

Dereham, Toftwood Community Junior School

38 Westfield Road, Dereham, NR19 1JB

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not yet make consistently good progress in English and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always plan appropriate tasks that meet the needs of lower-achieving pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- There is not enough rigour in identifying the specific learning needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Not all marking in books gives pupils the best advice on how to improve their work.
- Information about pupils' progress to guide teaching so that pupils are fully challenged to learn is not always applied well enough and some pupils are not achieving their targets.
- Teaching of mathematics does not always give pupils sufficient opportunities to solve challenging problems.
- Not enough opportunities are taken to challenge and inspire pupils to produce extended writing or use phonics (letters and associated sounds) to improve their reading.

The school has the following strengths

- The attainment of Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics has sharply improved, and more are now making expected or better-than-expected progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons and around the school are consistently good. They say they feel safe in school.
- Good leadership, including governance, has resulted in improved teaching of reading, writing and mathematics and pupils' better achievement.
- The school makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, five of which were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. A number of small-group activities were also observed.
- The inspectors talked to pupils, looked at their work in books and listened to them read.
- The inspectors had meetings with senior leaders, year leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also met with six members of the governing body and had an extended telephone conversation with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors took account of the school’s recently conducted parental questionnaire and 33 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The team also analysed 11 questionnaires completed by school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation, including: school development plans, the school’s information on pupils’ progress and attainment, the school’s evaluation of its own performance, reports on the school produced by the local authority. The team also looked at information on staff performance and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Alan Giles, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Nigel Sagar	Additional Inspector
Sharon Jackson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Dereham, Toftwood is a larger-than-average junior school.
- Nearly all pupils are White British and there is a much smaller-than-average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement is well-above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The funding is based on the number of looked-after children, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The headteacher took up his post in September 2011 and the newly-formed senior leadership team has changed from the one at the previous inspection.
- The school is part of the Dereham Cluster, an informal arrangement of 17 schools working together to support school developments.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain the improvements in teaching and increase pupils' rates of progress by:
 - making better use of information about pupils' progress to improve the challenge in lessons and to ensure that work is set at the right levels for all pupils
 - improving procedures for identifying the specific learning needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and improving staff awareness of the day-to-day progress that these pupils are making
 - teaching mathematics lessons more effectively to enable pupils to independently spend more time on their work
 - making better use of phonics (associated letters and sounds) to accelerate pupils' progress in reading
 - giving pupils further opportunities to write in lessons
 - improving the quality of marking across the school so that pupils better know what the next steps in their learning should be and teachers test their understanding of how to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- There has been a trend of too many pupils not making the progress of which they are capable.
- In 2011, attainment was broadly average and many pupils did not make good enough progress to achieve well. The situation further deteriorated in 2012 with attainment in writing and mathematics below average standards and pupils' achievement in these subjects was not good enough.
- The latest unpublished Year 6 test results indicate significant improvement in pupils' achievements in both English and mathematics.
- A higher proportion of pupils are currently making good progress, compared to 2012 performance data. The proportion of pupils in Year 6 who are achieving the higher-than-expected levels in reading and writing has risen sharply.
- The school has also maintained these high levels in mathematics.
- Pupils who enter the school with below-average attainment, those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs are still not making consistently good progress. Staff are not sufficiently boosting the skill levels of these pupils to enable them to achieve more.
- Strategies to raise achievement further in mathematics for all pupils are hampered by a slow pace of learning in some lessons, where teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- There is recognition within the school that more use of the teaching of phonics (letters and associated sounds) and increased challenges for pupils to write more in all subjects will improve the achievement of those pupils who enter school with below-average attainment.
- The few pupils from minority ethnic groups make the progress expected nationally, in line with others.
- The school is using pupil premium funding well to provide additional resources for pupils who are eligible. Many of these pupils made better progress than their classmates in 2012 but their attainment in English and mathematics was still behind that of other Year 6 pupils.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Recently improved teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement and much of the teaching observed during the inspection was good. Throughout the school, there is still not enough teaching that is outstanding, and some still requires improvement.
- The planning of learning for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is not always well directed. Teaching staff are not aware enough of the varied and specific learning needs of many pupils, so they do not plan the appropriate small steps to make learning more meaningful and successful for these pupils.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs sometimes struggle to remain on task and become disengaged from their learning because learning is not directed well enough for them. Their actions are sometimes incorrectly interpreted as unacceptable behaviour rather than frustration leading to a lack of motivation because of weaknesses in the planning of their learning.
- Where marking and feedback are good in lessons, there are purposeful discussions between teachers and pupils about the next steps in learning that help pupils to achieve more challenging targets. These good practices have still to be consistently applied in all classrooms.
- Teachers are not always using the data they have on pupils' progress and predicted targets to plan a range of activities that best match their abilities and challenge them to learn. This issue is most apparent in the teaching in the lowest ability English and mathematics groups.
- Some mathematics lessons lack pace in learning because teachers sometimes give unnecessarily long explanations and directions and delay pupils from working independently when they could do so successfully. Teachers do not always provide work at a level suitable for the abilities of all pupils in the class and also do not allow enough time for pupils to investigate and solve challenging problems in the subject.
- In a successful Year 6 English lesson, pupils were expertly challenged to improve their writing by using demanding grammar and phonics to improve their spelling. They compared their work with examples from their class reading book to evaluate the standards of their writing. However, such good practice in reading and writing is not applied well enough across the school.
- There has been good progress made to identify and share the best teaching standards in the school and this has proved beneficial in improving the rates of progress pupils make in acquiring appropriate reading, writing and mathematical skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to learn and behave well around the school. The way pupils work together in lessons contributes greatly to their learning.
- The school is very caring and pupils say they feel safe in the school's non-bullying atmosphere, including e-bullying or prejudices related to disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs. They know they will get support from their teachers if needed.
- Pupils' positive attitudes in lessons reflect their enjoyment in learning. This was seen during the rehearsals for their production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', when both communication skills and enthusiasm were of a high quality. Their enthusiasm for school and for learning is also reflected in their well-above average attendance.
- No disruptive behaviour was observed in lessons. School records show this is typical and there are few serious misdemeanours.
- The vast majority of 177 responses to a recent school parental questionnaire rightly believe their children behave well and feel safe at school. A letter received from parents of a pupil who has a statement of special educational needs fully supports the school's procedures and expresses appreciation for the good progress their child is making.

