

West Earlham Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120958
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358889
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Cheryl Thompson

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Anne Gibson
Headteacher	Anthony Hull (Partnership Head)
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors accompanied by a trainee inspector. Seventeen lessons were observed involving all nine teachers and a small number of teaching assistants. The work of teaching assistants supporting small groups of pupils and individuals was also observed. Inspectors held meetings with a few parents, staff, members of the interim executive board and shadow governing body, and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school self-evaluation documents, data on pupils' progress, external monitoring reports and development planning. A wide range of documents relating to safeguarding procedures was scrutinised. Responses to the inspection questionnaire from 33 parents and carers were analysed as well as those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors examined the attainment of pupils currently in school, especially those in Year 5.
- Whether pupils for whom English is an additional language make good enough progress.
- Do pupils in Year 3 make enough progress in writing?
- The extent to which planning for the future leadership for the school is sufficiently secure to sustain the school's upward trend.

Information about the school

This is a junior school of average size. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with statements of special needs are much higher than usually found. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very high at almost half of the school. Most pupils are White British with a small number from minority ethnic groups, a few of whom are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

The school has been led by a partnership headteacher who also manages a nearby junior school since April 2008. He spends approximately half of each day in each school. There has been an almost complete change of teaching staff since 2008. The school has started the process to appoint a full-time headteacher for the school to take effect from January 2012.

Following an inspection in 2007, the school was made subject to special measures. The subsequent inspection in 2009 removed the school from this category and found it to be providing a satisfactory education. During the period when the school required special measures, the governing body was replaced with an interim executive board. This board remains the appropriate authority and a 'shadow' governing body has been appointed to take over in 2012. Many members of the interim executive board are also members of the 'shadow' governing body.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Pupils get a good education at West Earlham Junior. The school has improved considerably since the last inspection as a result of the partnership headteacher's outstanding and determined leadership. He has recruited and inspired a strong team who work together exceptionally well to implement the school's clear, ambitious aims. The capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

Pupils' attainment is broadly average. They make good progress, a minority from low starting points. In response to outstanding teaching, more-able pupils make excellent progress in English and mathematics.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Those for whom English is an additional language also make good progress.

Pupils say they enjoy school and demonstrate this with their above average attendance. They have well-developed social skills and good manners. They enjoy taking on responsibilities around the school.

Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong, they also understand what good behaviour means. They say there has been 'massive improvement in behaviour'.

Strong links with local junior and senior schools have a positive impact on teachers' professional development as well as wider opportunities for pupils to enjoy special themed lessons or sports in the senior school.

Links with the on-site infant school are developing well, particularly for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils. Transition arrangements are less well developed in terms of ensuring pupils continue to build on their early literacy skills as soon as they start in Year 3.

Teaching is good with almost half of the lessons observed demonstrating outstanding practice. Teachers make effective use of assessment of prior learning in their daily planning. A strength is their astute and precise assessment of how well pupils are learning in each lesson. Consequently, if needed, teachers provide pupils with more time to practise a skill or give further explanations.

On occasions, when there is insufficient guidance for teaching assistants supporting a small group or individuals who either have learning difficulties or are at the early stages of English, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress.

Links with parents and carers are good. The school works very effectively to involve parents in their children's learning. Consequently, the impact of such links is much improved since the last inspection.

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Good systems identify groups or individuals whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. Pupils are known very well so any unhappiness or uncharacteristic behaviour is noted quickly and issues resolved. Pupils are very confident that they are safe at school and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further by:
 - improving teaching so that all is at least good
 - ensuring teachers provide teaching assistants with precise directions particularly in the support for pupils at the early stages of learning English
 - introducing a handwriting scheme for the whole school to follow.
- Ensure pupils in Year 3 make good progress in writing when they start in school by:
 - building on the developing links with the infant school to increase teachers' knowledge of how early literacy skills, particularly phonics (letter sounds), are taught.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils of all abilities make at least good progress. Significant strengths are the way they develop very positive attitudes towards learning and personal qualities such as how to work together and respect for others' opinions. These qualities were very obvious in a Year 6 poetry lesson where pupils applied themselves exceptionally well to choosing the right adjectives and adverbs to help them describe personal feelings. They listened to each other's poems most thoughtfully and offered very pertinent comments.

On entry to Year 3, the range of attainment is broad, but on balance, it is generally below average. Importantly, all groups make at least good progress from their starting points. Attainment in the current Year 6 is broadly average. These pupils have made up for lost learning at the start of their time in the school when it was in special measures. Pupils in Year 5 have benefited from stability of staffing and mostly good teaching throughout their time in school. Their current attainment is securely in line with that expected for their age.

The school's setting of pupils according to their prior attainment is particularly beneficial for more-able pupils and the reason why they make excellent progress in English and mathematics. During their Year 3, pupils make good progress in reading but satisfactory progress in writing. The school now uses the same reading scheme as the infant school to promote continuity but does not have a similar scheme for teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make). As a result, pupils, especially those who find writing difficult, have to get to grips with a differently structured scheme which temporarily slows their progress in developing correct spelling when writing. Throughout the school, standards of handwriting are far too variable and recognised by the school as in need of improvement.

