

St Nicholas Priory CofE VA Junior School

St Nicholas Road, Great Yarmouth, NR30 1NL

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Standards are below average. The achievement of different groups of pupils is variable. Boys make less progress in English than mathematics because they do not read often enough. Girls do less well than boys in mathematics. Pupils from less well-off families do not achieve as well as others.
- The quality of teaching is uneven and not enough is outstanding. Senior leaders' monitoring of lessons is not sharp enough. Targets set for increasing the amount of good or better teaching have not been met.
- Some pupils do not learn well because work is too easy for them. There are no timescales set to complete work and marking is inconsistent. Some pupils are not expected to work hard and do their very best.
- The governing body do not know enough about how teachers' performance is being managed. They do not challenge the headteacher enough about the quality of teaching and its impact on learning because they are not fully involved in evaluating the school's effectiveness.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders have improved the school. Pupils are achieving much better than in the past and teaching is improving.
- Regular checks of pupils' progress enable teachers and support staff to help those who need it with their English and mathematics.
- Behaviour is good because it is managed well, and pupils feel safe at school.
- Attendance has risen and is above average.
- The school's caring and supportive atmosphere promotes pupils' enjoyment of school. They act as house captains, school councillors and 'special eyes' to help it run smoothly.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 12 lessons, all of which were joint observations with senior staff.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, representatives of the Governing Body, the school council and a representative from the local authority.
- There no responses on the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector observed the school's work; scrutinised current data about pupils' achievement, examined the single central record, behaviour and attendance data and looked at documents used by leaders in their monitoring and evaluation of the school.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- St Nicholas Priory Church of England Voluntary Aided School is a larger-than-average junior school.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, including many from Eastern Europe.
- The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (extra government funding to support particular groups of pupils) is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above that found nationally. An above-average proportion of pupils are supported through school action, school action plus and have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual transfer times is higher than in most primary schools.
- In 2012, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school was inspected by Ofsted in July 2011 and was placed in special measures due to weaknesses in pupils' achievement, teaching and leadership and management.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it consistently good by:
 - applying the school's guidance for good teaching in every lesson
 - making sure that teachers check the quality of pupils' work regularly and challenge pupils whose work falls below the standard expected
 - telling pupils what they are expected to learn, and checking during and at the end of each lesson that all pupils have achieved this
 - giving pupils regular, written advice on what to do to improve their work and providing time for them to re-visit previous work to complete it.
- Raise achievement so that standards in English and mathematics are at least in line with the national average by:
 - widening opportunities for boys to read more often and to read for pleasure
 - providing more activities that increase girls' interest and enthusiasm for mathematics
 - setting timescales for pupils to complete work promptly
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving and providing challenging tasks that encourage them to work hard and do their best
 - using the pupil premium more effectively so that pupils from less well-off families achieve as well as other pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - checking that teachers use the agreed procedures for good teaching in all lessons and

challenging them when their teaching is not consistently good

- comparing the quality of teaching with that in other successful schools to see what else needs to be done to make more of it outstanding
- making sure that the pupil premium always helps pupils from less well-off families to achieve
- evaluating how effective the school is and revising plans for further improvement, and involving governors in this so that they are able to fully challenge the headteacher to make further improvements.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Over the last two years, boys have not done as well as girls in English, and girls have not achieved as well as boys in mathematics. New resources are helping boys to write at length and read more often, and there are plans to promote girls' interest in mathematics, but these gaps in performance are not closing.
- One-to-one support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is helping to narrow the gap between their achievement and that of others, but this gap remains too wide. For example, in 2012, only 60% of them achieved Level 4 in English and mathematics compared with over 80% of other pupils. The standards they attained in mathematics measured by average points scores meant that they were the equivalent of a year behind other pupils.
- Although achievement requires further improvement, results in national tests in 2012 improved significantly. The proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the nationally expected levels in English and mathematics remained below average but, based on their low starting points, this represents better progress than in the past. The percentage of pupils making the expected progress in English, writing and mathematics increased this year to above national averages.
- The school is tackling many of the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. A combination of improved teaching, careful checking of pupils' progress and extra help to boost their performance is raising pupils' achievement. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the progress expected of them. Pupils arriving in school without English as their first language achieve well in English but not in mathematics.
- Pupils are making better progress because senior leaders check how well pupils in all classes are doing, and decide what else needs to be done to help them progress. Extra help each morning for less-able pupils and those with gaps in their knowledge is improving their basic skills in English and mathematics. The progress that pupils make in lessons depends on the quality of teaching. Pupils learn well when they are challenged to work hard, learn independently in small groups and receive help to improve their work. When work is too easy, and they are not expected to complete work quickly and neatly, their progress slows.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The previous inspection in 2011 made clear what actions senior leaders needed to take to improve teaching, but not all of these actions have been completed. Some teachers' expectations of pupils, the challenge provided for them and the quality of marking all remain variable. Some improvements have been made and there is more good teaching than in the past. However, not enough of it is good and there is little that is outstanding.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough. Work is often too easy and does not stretch the pupils. For example, confident readers in a Year 3 class were held back by having to listen for too long to instructions from the teacher even though they knew what to do. At other times, tasks are not matched to pupils' different abilities. Pupils in another Year 3 class were given work that was too difficult. Some of them could not read or sound-out words, so the quality of their answers was poor.
- The different expectations of teachers are clearly seen in pupils' books. Some contain good-

