

Orchards Junior School

Nelson Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN12 6EN

Inspection dates

11–12 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have a strong vision and know the school well.
- Leaders have the trust and confidence of parents, carers and the local community.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils make good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics. There is a strong culture of self-evaluation. However, governors are aware of the need for even further rigour.
- Reading is a strength in the school and is above the national average. Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved recently so that achievement is now also broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' progress in writing is accelerating. However, too few pupils achieve greater depth.
- Leaders and governors have created a very rich curriculum with a broad range of first-hand experiences. Pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including physical education, music and art.
- Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils with increasing care. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is accelerating, but too few are achieving greater depth in writing.
- Leaders and governors ensure that pupils' progress is tracked with increasing rigour, and most staff know pupils well. They provide work that meets the majority of pupils' needs.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils are polite, friendly and respectful to adults and to each other. They have very positive attitudes to learning, which supports their strong progress.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is thoughtfully woven into the curriculum, and is very effective. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils are confident that they are safe. Parents are unanimous that their children are cared for well.
- Leaders use extra funding for sport very effectively. Pupils appreciate the wide range of sporting activities provided, alongside a wide range of other extra-curricular activities.
- Parents are kept well informed and, consequently, they are able to support their children's learning at home effectively.
- The speech and language resource base contributes to pupils' learning effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are provided consistently with opportunities to enable them to make better progress and to achieve greater depth in writing
- the attendance of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, matches that of other pupils nationally
- governors continue to refine their skills of holding the school to account in order to accelerate the rise in standards further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- Leaders and governors recognise that this is an exciting time for the school, and they have a strong vision and ambition for all pupils to thrive. They review the quality of teaching through a range of activities, such as visits to classrooms and scrutiny of pupils' work. Most staff share high expectations and work together closely to share good practice. Leaders organise regular training as required. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is improving constantly, across the school and in the speech and language resource base.
- Leaders have recently established new procedures for assessing pupils' progress more regularly, and these are being kept under review. The tracking of pupils' progress ensures that leaders have an accurate view of how well pupils are achieving. Consequently, pupils who are at risk of falling behind are now being identified, and extra help is provided.
- The curriculum is broad, with a very exciting range of first-hand experiences. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning a range of subjects and make good progress. They develop their technology skills when building motorised buggies, and use a Green Screen to help learn about the tragedy of the Titanic. Links are made to children's literature. Pupils use 'The Enormous Turnip' to help them learn Spanish, and they develop their descriptive writing skills using 'Beowulf'.
- A rich programme of visits and visitors brings learning to life, for example pupils learn about the Romans when visiting Fishbourne Roman Villa. They enjoy taking part in drama workshops, producing whole-school musicals and taking part in their own cookery competitions. Pupils and parents appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular clubs, including learning to play the guitar, chess, gardening and the performing arts. These activities are attended well by pupils and contribute successfully to learning.
- The school's values, represented by 'sparkle', are shared widely with governors, staff, parents and pupils. These key values include perseverance, positivity, paying attention and asking questions. They are woven thoughtfully through the culture and curriculum of the school and reflect British values.
- Pupils learn about democracy as junior governors, and about different faiths, for example when studying the origin and beliefs of Hinduism and the importance of pilgrimage in Christianity. The curriculum and assemblies provide routine opportunities for pupils to reflect, listen to the views of others and share their differences. Consequently, the school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective. As one parent commented: 'The children really do sparkle!'
- Leaders ensure that pupils have an equal opportunity to do well. For example, learning mentors help pupils cope with challenges. The breakfast club provides care before school. Pupils who have difficulty with reading are given support in school, and those who have difficulty working at home can attend the homework club.
- Leaders now track the progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities carefully. This information is used to plan additional learning

