

West Earlham Junior School

Scarnell Road, Norwich, NR5 8HT

Inspection dates 28–29 November 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- In the past, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 has been well below average by the time they left school and there has been a legacy of underachievement.
- Teaching requires improvement because there have been weaknesses in teaching which have led to underachievement. Although teaching is now generally good a few weaknesses remain in teaching.
- Teachers do not always use questioning effectively enough to challenge pupils' thinking and to elicit from them responses which show they understand their learning.
- Teaching assistants are not always used well enough to support teaching and learning during whole class activities.
- Teachers do not always inform pupils of their next steps for learning in punctuation, spelling and grammar across different subjects.
- Leadership and management require improvement because the school's evaluation of its effectiveness is not rigorous enough.
- Subject leaders have yet to use the information about the impact of teaching on the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils to inform self-evaluation and school improvement planning.
- The new governing body has not yet evaluated the impact of its work on raising achievement and driving improvements forward.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the headteacher's appointment, all groups of pupils throughout the school have been making good progress.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils' attendance is above average and they are enthusiastic about their learning.
- The new headteacher and senior leaders are driving improvements forward rapidly. As a result, recent teaching and learning, the tracking of pupils' progress and the curriculum are good. The promotion of safeguarding is a strength.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw 18 lessons and observed eight teachers. Four of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work jointly with subject leaders. They heard a few children read in the Year 3 classes.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, staff, four members of the governing body and a local authority representative.
- There were insufficient returns to the online survey (Parent View) so inspectors took account of the 71 returns from the school's most recent survey and talked to a small number of parents who brought their children to school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including its self-evaluation, school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding policies, records of incidents, attendance figures, records of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching over time.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Mason

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. An above average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- High numbers of pupils, almost two thirds, are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding given to schools for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care or from families where a parent is in the armed forces).
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards in 2013, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been significant changes to staffing and governance since the last inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2012. There has been a high turnover of teachers and the leadership team has been re-organised. A shadow governing body was appointed from an interim executive board in 2012 and was replaced with a new governing body in April 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is at least consistently good and leads to good achievement over time by
 - ensuring teachers' questions always develop pupils' thinking and elicit feedback on how well they understand their learning
 - teaching assistants are always deployed effectively to support teaching and learning during whole class activities
 - pupils always know how to improve their learning particularly in their use of English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Develop leadership and management by ensuring:
 - self-evaluation is more rigorous
 - subject leaders use the information about the progress different groups of pupils are making within their subjects to inform self-evaluation and school development planning
 - governors carry out an audit of the impact of their work in raising achievement and driving school improvements forward.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- In the past, pupils have entered the school with below average attainment and left with attainment which was well below average. This is because, until the appointment of the new headteacher, they did not make enough progress across the key stage.
- Standards have not improved fast enough over the past three years, especially in writing and mathematics. In 2013, there were few more-able pupils in the school. Although they did not do quite as well as other groups, girls and middle attainers significantly underachieved because of the legacy of underachievement in previous years. Not all pupils met the expected levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and very few exceeded these.
- Despite this unfavourable picture, pupils' progress overall improved slightly in 2013 and progress in reading showed a marked improvement. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs did better than their classmates because of improvements in assessments and in planning for these pupils. The proportions of these pupils making expected progress rose dramatically in 2013.
- The gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, the majority of pupils in the school, and their classmates narrowed in 2013 from approximately seven months behind to approximately three months behind the rest of the class in English and mathematics.
- Accurate school data, which is rigorously checked by the local authority and local schools for its reliability, clearly shows that since January 2012, all groups of pupils have made good progress. Gaps are narrowing rapidly with middle attainers doing as well as other groups, and girls reaching the same levels as boys and in some cases surpassing them. Overall, pupils are on course to reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics in 2014.
- The school's data show that the more-able pupils are now making good progress and are on course to reach the higher levels in national tests with a significant proportion making three levels progress and some pupils expected to gain Level 6 in writing and mathematics. All groups of pupils have made equally good progress in the past two years, despite the legacy of underachievement which resulted in low standards in 2013.
- Pupils are doing particularly well in reading because the school has implemented effective guided reading programmes each day, resourced the library and classrooms with new books and successfully implemented a commercial programme to develop reading and writing across the school. Its close links with the infant school now ensure that expertise in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and its use to promote reading and writing in Year 3 has been implemented successfully. As a result the weakest readers are making good progress from their low starting points.
- In most lessons seen, pupils were making good progress. Pupils now are enthusiastic about their learning and eager to do their best and this is impacting positively on their progress.
- It is too early to judge the impact of primary sport funding as the school has not yet received this in their budget. However, pupils enjoy their physical education sessions, the wide range of after-school clubs including sports clubs and staying healthy and fit.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because previous weaknesses in teaching have led to a legacy of underachievement in the school.
- In a small number of lessons where teaching still requires improvement, there were sometimes missed opportunities to question pupils about their learning in order to deepen their thinking and elicit from them a clear understanding of how much they were learning. In some cases, teaching assistants were passive during whole class activities and not used well enough to support teaching and learning.
- There were also missed opportunities to inform pupils of how to improve their use of English grammar, spelling and punctuation when they were given written work to do in class. This was also seen in pupils' books where marking did not always inform pupils of their next steps for learning in the use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- During the past two years, teaching has significantly improved and begun to impact positively on pupils' learning and progress. Regular homework in reading, writing and mathematics is now set and marked.
- During small group and individual activities, teaching assistants provide good support in moving pupils' learning forward and in promoting good attitudes to learning with praise, encouragement and positive feedback on how well they are doing.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is improving. The teaching of reading is a strength as teachers implement improvements to learning opportunities such as guided reading, the use of reading passports and reading journals effectively. Teachers also build handwriting practice into guided reading sessions and sometimes provide pupils with tick sheets and prompts to improve their use of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils have clear targets for improvement based on prior assessment of reading and mathematics. As a result they know what they are learning and are clear about their next steps in these areas.
- In an English and philosophy lesson, the teacher asked pupils to formulate clear questions which they might put to society in order to protect the world and then to justify these questions to others. They were then asked to write down the questions and reasoning behind them down. This promoted good writing skills. It also promoted pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they reflected on the wider meaning of life, and listened carefully to each other, respecting different ideas as they prepared to take risk with their answers.
- The school's data and the national test results in 2013 show that the teaching and support of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and those who have special educational needs are good as they are making the same progress as their classmates. It also shows that the teaching of more-able pupils and middle-attaining pupils is now good because they are on course to successfully convert to the higher levels by the end of Year 6.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. In lessons, they show positive attitudes, enthusiasm and good behaviour. This has a good impact on their progress and recent achievement. They listen carefully to their teachers, follow instructions and try their hardest. In discussion, most pupils said that learning is fun because teachers make activities enjoyable.

