

# Firside Junior School

Middleton's Lane, Hellesdon, Norwich, NR6 5NF

**Inspection dates** 12–13 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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

- Recent actions taken by senior leaders have not yet brought about the rapid improvement in pupil progress and teaching that are still needed.
- Too few pupils make more than expected progress in English or mathematics, in part because their targets are insufficiently challenging.
- There are limited opportunities for reading and for the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- The systems designed to track pupils' progress are not always used to identify and support quickly enough the pupils who need extra help.
- There are too many classes where teaching is not yet consistently good. In those classes, teachers do not always match the work to pupils' ability, encourage them to become more independent learners or deploy teaching assistants effectively.
- Performance targets for teachers do not directly address specific areas of weakness in teaching.
- Subject leaders are not fully effective in their supporting and monitoring roles and there are insufficient opportunities for teachers to share good practice.

### The school has the following strengths

- Progress in Years 5 and 6 is improving. Attainment in both English and mathematics was above average last year.
- The school is using its additional pupil premium funding effectively to close the gap between the achievement of this group of pupils and their classmates.
- The behaviour of pupils is good and they feel safe and secure in the school.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of outside visits and out-of-school activities.
- Attendance is above average and reflects pupils' enjoyment of school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, two additional governors, two local authority representatives, senior leaders, staff and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 47 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire and the 16 responses from the staff questionnaire distributed for the inspection.
- Inspectors examined a range of evidence, including the school self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, the system to track pupils' progress, and records relating to behaviour and attendance. They also looked at records of lesson observations by senior staff, performance management information, safeguarding documentation and a sample of pupils' work.

## Inspection team

Stephen Walker, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Angela Savill	Additional Inspector
John Mason	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*in accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.*

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized junior school and is situated in the northern part of Norwich.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and most pupils are admitted from the two local infant schools and live within the immediate locality.
- The school is housed in the original secondary school building for Hellesdon, which was built in 1937.
- The school was subsequently changed into a middle school and was then restructured into a junior school in 2007, as part of the Norfolk reorganisation programme.
- A smaller-than-average proportion of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils with a parent in the armed forces and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is above average, whilst the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has received the Eco-School Green Flag award and gained National Healthy Schools status.

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

- Ensure that teaching is good or better by making sure that all teachers:
  - plan and adjust work in lessons so that it is at the right level for all pupils
  - set challenging targets for more of the pupils to exceed expected progress
  - give pupils frequent opportunities to work more independently and take more responsibility for their own learning
  - use teaching assistants more effectively to support pupils' learning within the classroom and when working with small groups of pupils.
- Accelerate progress and raise the attainment of pupils across the school in English and mathematics by:
  - improving systems for tracking pupils' progress and providing effective additional support for all pupils at risk of underachieving
  - ensuring there is a clear programme to develop pupils' skills and confidence in reading
  - providing more opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills across all subject areas.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and governors by ensuring that:
  - teachers' performance targets address specific areas for development in teaching
  - there are more opportunities for improving teaching through coaching and for sharing the good practice available both within and beyond the school

- training is provided for subject leaders to help them become more effective in their supporting and monitoring roles
- leaders rigorously monitor the effectiveness of key decisions and actions to ensure they are quickly leading to improvements in teaching and achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Although they were above average last year, standards are not improving fast enough for pupils to make really good progress from their equally above-average starting points. Although there has been some improvement over the last year, not enough pupils reach the higher levels of attainment. Although the majority of pupils are now making expected progress, too few are making more than expected progress.
- Progress is variable across the classes and few pupils make good progress from Key Stage 1 in Year 3 and 4 in writing and mathematics. The school is not providing sufficient opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills across all subject areas.
- Although more accurate systems for tracking pupils' progress have been introduced and better support provided for underachieving pupils, some teachers still do not identify underachieving pupils quickly enough, or give them fully effective additional support.
- Not enough pupils are gaining the higher levels in English and mathematics. Targets for pupils are sometimes not challenging enough, so that a few pupils who should make more than average progress do not achieve their full potential.
- Pupils' skills and confidence in reading are not being consistently developed across the school. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to read in school and the afternoon reading period is not effectively used by all teachers. The school has begun to encourage more reading by pupils and to involve parents in supporting reading at home.
- The school has introduced a new course in Year 3 in order to develop key skills in numeracy so that pupils have a clear foundation for calculations and problem solving. The school is improving the quality of writing through teachers providing pupils with more structured plans for writing. The emphasis on speaking and listening in some classes and encouraging all pupils to answer questions is supporting the improvement in writing skills.
- The progress records for the pupils indicate better progress this year in Years 5 and 6, particularly in writing and mathematics. This is because teaching is more structured and better able to help pupils make accelerated progress. Recent testing in Year 6 indicates that slightly more pupils are expected to gain level 5 in English and mathematics than last year and an increased percentage is likely to make three levels of progress.
- Most disabled students and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with their classmates. Progress is at least adequate and a few pupils make good progress. There has been a marked improvement over the last year in the organisation of support for these pupils and there is now a more regular monitoring of the effectiveness of this support.
- The school is using the additional funding effectively to close the gap between the achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and the other pupils by allocating money for enrichment activities and additional support in reading, writing and mathematics. There is now no significant difference between attainment of these pupils and their classmates in English and mathematics.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching varies too much across the school to be good overall, and students do not make enough progress in some lessons. Although there is more good or better teaching than last year, there are still too many lessons where teaching requires improvement.
- Teachers do not always make sure that the planned activities and instructions are set at the right level for all ability groups. Some pupils are not challenged enough because the work in lessons is sometimes too easy for them, while some are held back in their learning because the work is too hard and they need more guidance and support.
- Not enough teachers encourage students to take greater responsibility for their own learning. In some lessons, students sit listening for too long without being actively involved or encouraged to think about the topic. Subsequently the pace of learning slows down and teachers miss the opportunity to accelerate the progress of the pupils. Some teachers tend to do the thinking for the pupils and often provide answers too quickly.
- Not all teachers are using the teaching assistants effectively to support a wider range of pupils in the classroom. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are benefiting from the extra support they receive in and out of class but more pupils need additional support with their work.
- The school had successfully addressed the inconsistency of marking which was identified in the previous report. There are some good examples of marking, with clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. Many teachers, particularly in Years 5 and 6, are involving the pupils in the assessment of their work so that they know what is expected for the higher levels in English and mathematics.
- In lessons where pupils make good or better progress, there is a very positive atmosphere for learning and pupils are eager to answer questions and take a full part in the learning. There is a range of well-planned activities which challenge the pupils and allow them to take some responsibility for their own learning. For example, Year 6 pupils made good progress in their writing, using their vocabulary well to portray the passage of time. The teacher skilfully used questioning to check understanding, encourage reflection on previous work and extend their thinking.

