

# Fakenham Junior School

Queen's Road, Fakenham, NR21 8BN

**Inspection dates** 11–12 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Not enough teaching is good.
- Too many pupils do not make good progress in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always check to see if quieter pupils understand the work.
- Senior leaders do not always insist that school policies about teaching and learning are followed consistently.
- Sometimes, subject leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching are too generous.
- Pupils do not pay enough attention to the quality of their writing, including spellings, in topic books and work other than in English.
- Middle and lower ability pupils do not make enough progress in mathematics.
- Teachers do not always give pupils clear ways to improve their work when they mark their books.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and friendly.
- The school helps parents understand what their children are being taught.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils in lessons.
- Pupils attend school regularly and persistent absence is rare.
- The school organises a wide range of activities to help pupils develop their personal skills.
- Higher ability pupils do well in mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors watched 16 lessons. Several were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met senior teachers, 3 groups of pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- 39 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire were considered.
- Inspectors looked at the school's improvement plans, policy documents, pupils' books and other information about pupils' progress.

## Inspection team

Neil Stanley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Mason	Additional Inspector
Gay Whent	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Fakenham Junior School is slightly larger than the average- sized junior school.
- An above-average proportion of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for children known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority or who have a parent in the armed services) for these pupils.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- 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 more teaching is good or better by:
  - using questioning in class to check whether all pupils understand the work
  - marking all work in detail and giving pupils the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments and make improvements
  - having higher expectations of the quality of pupils' written work, including their spelling, in topic books and work other than English
  - ensuring senior leaders and subject leaders make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and give teachers more help on how to improve
- Improve pupils' attainment in mathematics by giving middle and lower ability pupils work that builds their confidence and helps them use their skills to solve problems.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- When pupils join the school in Year 3, they are typically half a term behind the national average in English and mathematics. When pupils leave the school in Year 6, their attainment overall in English and mathematics remains half a term below average. As a result, pupils make adequate, but not good, progress.
- Pupils make less progress in writing than in reading. The quality of pupils' writing in their topic books and other work, including the accuracy of their spelling, is not as good as it is in their English books. As a result, they are not applying and developing the writing skills they learn in English.
- A significant proportion of middle and lower ability pupils do not make enough progress in mathematics. This is because these pupils often lack confidence working on their own and find it difficult to use the skills they have been taught to solve problems.
- Pupils' attainment in reading has improved and is now in line with national expectations. This is because the school provides good support to encourage reading, particularly in Year 3 and Year 4. Most pupils have a reading book with them at all times.
- Higher-ability pupils make good progress in mathematics and the proportion of pupils leaving the school at level 5 or above compares favourably with pupils nationally. This is because the school gives these pupils opportunities to develop their skills, for example in the computer programming Code Club.
- Pupils who are entitled to pupil premium funding make similar progress to other pupils in the school. When they leave the school in Year 6, their attainment is typically in line with other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make comparable progress to other pupils. When they leave the school, their attainment is, on average, two terms behind other pupils.

### The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school varies too much.
- In the strongest lessons, pupils are able to work well both in groups and on their own. They use a variety of strategies to solve problems and do not rely on the teachers to direct them. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson on punctuating speech where pupils understood how to move on to the 'next step'. However, in some lessons, especially mathematics, the less able pupils lack confidence to get started.
- Teachers often use probing questioning to check pupils' understanding. However, in some lessons, teachers spend too much time talking to the most confident pupils. This means they do not check to see if the quieter pupils understand the work.
- Teachers' marking is variable. In some classes, especially in Years 3 and 6, pupils were given clear areas for improvement and there was evidence of pupils responding to the marking and

making rapid improvements as a result. However, the marking of some books, particularly topic books, was less thorough. Because of this, pupils paid less attention to the quality of their work, particularly writing and spelling, and they did not build on the skills they had learnt in English. This is one reason why pupils' writing is not as good as reading.

- Most lessons are well planned with a swift pace and good use of information technology to keep pupils' interest. However, teachers sometimes spend too much time talking at the start of lessons. This leaves less time for pupils to show their understanding and make progress.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils in lessons. They have good subject knowledge and they use this to find imaginative ways to help pupils answer the questions. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson on measuring fibre-optic cables, where string was used to help pupils understand the circuit layouts.
- Good relationships exist between teachers and pupils and this creates a purposeful classroom atmosphere.
- The teaching of reading is good across the school and, as a result, levels of reading have improved over time. The school is working with the local infants' school to make sure there is a consistent approach to teaching phonics (the sounds letters make).
- Teachers often plan interesting work and use good methods to engage the pupils. Pupils said they enjoyed their projects on the school's centenary, especially when they were able to interview past pupils about their experiences and edit their interviews at the BBC. As a result of these activities, the pupils are confident speakers and listeners.

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

- Pupils say they enjoy school. They behave with courtesy and respect to teachers, visitors and each other.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe and are especially confident talking about safety on the internet.
- Pupils told inspectors that they did not have concerns about bullying. They think bullying happens rarely in their school. They know about different types of bullying and they feel confident that their teachers will deal with bullying should it occur.
- Pupils are punctual to school and their attendance is good. This shows their enthusiasm for school. Senior teachers regularly check absence and, as a result of this, very few pupils are away from school for significant periods of time.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility and they say teachers listen to their views. For example, the school council suggested that different year groups should be able to play football on the school field on different days. This idea has been taken up and it has meant that all pupils have the opportunity to share the facilities.
- Earlier this year, there was a rise in racist name-calling among a small minority. The school responded quickly, took advice from the local authority, and introduced projects on different cultures, such as the Ashinkas. Pupils say they are now much more aware of racism and people's different backgrounds. As a result, the name-calling has stopped.

**The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior leaders have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. They have put in place a number of initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and to raise standards of attainment, but they do not always make sure that these are applied consistently by all teachers across the school.
- Subject leaders are taking increasing responsibility for improving standards in their areas. However, they do not always accurately evaluate the quality of teaching in their subjects. As a result, improvements in both teaching and attainment have been inconsistent.
- The school has worked very well to build relationships with parents, particularly those who are not confident working with schools. Through the Curiosity Café, parents have gained an understanding of how children are taught, particularly mathematics and phonics. As a result, parents are more able to help their children with their learning.
- The school has recently linked its subjects into big projects, such as the Year 6 'Big Green Adventure'. Pupils say this is an exciting way to learn. However, this has not been in place long enough for its impact on achievement to be evaluated.
- The school provides plenty of activities for pupils outside of normal lessons. Trips and visits are well-chosen to widen pupils' experiences, for example, to watch seals in the North Sea, or to help them apply their skills, for example, a mathematics trip to the racecourse.
- Pupil premium money has been used to provide intervention teachers for English and mathematics. As a result of their work, the gaps between pupils eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils are closing.
- The school sees itself as central to the life of the local community. This year's centenary picnic brought together people who live in the town and this has helped pupils think about different people's experiences.
- The school provides many opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils learn about the work of many local charities and they decide which charities they wish to support. They also learn about a wide variety of different faiths, many of which are not represented in the local area.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governors regularly visit the school to listen to teachers, pupils and parents about how well the school is doing. This means they are well informed and can ask the right questions to hold senior leaders to account.
  - Governors check the progress and attendance of different groups of pupils in the school, including pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium.
  - Governors are ensuring the school's financial stability through prudent budgeting. They make sure arrangements for safeguarding are appropriate.
  - Governors check pay decisions for teachers. They demand that pupils' progress is used to justify better pay and promotion.

## 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>	120805
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	411963

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>	277
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Randall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Lesley Cook
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01328 862188
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