

Larkfields Junior School

Coronation Road, Nuthall, Nottingham, NG16 1EP

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2014

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.

- Achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is good. Pupils also achieve well in subjects such as art, music and physical education.
- Most teaching is good and as a result pupils are interested, well-motivated learners.
- Different groups of pupils, including the most able and those with disabilities and special educational needs, are given work that is not too easy or too hard for them.
- Pupils behave well, showing positive attitudes towards learning. They feel safe and have trusting relationships with all adults. This helps them to learn and progress successfully. Attendance is well above average.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Their personal development including spiritual, moral social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Information about pupils' progress is used well to identify where pupils need extra support and where staff need further training opportunities.
- The headteacher has been successful in establishing a united staff team who share, alongside well-informed governors, the same determination to achieve the best for all pupils. This has brought about improvements in teaching and achievement.
- The school is a happy and orderly place where all are treated with care and respect.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding and good quality marking is not consistent in all subjects.
- Weaknesses are evident in pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling throughout the school. Staff do not insist on pupils using these skills consistently well in all of their writing.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their mathematics knowledge.
- Teachers do not regularly have the chance to learn from the examples of outstanding teaching within the school.
- Termly information about pupils' achievement is not always clear enough to help leaders, including governors, to quickly check strengths and then identify areas in need of further improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching in all classrooms. They visited 13 parts of lessons, one of which was jointly visited with the headteacher. The headteacher was also involved in a scrutiny of the work of Year 5 pupils.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, staff, the headteacher, and three members of the governing body. The inspectors also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Account was taken of the 81 responses to the online Parent View survey, and the 14 questionnaires returned by staff. Inspectors spoke informally to parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning and analysed the work in their books.
- A wide range of documents were reviewed, including safeguarding documents, the school improvement plan, data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports following lesson observations and the school's records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lois Furness, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Heptinstall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- In this broadly average-sized junior school, almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil-premium funding is below average. This funding is additional government funding provided for pupils in local authority care, those from armed forces families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so more is outstanding by:
 - improving teachers' skills in the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling
 - providing pupils with regular opportunities to apply their mathematics knowledge
 - marking consistently, showing pupils how to improve their work, especially in subjects other than English and mathematics, and making sure pupils follow the advice given.
- Making sure the summaries of pupils' achievement allow leaders, including governors, to quickly identify strengths and development areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good and by the end of Year 6 pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are well prepared for their secondary school education.
- In 2011 and 2012 attainment in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests was well above the national average which showed good progress from the pupils' starting points in Year 3. However in 2013, attainment declined to broadly average. Leaders have responded well to this decline in attainment, and current assessment information shows that well above average standards are expected in 2014.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. They read with good fluency and expression. Pupils use their reading skills well in lessons, showing confidence in obtaining information from texts they have read, and explaining clearly what makes a good quality answer in their work on comprehension. Year 6 pupils say they enjoy reading because they have good opportunities to read a wide range of books that interest them.
- Writing progress is good, and the work in pupils' books shows that pupils write extended pieces of writing. Other subjects such as history and science are used effectively for pupils to use their knowledge of report writing or description, for example. However, there are weaknesses in the application of grammar, punctuation and spelling skills.
- In mathematics, pupils develop a good understanding of number and of a range of calculation methods. Problem-solving activities are meant to be undertaken on a fortnightly basis. However, this does not happen in all classes and too often the problems are unrelated to the pupils' immediate learning. This means pupils are missing opportunities to deepen their understanding of mathematics by applying their new knowledge.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress through the well-managed support provided for them. They receive a good range of carefully evaluated individual support sessions and well-directed help from teaching assistants in lessons.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make similar good progress to others. Last year, they were approximately four terms behind their peers in mathematics and three terms in reading. There was not a gap in writing attainment. This year, the gap is narrowing as shown by performance information and the work in their books.
- Pupils develop their learning skills well across a range of subjects. They speak with confidence, having good opportunities to develop their communication skills. Pupils show good interest in subjects such as art, music, physical education and sport. Participation rates in after-school activities are high. Pupils are enthusiastic about swimming and perform well. It is too soon to comment on the impact of the recently introduced national sports funding for primary schools on pupils' academic achievement.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers make sure that classrooms are happy, safe places for learning. Classrooms are attractive and good quality displays are evident, for example as seen in Year 4. Lessons start punctually and positive relationships between pupils and staff are evident. As a result of good teaching over time, pupils make good progress. Pupils behave well and enjoy learning. Pupils

who sometimes find it difficult to manage their behaviour are dealt with sensitively by staff.

