

Avenue Junior School

Avenue Road, Norwich, NR2 3HP

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide firm and determined leadership. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas which could be better.
- By the end of Year 6, standards in reading and writing are above average and improving in mathematics.
- Teaching is usually good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, use assessment and questioning well and have excellent relationships with pupils which creates a friendly, positive learning atmosphere.
- The opportunities for pupils to participate in musical and sporting activities are exceptional.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils say they feel safe and are well looked after by adults. They are aware of how to keep safe in a variety of situations.
- The governors know the school very well. They provide on-going support whilst effectively holding the school to account for its performance and actions.
- Attendance is high and pupils' say they enjoy coming to school.
- Parents are generally very positive about all aspects of school life. They praised the care which pupils receive and the standard of behaviour.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment is not as high in mathematics as it is in reading and writing.
- Sometimes, in mathematics, pupils receive work which is too easy or too hard for them and teachers do not move lessons on quickly enough when pupils have successfully completed the tasks set.
- Pupils are not always given sufficient time to practise mathematical skills in problem solving activities.
- The standard of presentation of pupils' work is variable.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. They observed 27 lessons, nine of which were joint observations with the headteacher, deputy headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- They listened to some Year 3 and Year 6 pupils read. Inspectors also visited school assemblies, observed pupils at play and during lunchtimes. The work in pupil's books was also looked at.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. A telephone call was made to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents contained in the 86 online responses to the Parent View questionnaire as well as those in the school's own questionnaire. Inspectors also reviewed a number of e-mails received from parents and spoke with others at the start of the school day. Staff questionnaires were also considered.
- Inspectors took into account a wide range of documents, including information on safeguarding, the progress and attainment of pupils, the school's view of its own performance and plan for improvement, minutes of the governing body and records of monitoring in relation to teaching, pupils behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Valerie Palmer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rachel Welch

Additional Inspector

Ken Parry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Avenue Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils, those with a statement of educational needs or those who need extra support at school action plus are above average. The proportion of disabled pupils supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are in the care of the local authority, for which the school receives additional funding (pupil premium), is below average.
- Alternative provision is made for a very small number of pupils to be taught at George White Junior School.
- 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?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in mathematics by ensuring that teachers:
 - give pupils more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in order to solve problems
 - ensure that work set is neither too easy or too hard
 - move lessons on more quickly when pupils have demonstrated that they have successfully completed tasks.
- Improve the presentation of pupils work by consistently applying a whole school policy for neat and flowing handwriting.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been above average for the last three years in reading and writing and average for mathematics. The proportion achieving higher levels in reading and writing is much greater than the national picture. Progress is good and pupils are well prepared for next phase of their education.
- The most able pupils are well supported which helps them to achieve well. This is reflected in their success in the Level 6 reading, writing and mathematics test which is a standard much higher than ordinarily expected for primary school pupils.
- Writing is strength of the school. An above average proportion of pupils in 2012 met or exceeded the progress expected of them in the national tests and a concerted effort last year to encourage even greater skills in boys writing has culminated in vastly improved provisional results in 2013.
- Reading continues to be highly valued. Pupils are able to talk eloquently about writers and the sorts of books they enjoy. They read widely both in and out of school. Clearly structured catch up groups are used to good effect to help pupils, who struggle with reading, to gain in confidence and succeed.
- The percentage of pupils achieving the expected national levels in mathematics has risen steadily over the last three years. However, school results in 2013, although still average, have seen a drop in the number of pupils achieving level 5. Inspectors saw an outstanding, imaginative Year 6 mathematics lesson involving shops, profit and loss and stock control which brought together all the skills previously taught into a fun problem solving lesson. However, pupils need more opportunities to undertake this type problem solving activity across all year groups.
- Pupils for whom the school receive pupil premium funding receive additional help in lessons and small group support. Access to residential activities, theatre and puppet shows and additional resources to support home learning have resulted in greater confidence, motivation and higher levels of attendance for these pupils. Attainment has risen in English and mathematics over the last three years and the gap continues to close. In 2013, according to school data, pupils were one term behind their school peers in reading and writing and half a term ahead in mathematics.
- Compared to other pupils the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who are new to English make better progress than their classmates and as a result achieve the same standards.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from additional support in lessons and small groups and as a result make good progress. Teaching assistants are most effective when teachers' planning provides detailed guidance on how they can best support within the classroom.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good and some is outstanding. The most successful lessons are motivating, move at a brisk pace, link subjects together, build on previous knowledge and consolidate and extend skills. This was evident in an art lesson where pupils were using a variety of previously

practised techniques and media to produce a pop art poster based on the work of Lichtenstein. The poster was linked to their English studies in advertising and to their topic 'Holiday Show.'