activities that are reviewed regularly. Leaders work closely with a range of external agencies to support pupils' specific needs. As a result, most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making strong progress and additional funding is used well.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Leaders and governors have high aspirations for the school and pupils. Governors have maintained a strategic overview while restructuring from a middle school to a junior school and then converting to an academy. Leaders, together with governors, have the trust and respect of the community to lead the school forwards successfully.
- Governors are thoughtful and are seeking constantly to improve. They attend training regularly and work closely with similar schools. They understand how these activities help them fulfil their role. Governors completed an audit recently to ensure that, as a team, they have all the skills required. New governors are recruited actively to fill any gaps.
- Governors monitor the school development plan closely, and they undertake an annual review with leaders. They are aware of their responsibility to hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes and they visit the school regularly. There is a systematic approach to monitoring activities and, as a result, governors know the school well. However, they acknowledge the need to challenge leaders more rigorously, to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential.
- Governors maintain an effective overview of staff training. Staff morale is high and training opportunities are welcomed by staff to help accelerate pupils' progress.
- Governors monitor school expenditure regularly in order to ensure that it impacts on pupils' outcomes, including additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and physical education (PE). As a result, pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of sporting opportunities and have won numerous awards. However, the monitoring of funding for disadvantaged pupils is still being refined. Moreover, not all disadvantaged pupils are attaining higher standards, especially in writing.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are provided with regular training, and they are aware of safety procedures. Staff act swiftly if there are concerns. Leaders maintain detailed records that are reviewed regularly by a designated governor. Robust systems are in place when staff are recruited. As a result, pupils feel safe and parents are unanimously confident that their children are safe.
- Pupils are taught how to be safe. Pupils speak enthusiastically about how they support one another and learn about e-safety. They are very confident that there is someone to talk to about their concerns. Pupils know that any issues raised will be taken seriously by staff and dealt with promptly.
- Pupils are cared for well. Leaders work closely with external agencies as needed, in order to provide targeted support for pupils and their families. As a result, pupils are safe and feel secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Most teachers have high expectations and these ambitions are used to plan lessons, provide exciting resources and lead discussions with pupils. The majority of teachers are very positive and encourage pupils 'to be the best they can be'. Pupils enjoy being challenged, and most pupils are engaged and keen to learn.
- Pupils' learning is promoted by activities linked to a range of thoughtfully chosen themes and first-hand experiences, for example a study of author Roald Dahl that links to a dressing-up day, and a Stone Age day, which provides opportunities to learn about the past. These activities give pupils the opportunity to learn new vocabulary and to apply and practise literacy and numeracy skills in a wide range of contexts.
- Most adults question pupils carefully in order to build on previous learning. Questions are made more difficult when the activity is found to be too simple, and, alternatively, broken down into smaller steps when pupils are facing challenges. Consequently, most pupils make increasingly strong progress in key areas of learning.
- Additional adults have an important role in the classroom. They support pupils' learning with careful questioning in order to move learning forward. These extra adults target pupils for extra support, individually and in small groups.
- Teachers set homework in line with school policy routinely. Pupils enjoy these challenges, which give them the opportunity to practise skills learned in the classroom. For example, pupils were asked to practise how to use train timetables for homework, following similar lessons in class.
- Parents are kept informed regularly about their children's progress and are overwhelmingly happy with the range of information provided. As a result, parents are able to support their children with school activities at home, and these activities contribute successfully to learning in school.
- There are numerous strengths to teaching, learning and assessment across the school and within the attached speech and language resource base. Pupils' progress is now tracked more rigorously. As a result, staff provide pupils with varying levels of support, a range of resources and differing tasks.
- Pupils make most progress where teachers use assessment information to make changes to their teaching as lessons are underway. The careful use of equipment, variety of tasks and adult support help most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to succeed in lessons. Pupils are now making good progress in reading and mathematics. However, as leaders recognise, there is more to be done to ensure that more pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve greater depth in writing than in the past.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils are known as individuals, which is a fact appreciated by parents. Staff work closely with families to provide relevant individual support when required. Plans for pupils with individual needs, including medical needs, are kept under regular review, to ensure that these pupils play an active part in the life of the school.
- Pupils feel safe and are taught how to keep themselves safe. They speak very confidently about how to use computers safely. Parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are overwhelmingly satisfied that their children are safe, and they are very confident that any concerns that they or their children raise are dealt with effectively.
- Pupils are happy to talk to staff about their concerns. They are confident that any incidents of unkindness are dealt with promptly by staff.
- Staff know pupils very well and relationships are very good. The 'sparkle' values are threaded deeply throughout all aspects of school life. Pupils are tolerant, respectful of each other and work together well. Cookery lessons give pupils opportunities to prepare healthy meals together. Regular charity fundraising enables pupils to help others who are less fortunate.
- Pupils speak happily and articulately about their school. They enjoy and benefit from taking part in the wide range of activities on offer, including a residential visit to Disneyland Paris and participating in dance and drama workshops. Pupils learn how to be independent and take responsibility when serving as young magistrates, digital leaders and prefects. Parents appreciate the breadth of opportunities that are provided by the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They move around the school sensibly and calmly, and cooperate in the playground. Pupils benefit from a wide range of outdoor activities and organised playtimes. They enjoy scrambling on the climbing wall, playing table tennis and playing basketball.
- The vast majority of pupils are keen to attend school regularly. Pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive punctually. As one parent commented, 'My child bounces into school.' Leaders follow up absence routinely and work closely with families to provide support as necessary.
- Parents appreciate the breakfast and extra-curricular clubs, which provide childcare. As a result, pupils' attendance is improving. However, as leaders recognise, more needs to be done to ensure that attendance is at least in line with national average.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning throughout the school and in the speech and language resource base. Pupils work together well and persevere when faced with a problem. Pupils are able to self-assess and make improvements to their own work. Pupils take pride in themselves, their work and their school, and they enjoy being challenged.