quality work that is neatly presented and marked regularly to show what needs to be done to improve it. In the best examples, pupils are given time to look at teachers' comments and spend time correcting and improving their work. Elsewhere, books are untidy, work is unfinished and work is not marked regularly.

- Not all teachers explain to pupils what they will achieve by the end of the lesson, or check later what they have learnt. Pupils are not encouraged to work quickly and efficiently. They work steadily at their own pace, which slows the rate of their learning and limits the amount of work they do.
- Most teachers know their pupils well and provide good care and support for them. They praise pupils regularly, share good relations and manage their behaviour well. They meet the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs by preparing individual plans for them and monitoring how well they meet their personal targets. Extra help for pupils whose first language is not English helps them to read and write in English and enjoy school.
- Where teaching is good, expectations of how pupils should behave and how much work they do are high. Teachers meet pupils' different needs by planning work that is suitably challenging for the most able and providing tasks suited to less-able learners. Pupils enjoy learning together in pairs and small groups for long periods of time. They plan practical activities that help to make learning fun. Teaching assistants are used well. They work alongside teachers and teach small groups of pupils to help them to catch up. Most teachers use interactive whiteboards regularly and let pupils use laptop computers in lessons. Teachers check pupils' record books to see how often they are reading by themselves and with their parents and carers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school during play and lunchtimes because their behaviour is managed well. They say that behaviour has improved a lot recently and that disruption in lessons is uncommon.
- Pupils feel safe and free from bullying. Very few incidents, mostly name-calling, have occurred this year. When it does happen, they say they know who to go to for help and can use the bullying box to raise concerns. Pupils' enjoyment of school is shown in their attendance, which is above average.
- Pupils are not excluded from school. An isolation room is used effectively to sort out problems promptly and to avoid more serious issues from developing. A nurture room helps to show pupils how to behave to staff and other pupils. Pupils help to improve others' behaviour. For example, the school council have chosen new playground equipment to keep pupils busy and active during lunchtimes. Pupils selected as 'special eyes' do a good job during lunchtimes by supervising outside areas and corridors, and helping more vulnerable pupils to engage in playground games.
- The school's link with the church encourages pupils to respect and care for each other. Their good attitudes and behaviour are celebrated in assemblies and work is displayed well around school. Pupils enthuse about the range of enrichment activities organised for them. This makes a good contribution to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural education.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders have improved teaching but not enough of it is good or outstanding. They know where most of the strengths and weaknesses lie and feel that teaching is good, but this is based on the improvements made since the last inspection rather than the current impact of teaching on pupils' learning. The school's own observations, monitoring by the local authority and inspection findings clearly shows that some is good and some requires improvement.
- New procedures to improve the quality of learning are not leading to it becoming consistently good. Senior leaders are not checking that teachers are using this guidance well enough to improve their effectiveness. Nevertheless, teachers are being held to account by linking their performance to the progress made by pupils in their class and this information is being used wisely to decide which staff progress to the next pay scale.
- The headteacher has improved the school. Pupils' achievement has risen, monitoring of progress is more accurate and behaviour is now good. Stronger links have been forged with parents and carers. Visits to other schools to observe best practice and advice from an experienced leader of a local school have helped to strengthen the school. However, senior leaders' evaluation that it is now a good school is not accurate. The quality of teaching and the impact this has on the achievement of different groups of pupils is too variable. An action plan in place since the last inspection has helped the school to make improvements but now needs updating to enable the school to improve further.
- The local authority has monitored the actions taken to improve the school since it was placed in special measures. It has provided effective support to develop mental mathematics and the teaching of reading. It has reduced its support because it feels there is sufficient capacity in the school to lead its own improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are not challenging the headteacher well enough to make teaching consistently good and outstanding. They know where there is good teaching and where it needs improving, but they are unsure which teachers progress up the salary scale. A committee charged with monitoring the school's improvement provides some challenge and support. However, they do not have a full understanding of the school's performance because they are not fully involved in evaluating it. They are not making sure that the pupil premium is being used exclusively for pupils from less well-off families. Their clear strategic lead for the school is shown by their action to change its religious status to voluntary aided in order to secure its future development. Governors have taken up appropriate training, including to ensure that arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet the current regulatory requirements. They use their expertise to manage finances and improve the school's facilities.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121093
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	399139

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Wright
Headteacher	Mark Adams
Date of previous school inspection	14 July 2011
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