- Secure subject knowledge, skilful questioning and the use of engaging and motivational resources encourages high attendance and pupils' enjoyment of school. A satsuma, a red sport sock and a pipe cleaner brought much fun and some snappy slogans from a Year 5 English class learning about advertising. The 'Red, ruby and raring to go' sports sock was the inspirational outcome of the carefully structured use of talking partners, group discussions and excellent support from the teaching assistant based on clear directions driven by the teacher's secure subject knowledge and well planned lesson.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils whilst working in small structured 'catch up' groups in reading and mathematics. These are monitored closely by subject leaders and progress for pupils is deemed as good.
- There are some excellent examples of high quality marking by teachers in work books. The best practice shows pupils' how to improve their work and gives them time to respond.
- The quality of teaching is not outstanding because there are occasions in mathematics, when work is either too easy or too hard and teachers are not able to adapt their teaching quickly enough to respond to pupils who have successfully completed their work and need to move on.
- The quality of presentation of pupils work in books is variable. The lack of a flowing and neat script in handwriting appears to contribute to the lack of pride in the presentation of work in some books. This is in marked contrast to the excellent art work displayed around school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around school is typically good and often exemplary. Pupils know what is expected of them and are aware of the rewards and sanctions which underpin the calm atmosphere which pervades the school. Behaviour is not outstanding as pupils tend to lose concentration in lessons that are not so engaging.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They say that they like coming to school and enjoy their lessons. They appreciate the opportunities to take part in the wide variety of after school activities, educational visits including the cinema and theatre, the Harry Potter residential experience and competitive sport.
- Bullying is rare. If an incident was to occur pupils say that an adult will deal with it quickly and effectively. Anti-bullying ambassadors and buddies encourage all pupils to play well together at lunch and break times.
- Pupils can describe how to keep safe in a variety of situations including the use of the internet. They were also able to talk about what they should or should not do to keep safe. Older pupils were keen to talk about assemblies which gave them the confidence to take charge of situations and not become a bystander or victim.
- Visitors are welcomed with warmth and courtesy. Pupils look after each other and respect their friends' opinions both at play and in the classroom. They co-operate well whilst using talking partners and listen carefully to staff. They said that 'adults treat us with respect – 100%'.
- Parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire or spoke informally to inspectors

feel that their children are well looked after and are safe and happy. A number of parents were very positive about the transition arrangements from the infant to the junior school. They felt their children settled very quickly and they too were made to feel very welcome.

- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. This is evidenced by consistently above average levels of attendance for the last three years.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher show strong determination in driving the school forward so that all pupils have equal opportunities to be successful academically, musically, socially and in sport. They are fully supported by all staff and a dedicated governing body.
- The school evaluates itself well and knows what needs to be undertaken to raise standards further. The school's detailed and accurate plan for improvement is precisely written with clear deadlines for completion and correctly identifies mathematics as the main area for improvement. The plan dovetails with staff training needs to ensure that teachers' knowledge is continually updated.
- Pupils' progress is rigorously checked throughout school every half term. Subject leaders meet with year group leaders and teachers to discuss pupils' progress on an individual basis. These meetings ensure that teachers have a thorough knowledge of their pupils and what they can and cannot do. Any gaps in pupils' knowledge are addressed through additional help
- The performance of teachers is regularly monitored as is the headteacher's. Teachers are set targets linked to the achievement of pupils in their class, their own professional development and the overall improvement of the school. Teachers fully understand that they will only move up the pay scales if they successfully meet these targets.
- Subject leaders have in depth knowledge of pupils' performance and have the opportunity to observe colleagues at work, undertake book and planning scrutinies and talk with pupils. They evaluate the curriculum and its impact on pupils' achievements and ensure that additional help is appropriately placed.
- The topic based curriculum helps pupils to develop and apply their skills in a number of different subjects. There is a rich music tradition at the school and over 200 pupils have access to instrument tuition and play in the school's own orchestra, wind band, concert band and a variety of other ensembles. All pupils sing in year group choirs and the school choir, along with the various musical groups entertains widely around the local area. Similarly over 200 pupils took part in competitive sport activities last year and there is a continual drive to encourage pupils to partake in these activities. These activities contribute positively to pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development.
- Close links are established with parents and many help in school by hearing pupils read and organising the forest school's area. There are many opportunities for parents to attend workshops in mathematics, e-safety, drug awareness and to join in with their child's learning with events linked to class topics such as tasting food for Europe.
- The new funding for primary sport has been allocated to offer a wider range of sporting opportunities including greater participation in competitive sport, access to external sports clubs and additional training to further enhance teachers' skills to improve the quality of P.E. teaching.

- The local authority provides minimal support for this school.
- Safeguarding meets all statutory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

Governors, ably led by the Chair, are caring and supportive but hold the headteacher firmly to account for all aspects of the school's performance. They are keenly aware of the school's many strengths and give credit for this but want to know how to make it even better. They have an in depth knowledge of the quality of teaching and understand the analysis of figures relating to the performance of all groups of pupils which enables them to ask very challenging questions. Clear performance targets to improve the quality of teaching are set and good teaching is rewarded by appropriate pay progression. Any underachievement is carefully monitored through tailor made support packages. The governors keep a firm overview on the budget and ensure that all funds are appropriately used in order to have an impact on pupils' achievement and emotional wellbeing.

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	120928
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	425384

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	422
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Cleary
Headteacher	Deborah Dismore
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2008
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