- Although some responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and some staff questionnaires expressed the view that some behaviour is not good, inspectors saw no evidence of this and confirm that the school deals with some complex social, emotional and behavioural needs of pupils very well.
- Tasks sometimes given to lower-ability pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not inspire their learning enough. This was observed in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils did not actively engage in the discussions and their passivity restricted the progress they made in writing.

The leadership and management are good

- Since his appointment in 2011, the headteacher has established a strong senior leadership team. There is a good team spirit within the group and they are very aware of the next stage in the developments already set to achieve good overall effectiveness.
- Since 2011, there has been accurate evaluation of priorities for improvement and successful action to rectify weaknesses. The impact of this approach has been a swift improvement in literacy standards after a downward trend in recent years.
- The leadership team has made significant changes to the procedures to hold teachers more accountable for pupils' achievement. The targets for better teaching and teachers' professional development are well set because they are linked to relevant school priorities and are evaluated for impact on pupils' progress and achievement. Leadership of year groups is working better because it is making teaching staff fully accountable for pupils' progress.
- There is good subject leadership of literacy and numeracy. These leaders have received appropriate training and are sharing their best practice with colleagues. They check how well initiatives are working in their areas and are well placed to sustain recent improvements.
- New processes are being introduced to improve the accuracy of the data teachers use to plan learning. These processes will also improve teachers' understanding of pupils' Year 2 results as a more accurate baseline on which to judge future progress.
- There has been a legacy of too low achievement for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The senior leadership team is acting to improve equal opportunities for all pupils and relevant training is enabling the special educational needs coordinator to help colleagues plan better learning experiences for these pupils.
- The range of subjects and topics taught are helpful to pupils' learning. Timetable adjustments are now applied to ensure that all teachers use daily practice to help pupils use phonic strategies to improve their reading and spelling skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for well. There are a wide range of planned enrichment activities, charitable functions, faith-awareness opportunities and cultural exchanges. Opportunities for pupils' to contribute to the school's development are giving pupils many additional responsibilities that impact on their moral and social development very well.
- The principles of the Toftwood Learning Adventure Curriculum appeal to the pupils and they talk positively about interesting investigative work and outdoor learning. Strategies are in place to

enable teachers to further improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through these topics.

- The school's communication with parents is a key aspect of the school development plan. Recent newsletter and website developments reflect positive outcomes of this work.
- The local authority has provided regular advice to the school since the previous inspection and has made important contributions to support the school to make necessary changes. Working in partnership with a number of local schools has also enhanced this work.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body works very closely with the new leadership team to evaluate the impact of recent school improvement initiatives. Governors involvement in initiatives to monitor provision in order to raise attainment and achievement has improved since the previous inspection.
- Governors know what the quality of teaching is and press for its further improvement. They make the necessary links between teachers' pay and the effectiveness of teaching performance, and make sure that teachers' pay is justified by proven competence in enabling pupils to make good progress. The governors challenge the headteacher and the leadership team to improve teaching further and have a good awareness of teaching standards and the targets set to achieve these national expectations.
- They understand the data showing the standards the school is achieving compared to all schools nationally, and are insistent on continued improvement in pupils' achievement and attainment.
- The governing body oversees the arrangements for the spending of the pupil premium and is aware of closing the achievement gap between pupils who qualify for this funding and their peers.
- Governors ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet current national requirements.

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	120987
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	412206

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	332
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Birt
Headteacher	Robin Turner
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2010
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