In most lessons, pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress as a result. On occasions, though, teaching assistants supporting these pupils are not given precise enough instructions to help those at the very early stages of learning English or those with

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complex learning difficulties. As a result, opportunities are missed to extend the learning of both groups and, on these occasions, they make satisfactory rather than good progress.

Pupils' good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe is reflected in their keenness to take part in sporting activities and of knowledge of how to take care of themselves. In a topic lesson about the Amazon rain forest, pupils demonstrated a good sense of empathy when discussing feelings that a tribe may have when their culture and homes are devastated by rain forest clearance.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

All teaching is underpinned by excellent relationships and very high expectations for pupils to behave well, listen and learn. Lessons are planned taking very good account of what pupils learned in previous sessions and are often adjusted during the lesson. Marking is effective and in a good number of classes, exemplary so that pupils know exactly what they can do to improve their work. Pupils are confident in their use of their 'traffic light' system to tell their teachers if they understand, need a little more help or are very unsure of learning. Where teaching is outstanding, teachers use their excellent understanding of their pupils' capabilities to challenge them to do even better. In these lessons, the pace is brisk with finely balanced use of time for teachers to talk and pupils to work.

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The good curriculum is well balanced. It meets pupils' need to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills in order that they have a secure base for the next stage of their education. Learning is interesting because good links are made between topic work, English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Pupils say they really enjoy the opportunities to use laptop computers to give presentations.

At the start of the school day, each pupil is greeted by key members of staff. Pupils say they like this and are very confident that they know to whom they can turn should they be unhappy or concerned. The school ensures that pupils whose medical needs prevent them attending school regularly have sensitive support. Good partnerships with outside agencies such as social services and the local doctors' practice much enhance the good care the school provides.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides inspirational leadership to promote the best possible education tailored to individual needs. He has encouraged and facilitated excellent leadership and management at all levels. The assistant headteacher, literacy co-ordinator and special educational needs co-ordinator, as the senior leadership team, provide excellent role models through their own teaching and in their coaching of teachers in other schools. Consequently, they have well-developed skills to monitor and support further improvement in the work of teachers and teaching assistants. The assistant headteacher manages the school extremely efficiently when the partnership headteacher is not in the school. A key feature of the headteacher and senior team is their highly effective evaluation of data and lessons, and their analysis of the views of pupils and staff. As a result, they have a very clear picture of where improvements are needed and look for creative ways in which they can promote these.

The interim executive board (IEB) and shadow governing body share the headteacher's high aspirations for the school. They are very aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Risk assessments are well developed and safeguarding systems adopt recommended good practice. They have a good understanding of the school's and their own strengths and areas to improve. Good, strategic planning is in place to ensure that when the 'shadow' governing body becomes the substantive one, there will sufficient experience and knowledge to ensure the school's continued improvement. Similarly, the highly successful development of the leadership roles of senior staff contributes to the school's capacity to maintain good standards of work in the future.

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Community cohesion is satisfactory. It is very strong within the school and locally, with further national and global links planned. Links with parents and carers are good and improving although the school leaders recognise that they have yet to establish strong links with a small number of parents.

Equal opportunities are promoted well through very close monitoring of the progress of different groups and good support where needed. For example, pupils transferring to West Earlham from other schools are given expert help to help them settle in and meet their individual needs so that they can take advantage of all the school can offer them.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a relatively low response to the questionnaire. Responses of parents and carers spoken with during the visit and from their responses to the questionnaire indicate that they are supportive of the school. There were no areas where significant numbers of parents and carers disagreed with the statements about the school's provision.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at West Earham Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	36	19	58	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	64	12	36	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	61	12	36	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	67	11	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	58	13	39	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	45	16	48	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	42	18	55	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	14	42	16	48	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	52	14	42	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	52	13	39	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	36	18	55	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	45	15	45	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	64	10	30	0	0	2	6

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



31 May 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of West Earham Junior School, Norwich, NR5 8HT

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your thoughts and ideas about it. We would like to say a special thank you to the Year 3 and 6 pupils who gave up part of their dinner time to talk to us. These discussions helped us to learn more about your school and how it helps you to learn and develop. The school is providing you with a good education. These are some of the best things about your school:

- you told us that you enjoy school and feel happy and safe, and we agree
- your behaviour is outstanding - well done.
- teaching is good and you are well looked after and know how to keep yourselves safe
- your headteacher and senior teachers are leading and managing the school very well indeed.

There are some key areas where the school can improve. I have asked your headteacher, senior teachers and the interim executive board to:

- make sure that all the teaching in the school is good or better
- help Year 3 teachers find out how letter sounds are taught in the infant school so that Year 3 can carry on learning in the same way
- make sure that you learn and practise handwriting skills so that your handwriting improves.

You already make a good contribution to the life of the school. You are very positive about learning and we were very impressed with your good manners and how welcoming you are to visitors. I am sure you can all help to make improvements and you can do this by working hard to improve your handwriting.

Thank you again for your help and all good wishes for your continued success.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson

Lead Inspector

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