

Inspection of Hertford Junior School

Lynchet Close, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 7FP

Inspection dates: 10–11 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and feel safe. They trust adults to help them solve any problems that arise. Pupils say that bullying is rare.

The quality of education is not good enough. Pupils do not learn the knowledge and skills they need in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff are ambitious for pupils to do their best and achieve well. Leaders' work to improve the quality of the curriculum and to develop teachers' skills is beginning to have a positive impact.

The behaviour of pupils is improving. At lunchtime the wide range of activities on offer helps pupils play together calmly. However, in some lessons pupils lose focus and find it difficult to sustain concentration because they find work too hard or too easy. Training is helping staff to respond in a constructive way when pupils find managing their own behaviour difficult.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of opportunities they are offered, including extra-curricular trips and clubs. These include sporting activities and opportunities like eco club, and harmonica and French lessons. Pupils are helped and encouraged to take part in clubs that interest them.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The executive headteacher has taken decisive action to strengthen the leadership of the school since its previous inspection. The school has weaknesses in the quality of education. However, these are being tackled effectively. Leaders have accurately evaluated what needs to be done to ensure that pupils learn more. Leaders know that plans to secure improvements need to be implemented quickly. In the past the support and challenge offered to leaders, by governors, was not good enough. Work with the local authority has enabled governors to improve their effectiveness.

There is an increasingly consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics across the school. Teachers think carefully about the order in which they teach new knowledge. They also check what pupils remember and know. As a result, pupils improve their mathematical understanding.

Plans to improve the teaching of reading have only just started to be implemented. The way that reading is taught is different between classes. Some teachers do not have the skills or expertise to teach reading effectively. There has been little training for staff. Pupils do not become fluent readers quickly enough.

Some curriculum plans are stronger and more established than others. In history, pupils confidently recall what they have learned. For example, Year 6 pupils explained how they looked at evidence and artefacts to 'work out what is true from what's been left behind'. However, in other subjects curriculum planning is not detailed enough to ensure that knowledge and skills are taught in a logical order.

Teachers and curriculum leaders do not routinely check what pupils have remembered. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This means that some pupils lose focus in lessons because they find learning too difficult.

Leaders have taken steps to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the help they need. Pupils with SEND receive additional help or special resources. Leaders have ensured that teachers consider carefully how pupils with SEND are fully included in lessons.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of treating each other with respect, regardless of the differences and similarities they share. They say that it is okay to have different, or no, religious beliefs. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they get to take on more responsibility. Pupils proudly explained their involvement in the eco council, including buying and planting trees around the school site and encouraging recycling.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make pupils' welfare their highest priority. Staff are well trained and work closely together to make sure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the support that they need. Leaders act quickly when help is needed and work well with external partners to keep pupils safe.

The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils can describe steps that they take to stay safe online and this information is shared with parents and carers.

Governors have improved their oversight of the checks carried out on staff prior to them starting work at the school. These are completed and recorded accurately.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the past, progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been very low. Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to the leadership structure of the school. Leaders are now taking the right steps to address low standards. This is beginning to have a positive impact in mathematics and writing. Leaders need to ensure that there are rapid improvements to the approach used to teach reading and that staff have the skills and knowledge required so that pupils achieve well.
- Changes to middle leadership and improvements to the curriculum are very new. Some parts of the curriculum, such as mathematics and history, are carefully structured. Others are not planned well enough yet. Curriculum leaders should continue to develop and sequence subjects coherently. They should ensure that

teachers routinely check what pupils have learned and remembered so that pupils do not move on with gaps and misconceptions in their knowledge and skills.

- Governors have worked with the local authority to help secure improvements. These are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils. Governors are now clear about their roles and responsibilities and have an accurate understanding of how they need to develop their effectiveness further. Governors need to sharpen their evaluative role so that they can provide more robust challenge and support to school leaders.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	114383
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10111159
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ms Jenny Perrin
Headteacher	Mrs Zoe McGuigan
Website	www.hertfordjun.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is in a federation with Hertford Infant and Nursery School. The executive headteacher, head of school for teaching and learning and head of school for inclusion work jointly across both schools.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the executive headteacher and other leaders throughout the inspection. I met with a representative from the governing body and local authority.
- We carried out a wide range of activities to check how leaders ensure that pupils are safe.
- We spoke to parents before school and to staff with different roles in school to seek their views. We considered 58 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We took into account 44 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 24 responses to the staff survey.

- We spoke to pupils formally and informally throughout the inspection and observed them in classrooms and at lunchtime and breaktime.
- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and computing. This involved speaking with curriculum leaders, visiting lessons, speaking to pupils, looking at pupils' work and speaking to teachers. We listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading.

Inspection team

James Freeston, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Debra Anderson

Ofsted Inspector

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