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

- The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, and this contributes to a calm and orderly environment. There are clear expectations of behaviour and consistent systems to deal with any misbehaviour. Parents, carers, staff and pupils confirm that behaviour is good in the school.
- Pupils are generally polite and courteous to staff and to each other. They generally respond well to teachers' good use of praise and encouragement to promote high standards of behaviour. Pupils are developing their skills in managing their own behaviour and can be trusted to move around the corridors and socialise at break and lunchtime with only light supervision.
- Senior pupils have opportunities to support the younger pupils by acting as playground buddies and many pupils are involved in fundraising and out-of-school activities, particularly in sports and the performing arts. The regular whole-school assemblies and the occasional mixed aged theme days greatly support the positive atmosphere and sense of community in the school.

- Bullying of any kind is rare in the school. Pupils say that staff deal quickly and effectively with any unkind behaviour, such as name-calling or teasing. Pupils are aware of the different forms of possible bullying, such as cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to sex, gender, race and disability.
- The school makes every effort to ensure pupils feel safe and secure. They have a good awareness of issues relating to safety and know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations such as using the internet, crossing the road and talking with strangers. The National Healthy Schools status and the Eco-School Green Flag award reflects the emphasis the school places on healthy eating and lifestyles as well as looking after the environment.
- Attendance is well-above average and reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. The school is active in following-up absences.

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

- The leadership is not yet having enough impact on improving pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. The school is making sound progress in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection. It is on a well-planned journey of improvement but there is still some way to go to ensure consistently good teaching and good progress across the school. In setting performance targets for teachers, leaders do not include areas identified as needing improvement in their teaching. However, the school has eliminated all inadequate teaching and there are signs of better teaching and pupil progress in some classes.
- Subject leaders have taken on more responsibility within the school and are beginning to be more involved in whole school improvement. They are providing some guidance to teachers but have had insufficient training or experience to be fully effective in their supporting and monitoring roles.
- There are indications of better teaching and pupil progress in some classes but training and support is still not fully effective in improving the quality of teaching. There has been insufficient analysis of the areas where teachers require professional support so that coaching can be put in place. The school is not encouraging enough sharing of good practice from within and beyond the school.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team are working closely with governors to address areas of underachievement. There is now a greater use of the pupil tracking system and more regular pupil progress meetings with teachers. Teachers are being held increasingly accountable for the progress of their pupils and for taking more responsibility for identifying and supporting underachieving pupils in their classes.
- The senior leaders and subject leaders are carrying out more regular lesson observations to sharpen their awareness of the quality of teaching across the school. Observations are now more clearly focused on the progress that pupils make that results from the teaching.
- The school has developed a broad range of subjects and topics which are relevant to the majority of pupils' needs. A wide range of outside visits and out-of-school activities increase pupils' enjoyment and experience of school. All pupils have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument in Year 4 and many continue with instrumental lessons. The range of experiences contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has active links with schools in China, India and Uganda which encourage some

understanding of different cultures.

- The local authority has worked closely with the headteacher and governors to implement a plan for improvement since the previous inspection. It has been active in providing appropriate training for leaders and teachers so that the school has been able to address the previous inadequacies in teaching and pupil progress.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Its members are now fully involved in monitoring progress and holding leaders and staff to account, although this has not always been the case in the past. They have ensured that the school is taking appropriate action to improve the rate of pupil progress and the quality of teaching. They now have a more accurate view of teaching and pupils' progress. They have employed the correct procedures regarding salary progression although most recent decisions on staff pay rises have been based on rewarding teachers for taking on extra responsibilities. They make sure that the school's procedures for safeguarding meet current national requirements. Governors have effectively overseen the use of the pupil premium funding and ensured that it is spent only on supporting eligible pupils. They are developing their roles and are acutely aware of the need to increasingly monitor the effectiveness of key decisions and actions to ensure they are quickly leading to improvements in teaching and achievement.



## 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>	120901
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	408885

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	280
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Edwin Pearson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Fisher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01603 426550
<b>Fax number</b>	01603 403361
<b>Email address</b>	head@firside.norfolk.sch.uk

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