

# Diss Church of England Junior School

The Entry, Diss, IP22 4NT

**Inspection dates** 28 February–1 March 2013

<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		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching across the school varies in quality and not enough of it is good.
- Teachers do not always plan their lessons to ensure that pupils build on what they already know, which limits their progress, especially for the more-able pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not always make the progress they should because the work and help they have are not always closely matched to their abilities.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have not made enough progress from their starting points.
- The teaching of letters sounds to help pupils read and write (phonics) is not rigorous enough to help all pupils make good progress.
- Behaviour requires improvement because teachers do not always set high expectations for pupils to work hard and behave well. Teachers do not always correct unacceptable behaviour.

### The school has the following strengths

- In the past three years, the school has been through considerable changes. Since the appointment of the executive headteacher, the decline in pupils' progress and attainment has been halted. The school is back on track and is improving steadily.
- In Year 3, where teaching is outstanding and teachers' expectations are high, behaviour is outstanding.
- In Years 5 and 6, pupils make steady progress in catching up on lost ground. In Years 3 and 4, pupils' progress is good in reading and mathematics.
- The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher use a range of strategies to help teachers to improve their practice
- Almost all parents and carers who voiced their views agree that their children are happy and safe at school. They are pleased with recent improvements in the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, as well as groups of pupils or individuals working with learning support assistants. They looked in on pupils during lunchtime and visited break times.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' work in all year groups and heard some pupils from all year groups read.
- They held meetings with staff, the Chair and members of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils from Years 3 and 6. They spoke informally with many pupils during lessons and at break times.
- Inspectors looked carefully at safeguarding documentation, information about pupils' progress, self-evaluation documents and development plans.
- The views of 16 parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into consideration, as were the views of parents and carers who spoke with inspectors at the start of the school day.

## Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Watson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school with two classes in each year group.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. This extra funding is for looked-after children, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils from service families.
- No pupils are currently educated in alternative provision away from the school site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Seven of the eight members of the teaching staff have joined the school since the last inspection. Three teachers are newly qualified and three others are at the early stages of their teaching career.
- In the past three years, the school has seen considerable changes to its senior management. There have been three acting headteachers, three special educational needs coordinators and two deputy headteachers.
- The executive headteacher is also the headteacher of the nearby infant and nursery school and children's centre. She is at each school for two and a half days. The deputy headteacher leads the school for the remainder of the week.

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

- Improve teaching to a consistently good level by making sure that all teachers:
  - check how well pupils are getting on with their work in lessons and adjust their teaching in the light of pupils' progress
  - always provide the more-able pupils with work to make them think hard and make good progress
  - set high expectations for pupils to present their work neatly.
- Increase the consistency in pupils' progress and raise standards further, particularly in writing, by:
  - placing greater emphasis on building on pupils' early literacy skills and equipping teaching assistants with the skills needed to make an even better contribution to pupils' learning in these areas, especially phonics
  - teaching handwriting skills systematically and giving pupils time to practise these skills regularly
  - making sure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have work and support at just the right level for them
  - seeking detailed advice and assessments promptly from outside professionals, such as educational psychologists, to increase the impact of the school's provision for pupils struggling to learn or manage their behaviour

making sure that pupils who are behind with reading have frequent opportunities to practise reading to an adult.

- Improve pupils' behaviour by making sure that:
  - pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour
  - all teachers and learning support assistants insist that pupils listen carefully and work at a good rate.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- When pupils start in Year 3, their attainment covers a wide range of abilities but is broadly average overall. There is an average proportion of more-able pupils and an above average proportion of pupils who have complex learning difficulties and/or behavioural and emotional difficulties.
- Results of national tests at the end of Year 6 indicate that pupils' attainment is average.
- Data about the school's performance show that pupils do not make enough progress in their learning from Year 3 to the end of Year 6. However, when the school's own assessment of pupils' attainment when they start in Year 3 is used to compare with their attainment at the end of Year 6, progress appears better, but not yet as good as it should be.
- Pupils' learning requires improvement in Years 5 and 6 because, in the past, their progress has been disrupted by significant changes of teaching staff. Consequently, there are many gaps in their learning. These are most noticeable in writing. Most pupils are making steady progress in catching up.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's accurate assessment data indicates that the rate of progress in Year 3 is good and that Year 4 made good progress when they were in Year 3 and continue to do so. Elsewhere, the rate of progress is uneven.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. In Years 5 and 6, in particular, there are a few pupils who are not catching up as well as they should. Due to considerable staff changes, including changes of special educational needs coordinator, these pupils have not had their learning needs assessed by an outside professional, such as an educational psychologist. Therefore, the work they have does not always match their abilities or how they learn best. As a result, they struggle.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium mostly make similar progress to their classmates. Within the school, the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is relatively small, which makes it hard to compare their performance with others. In some years these pupils attain better and make better progress than pupils in this group nationally and their classmates, and in others they do not. In 2012, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals did notably better than similar pupils nationally, and their attainment matched that of their classmates.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- There are differences in the quality of teaching across the school. Sometimes, the tasks that teachers set for pupils are not sufficiently demanding, so pupils are not expected to think hard and come up with solutions. This is particularly the case for more-able pupils.
- Teaching for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. When these pupils are taught in small groups by learning support assistants, they do not always make good progress because the activities are not always closely matched to what the pupils need to learn or the way that they learn.

