

# Westwood Community Junior School

Maple Grove, March, PE15 8JT

**Inspection dates** 12–13 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Too few pupils make good progress in mathematics, and more-able pupils do not attain the expected standards in reading.
- Not enough teaching is good or better. Some pupils do not learn as well as they could because they are not given enough time to find things out for themselves.
- Teachers' marking does not always offer useful advice to help pupils improve their work or guide them through the next steps in their learning.
- Information is not always used well enough to give teachers a clear understanding of how much progress pupils are making.
- Although the gap between those pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium and all pupils nationally is closing, it remains too wide.

### The school has the following strengths

- There is some good and some outstanding teaching that interests pupils and helps them to make good progress.
- The headteacher has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what has to be done to make this a good school.
- The highly committed governing body makes a positive contribution to school improvement.
- Pupils' national results in writing show good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils say that they trust the adults in the school to look after them, and that they feel safe.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, two of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. They also observed some sessions in which some pupils were receiving individual support for their reading, spelling or mathematics. They heard some pupils read in Years 3 and 6.
- Inspectors analysed pupils' work. They held a formal discussion with pupils and spoke to others informally in lessons, at breaks and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and teachers in charge of subjects and with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- A discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and analysed a range of school documentation. This included safeguarding records and those related to pupils' behaviour and attendance; minutes of meetings of the governing body; records of monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning; the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plans. Inspectors also looked at teachers' planning and records of pupils' progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 47 written responses by staff to the inspection questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Ronald Cohen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ken Parry

Additional Inspector

Isobel Randall

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for children looked after by the local authority and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above average.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The school is recovering from a period of staffing change, and five new members of staff have been recently appointed, all of whom are newly qualified teachers.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that:
  - the work pupils are given is always set at the right level for their ability
  - pupils have enough time to find things out for themselves
  - teachers' written comments give pupils the precise information they need to improve their work.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by ensuring that:
  - teachers have the knowledge to help pupils to choose from different approaches to tackle problems
  - pupils use mathematics as often as possible in other subjects to show how it can be used to solve different problems in everyday life
- Raise achievement in reading for more-able pupils by encouraging them to read more widely both in their English lessons and in lessons in other subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- For the three years until 2011 there was a steady decline in performance at the end of Year 6. More-able pupils did not reach the levels in reading expected of them. They do not read sufficiently widely, and what they read is too easy for them.
- The gap in attainment between pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and the others, while closing, is too wide. The money is used in a variety of ways, from aiding and supporting attendance and punctuality of pupils, (including, in one case, the purchase of an alarm clock) to the purchase of additional teaching support for them while they are in school. As a result, attendance has gone from below average to above average. This means pupils are in school, where they can be taught. Their progress has, naturally, improved.
- In the last eighteen months, pupils' progress has sped up. The most recent results in Year 6 tests reflect the school's hard work over this time. There has been considerable improvement in writing, which is now back to national levels, and the signs, as evidenced in the current Year 6's work, are that this rise in standards is continuing.
- Most pupils' reading has also shown good progress. Measures such as the introduction of the sounds that letters make in Year 3, and some highly structured small-group and individual work, are paying off. However, more-able pupils do not do so well.
- Standards in mathematics are improving but are still below national averages. However, in the last year standards have risen considerably and this is borne out in the pupils' work.
- There are no significant differences in the performance and achievement of boys and girls, and although the very small number of pupils from ethnic minorities do well, their numbers are so small as to be statistically insignificant.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do at least as well as such pupils nationally, and in some cases, they do better. This is as a result of closely monitored additional support which the pupils get both in lessons, and in withdrawal groups.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Too much of the teaching requires improvement. This is partly because the school has a large proportion of inexperienced newly qualified teachers. For example, the use of time was often the factor that prevented a lesson from being judged as good. Pupils did not spend enough time finding things out for themselves and teachers spent too much time talking.
- Some teachers are not confident enough in their subject knowledge to try out different approaches with pupils to help them understand mathematical concepts. For example, in one lesson on measuring area, the teacher attempted to teach area and perimeter to pupils in a way they found confusing and was not able to adapt to respond to their difficulties.
- Where teaching was good or better, teachers made the lessons interesting, exciting and interactive, whilst still making work demanding. In these lessons, pupils were encouraged to seek out the answers themselves, either in groups or individually. Pupils were quickly "off the carpet" and engaged in their own discussions. Teachers' stepped in effectively to tweak a line of enquiry, or simply to check the learning and progress which had taken place so far.
- In the best lessons teachers made excellent use of teaching assistants to help pupils extend their learning even further. They developed pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. For example, in a Year 5 topic lesson on India, the discussion turned to the many socio-economic differences between India and Britain. At one point, the teacher talked of the infant mortality rate in both countries, pointing out how high it was in India. The empathetic silence of the class was broken only by a poignant, whispered, 'God bless those little babies' from a pupil. However, such moments are rare.
- Marking is inconsistent. Too often, teachers comment on pupils' attainment rather than giving