- Learning is planned carefully so that activities are not too easy or too hard for pupils. The most-able pupils enjoy being given demanding work to do. This was seen in Year 5 as a group of pupils explained they were struggling with the work they had to do, but they were confident they would find a solution. Next day, they eagerly found the inspector to say they now understood much more about the difference between 'mode' and 'median'.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are included well in lessons. Teaching assistants provide valuable support, helping these pupils make good progress by supporting the learning that is taking place in and out of the classroom. They are particularly effective in one-to-one and small group work.
- Teachers mainly have good subject knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. In writing, for example, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to write in different ways and for different purposes in other subjects. However, the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling is not as effective and simple errors are not always picked up by teachers.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Comments in marked work celebrate pupils' achievements and sometimes guide pupils in their learning. This is particularly evident in writing, and at times in mathematics. However, this guidance is not consistent in all year groups or in all subjects. Where comments are made, pupils are not always expected to act upon the advice given and so sometimes make the same mistakes again.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are proud of their school and particularly appreciate the wide range of trips and residential visits that are provided to enhance their learning. They say that they feel very lucky to go to this school where teachers work hard to make learning fun. Pupils' well above average attendance confirms their enjoyment of school.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an important strength. Pupils are respectful of each other and of adults. They say how well they get on together, and pupils from different ages and backgrounds play happily together at playtimes and lunchtimes. No one is left out.
- Most pupils believe that behaviour is good and that misbehaviour occurs only occasionally. School records confirm this view. During the inspection, pupils behaved very well in class and showed good respect for the adults who worked with them and for each other. Just sometimes, if the work does not keep them engrossed, they become distracted and lose interest in their learning.
- Pupils say that they enjoy having responsibilities such as being members of the school council or the 'ECO' action team. Younger pupils appreciate how Year 6 pupils are their 'buddies' when they first start school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of most types of bullying and of the risks that they might face in their everyday lives. They have a good understanding of how to use technology, including the internet, safely.
- Pupils have trust and confidence in the adults in the school to keep them safe and deal with any worries that they might have. This view is also shared by parents. Almost all responses on

Parent View survey reflected satisfaction with pupils' behaviour and safety.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and, alongside the deputy headteacher and other leaders, including governors, has driven forward school improvement since the time of the previous inspection. Staff questionnaire returns shows that staff morale is high, and all share the same determination to continue to improve. The school's view of its effectiveness is accurate.
- All leaders, including those of different subjects, are involved in checking school effectiveness. Formal observations of teaching, 'drop-ins' to lessons, scrutiny of planning and pupils' work, and discussions with pupils are all carried out. This means an accurate picture of the quality of teaching is known. Teachers receive appropriate support and training when necessary, but they do not regularly observe examples of outstanding teaching within school, and therefore learn from each other. Teachers' pay is closely linked to performance, and targets are suitably challenging.
- Detailed assessment information is available for each child. Regular meetings are held to discuss every child and consider if extra help is needed to help them make good progress. Leaders, including governors, receive termly summary information of each year group and the progress of different groups of pupils. However, the way this information is presented can hide underperformance, and does not enable them to ask probing questions easily. For example, how many pupils are attaining the higher levels in mathematics and does this show good progress from the year before?
- A good range of subjects is taught and pupils say they enjoy the opportunities for art and music. They speak highly of the extensive provision for clubs, games and competitive sport. The primary school sport funding is used well to extend sporting opportunities and to employ sports coaches to improve teachers' skills in teaching physical education. Some evidence of impact is already apparent, in the developing confidence of non-specialist teachers who have benefited from recent training. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development results in positive outcomes for safety and well-being.
- Discussions with parents and the Parent View analysis show that parents are very happy with the school's work. An overwhelming majority of parents would recommend this school to others. The school website is attractive and provides parents with all necessary information.
- Child protection and safeguarding policies and practice meet current requirements and the school rejects discrimination in all its forms. Pupils' good achievement both personally and academically shows that the school promotes equality of opportunity well.
- The local authority provides regular support, providing advice for example, on the induction of new governors and school improvement issues.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors want the best for all pupils and are very supportive. They are well informed and governors' minutes show they hold leaders to account. They have taken part in training to improve their expertise. Governors are committed to checking the performance of the school and have identified a need for the termly summaries of pupils' progress to give a sharper view of achievement.
 - Governors take time to find out the views of parents, staff and pupils and are responsive to concerns. For example, governors know a few parents would like further information about

homework. Consequently, a review is taking place, with the intention that a clear explicit policy will be carried out.

- Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and know how teachers' performance is matched to salary progress and promotion. They make sure that extra funds such as the pupil premium and the sports funding are used to strengthen pupils' progress.

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	122575
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	431554

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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim McGuire
Headteacher	Peter Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
Telephone number	0115 9194343
Fax number	0115 9190524
Email address	peter.taylor@larkfields-jun.notts.sch.uk

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