Outcomes for pupils

- Pupils make strong progress in reading, and standards are above national average. Pupils enjoy reading a variety of exciting texts, and they read regularly, both in and out of school. They speak confidently and happily discuss their reading in detail. They can also explain their book choices and consider the author's intentions.
- Pupils now make strong and improving progress in mathematics. Pupils use the basic mathematical skills learned across a broad range of mathematical activities.
- Although pupils' progress in writing is now improving, too few pupils are attaining greater depth. Expectations have not been consistently high enough, especially for the most able pupils. Leaders recognise that the legacy of weaker progress has not yet been eliminated, particularly for most-able writers, and that there is more to be done to improve outcomes for this group.
- Disadvantaged pupils increasingly make similar progress to all pupils. Their progress is tracked with growing rigour, and additional activities are now being provided to help them catch up where necessary. However, too few disadvantaged pupils are attaining higher standards, especially in writing.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and their families, are now supported more effectively. Consequently, most pupils with SEN and/or disabilities make good progress.
- Pupils' work across the school shows good progress in a range of subjects, including technology, art, music and PE. Pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills successfully in these areas. The rich, broad curriculum, with a wide range of first-hand experiences, such as creating wire sculptures, and special themed events, including Spanish and Victorian days, contributes well to pupils' achievements.
- Pupils make strong progress in the speech and language resource base, which contributes successfully to their learning.
- More pupils are now achieving their potential than in the past. Consequently, pupils are increasingly prepared well for Year 6, and the subsequent transfer to secondary school.

School details

Unique reference number	142381
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10059284

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	552
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Phillip Papps
Headteacher	Paul Jones
Telephone number	01903 520 202
Website	www.orchardsjunior.school
Email address	head@orchardsjunior.school
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy on 1 October 2015. Currently, Orchards Junior School is the only school within the Sparkle Multi-Academy Trust.
- The local governing body is accountable to a board of nine trustees, who principally oversee the finances of the school.
- On conversion, the school changed from a middle school, providing for Years 4 to 7, to a junior school, providing for Years 3 to 6.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- A much larger proportion of pupils than the national average is eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is much higher than the national average, and the proportion with education, health and care plans is also above the national average.
- A special needs resource base for speech and language forms part of the school. There are 12 pupils on roll.
- A breakfast club is provided before school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment in classes and sets from all year groups, some jointly with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors talked to pupils, looked at their work and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and two other governors, two representatives of the trust and the school's senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 59 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the 53 free-text responses provided.
- Inspectors also spoke to parents and carers during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered 36 responses to the Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the wider work of the school, including an assembly, breakfast club, playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including: minutes of governing body and trust meetings; leaders' and external evaluations of the school's effectiveness; the school development plan; information about leaders' monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress. They also reviewed a range of school policies and guidance relating to behaviour and safety. Inspectors checked the single central record, which summarises the recruitment checks made on staff.

Inspection team

Rosemary Addison, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Becky Greenhalgh	Ofsted Inspector
Bill James	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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