clear and precise advice on what needs to be done to improve their work.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils get on well with each other and have good skills in working together. Pupils respect one another. They work and play well together and are very polite to adults. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded believe that behaviour is good and their children are safe in school.
- Pupils are happy at school and enjoy their lessons when they are excited by their learning. Occasionally, there is some restlessness when the work is less interesting or pupils have to listen to their teachers for too long. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their above-average attendance, and high levels of punctuality.
- Pupils say that behaviour is generally good in lessons. Any misbehaviour tends to be minor and is swiftly and effectively dealt with by the teachers. A very small number of pupils have difficulties in managing their behaviour. The establishment of 'The Nest', a quiet area, allows them to calm down, and they are often ready to return to class after a short period of reflection.
- Records of behaviour show it to be consistently good. This is based on clear expectations of how pupils should behave. These are underpinned by clear class rules, and the use of praise to celebrate good behaviour. As a result, the number of exclusions has fallen.
- Pupils know what bullying is, and they say there is very little of it. They believe that the adults in the school definitely deal swiftly and effectively with bullying. Pupils have had training in how to deal with cyber bullying. They trust the adults in the school, and have no qualms about going to them if they have any problems.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep safe, for example, with regards to use of electrical equipment or sharp tools. They are aware of the dangers of the internet.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Several of the subject leaders are new to their roles and have not had enough time to influence teaching and learning. Standards, while improving, are not yet in line with the national average. As a result, leadership and management require improvement.
- The headteacher is improving the school. Her clear understanding of the relationship between good teaching and pupils' learning, and her determination to improve pupils' achievement by getting rid of weak teaching, has allowed her to tackle these problems with increasing success over the last eighteen months.
- The school has now reversed the decline in achievement, and standards are moving closer towards national averages. A key to the upward trend in results has been the improvement in teaching. Teachers' targets for improving their work are closely linked to how well pupils are doing. Targets for senior leaders are linked to how well they improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Newly appointed teachers are keen, committed and enthusiastic about their teaching roles, but they lack experience. The teaching advice which they are receiving from senior leaders, along with professional support by teachers in charge of subjects, is helping them to improve their work.
- The headteacher is working effectively with her acting deputy headteacher to refine the system for checking how well pupils are doing. She has introduced a programme of checks which has gone some way to making sure that assessments are accurate across the school.
- Topic work develops pupils' well being, and the school is beginning to use other subjects to improve their basic skills. There are good support programmes for pupils who need additional help in their personal development.

- The headteacher is fostering good relations with parents in the life of the school. She has introduced family learning sessions. Parents know that the school is determined to give equal opportunities to all its pupils. Parents and pupils are equally aware that discrimination of any sort is unacceptable and tackled quickly and effectively.
- The local authority representative has a good and growing relationship with the school, and offers good support in several areas concerning teaching, assessment and achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are knowledgeable through detailed and robust information from the headteacher, and from their own visits to the school. They are aware of the strengths of the school and areas for development, and they are rigorous in holding the school to account. Although they give unwavering support to the school, they ask searching questions about pupils' performance, especially, but not exclusively, of those pupils for whom the school is in receipt of pupil premium funding. Governors also have full knowledge of the school's use of targets to help teachers improve their teaching and its relation to the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. They understand that pay is linked to improved performance and have a clear understanding of what is being done for the continued training of teachers. They do this by visiting lessons and even, occasionally, the training sessions themselves. Governors understand the information presented to them by the school concerning pupils' performance and how this relates to other schools, and they probe the school about any areas which appear to be not doing so well. Governors make sure that they keep abreast of all current legislation which is relevant to them by taking part in regular training sessions. Governors meet their statutory requirements concerning the safeguarding and safety of pupils. They keep a close eye on the school's overall budget and its use for the current and future direction of the school.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110641
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405294
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	318
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Martin Field
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gillian Thomas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01354 653033
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