- Work is not always precisely matched to what pupils need to learn next and teachers do not always notice how well pupils are learning and make changes in the lesson. Consequently, more-able pupils are not always challenged to think hard and pupils who find learning difficult sometimes struggle.
- The school has recently introduced a systematic approach to teaching letters and sounds (phonics) to build on what is taught in the infant school. The older pupils in the school have not had the benefit of this systematic teaching. Consequently, those older pupils who struggle with reading and writing have few skills to help them; their difficulties have not been thoroughly checked by outside professionals such as educational psychologists.
- The teaching of reading requires improvement because phonics are not yet taught consistently well. As a result, pupils who struggle with reading, especially the older pupils, have few strategies to help them work out how to read unfamiliar words. Some staff are still developing their expertise so there is currently little impact of the new approach for pupils who find learning to read and write difficult. Furthermore, pupils who find reading difficult and do not read at home with their parents or carers do not have enough opportunities to read to an adult in school.
- The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher have helped teachers to improve their knowledge of how well pupils are learning. The school has introduced 'assertive mentoring', when pupils are given a very clear idea of how well they are doing through regular individual conferences with their teacher. This initiative has had a strong impact on pupils' motivation and impressive understanding of how well they are doing, their targets for further improvement and what they need to do to accomplish these.
- Where teaching is good or outstanding, pupils are given work to do that is pitched at just the right level. In these lessons, teachers manage behaviour very well so that pupils are not distracted from their tasks.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- The main reason why pupils' behaviour requires improvement is because teachers' expectations are inconsistent. For example, teachers do not always insist that pupils stop their conversations immediately when asked so that they can listen to their teacher.
- Where teaching requires improvement and the pace of the lesson slows or is too fast, pupils are not always expected to work to the best of their abilities. Their books show that teachers do not always encourage them to take care how they present their work.
- Where teachers set high expectations and insist these are met, as in Year 3, pupils respond extremely well. They listen intently and work hard.
- Throughout the school, relationships are good. Most pupils say that they feel safe and that if they have any concerns, their teachers would help them. In Years 3 and 6, relationships are excellent and used exceptionally well to help pupils learn to manage their behaviour.
- Pupils like school and older pupils say they feel safe. They have a good understanding of what constitutes various forms of bullying, including through mobile phones and emails, even though older pupils say there is no bullying in school.
- Younger pupils also like school but voiced concerns about a few odd occasions when other pupils

had been 'unkind' in the playground. They said that they know that any member of staff will help them if they are worried.

- The executive headteacher has raised expectations for playground behaviour and ensured that midday assistants and others have had training to provide playground games and ensure good behaviour. These strategies have reduced the number of playground incidents very successfully.
- Pupils have a good idea of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. Older pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They discuss, very maturely, the impact of the actions of others and relate these to how they should, themselves, behave.
- Attendance has improved and is above average. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of school.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Strong and decisive leadership by the executive headteacher, the most recently appointed deputy headteacher and governing body have provided much needed stability. They share a strong commitment to making sure that all groups of pupils have an equal chance to do well and there is no discrimination.
- There are good systems for checking on the work of the school. The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve pupils' progress further, and they show a resolute determination to drive forward the improvements needed.
- Together with the deputy headteacher, the executive headteacher is managing the improvements in teaching well. There are high expectations for teachers to fulfil their roles and high-quality support from within the school and from consultants to help teachers to improve their practice.
- Teachers at the start of their career are supported well. They have clear guidelines to follow. For example, in the marking of pupils' work and giving pupils time to respond. In the main, this is done well and pupils comment favourably on having time to read and reflect on what they need to do to improve.
- The executive headteacher has used funding wisely to buy in coaching for subject leaders. As a consequence, subject leaders now have a very clear understanding of their roles, how well pupils are learning and what needs further improvement. They provide good role models for their colleagues
- The current special educational needs coordinator is having a good impact on making sure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are identified and that special provision is made for them. It is acknowledged that more work remains to be done to fully meet these pupils' needs. There are plans now in hand to secure further improvements.
- A good start has been made on a consistent approach to teaching phonics and this is having a good impact in Years 3 and 4. More work remains to be done to refine teachers' practice so that they can spot the gaps in pupils' understanding and so have a good impact on progress for the older pupils in the school. Some teaching assistants lack the subject knowledge to support pupils in making good progress.

- The way subjects are planned and taught meets the needs of pupils reasonably well. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their creative work. As the executive headteacher of both the infant and junior schools, the headteacher has been able to make positive changes to the arrangements for when pupils transfer to the junior school. Parents and carers who spoke with inspectors agree that there has been 'great improvement' here.
- There is now common agreement between both schools on the levels of pupils' learning at the end of Year 2. As a consequence, pupils make a quick start to their learning in Year 3. Pupils continue with learning phonics using the same structure as in the infant school. These changes have made sure that Year 3 make good progress from the start.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school during the periods of considerable change. The training and consultants' advice the executive headteacher has bought in from the local authority have been very beneficial.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are thorough in making sure that they perform their legal duties, including the safe recruiting and vetting of staff. They know the school well and make good use of their individual professional expertise in supporting it and asking searching questions. Governors visit frequently and have a good understanding of what performance information tells them about pupils' progress compared with schools nationally. They are well aware of the quality of teaching and the strategies used for helping teachers to make further improvement, such as linking pay closely to pupils' achievement, how the school rewards good teaching and deals with any underperformance. They are not afraid to take tough decisions about staffing. They check on spending decisions carefully, including the use and impact of pupil premium funding.



## 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>	121032
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	401993

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Janet Turner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Youngs (Executive Heateacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01379 642675
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