- Pupils show respect for all adults and each other in lessons and around the school and are courteous and polite to visitors.
- Pupils stay safe and say they feel safe in school. They use the internet and school equipment safely and move sensibly from their classrooms to other areas in the school. At lunchtime and in assembly, pupils entered and left the hall in an orderly manner. In the playground, they played safely and were helpful to each other.
- Pupils have a good understanding of why they must behave well and how to avoid bullying. They have a good awareness of the different types of bullying and say that, on the rare occasion it may occur, staff deal with it quickly and effectively.
- Parents also said that bullying is rare and most said it was dealt with effectively. They all agreed that their children were safe in school and nearly all agreed that behaviour was good.
- Attendance is above average because the school promotes good attendance and punctuality effectively through clear rewards such as class attendance of the week.
- On a few occasions, minor disturbance, such as talking to others when the teacher was talking to the class, occurred but this was quickly dealt with by the teacher who refocused pupils on their learning. Pupils respond well to good management of their behaviour and exclusions are rare.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because of weaknesses in the past which led to weaknesses in teaching and in pupils' achievements. The schools' self-evaluation is not robust enough in making a clear judgement on how effective each aspect of its work is, why it is not more effective and what steps need to be taken to improve its effectiveness further.
- Subject leaders are fairly new to their role and have made a good start in monitoring the impact of teaching and learning on pupils' achievement overall. However, they have not yet analysed the progress of different groups of pupils across the school and used this information to evaluate the impact of teaching on the learning and to establish clear priorities for improvement.
- Since 2012, leadership has strengthened under the good leadership and management of the headteacher, who is ably supported by the senior leadership team. They are more rigorous in analysing assessment information and using this to identify any gaps in pupils' progress. Teaching and its impact on learning is rigorously monitored on a termly basis by senior leaders who provide support and challenge for improvement, through recent good arrangements for managing the performance of teachers. Pupils' progress is reviewed each half term. Any underperformance is identified with improvement made to planning.
- Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, the role of subject leaders has improved, links with other schools and with parents have significantly improved and the school has recently made good progress in the areas for development identified at the last inspection.
- Leaders have strengthened opportunities to develop pupils' basic skills of literacy and numeracy through initiatives to promote reading and writing such as the class author, the platinum award for timetables and mathematics enquiry lessons. There are more opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology, such as i-pads, to promote communication. A wide range of enrichment opportunities including residential visits, instrumental music sessions, sports

coaching and opportunities to learn Spanish promote good learning.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through religious education and the study of world faiths, the celebration of religious festivals, and in a range of other subjects such as in philosophy, geography, art and music.
- Good use is made of pupil premium funding through, for example, additional one-to-one and small group support and the funding of school trips to provide eligible pupils with the same opportunities as other pupils. As a result, they are achieving well. The school has also developed a clear action plan for the use of sport funding when it becomes available, which includes, for example, the purchase of more gymnastics equipment.
- The local authority was quick to respond to the 2013 results. It identified the school as causing concern and provided clear guidance to improve teaching further such as the development of the use of resources and display of pupils' work in classrooms in the teaching of mathematics, which the school has implemented successfully.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The new governing body is beginning to hold the school to account for its work. However, it has not yet had the time to carry out an audit of how effectively its work is impacting on raising pupils' achievement and school improvement. Governors are ensuring safeguarding requirements are met by reviewing policies regularly and checking that all vetting procedures and training are in place. They are using data to challenge leaders about the use of its pupil premium funding and they have a realistic view of the quality of teaching. Governors ensure that good teaching is rewarded and any weaknesses are tackled. They visit the school regularly to gain a first-hand view of the school.

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	120958
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	425407

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	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Gibson
Headteacher	Catrin Parry-Jones
Date of previous school inspection	26 May 2011
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