

Oliver Tomkins CofE Junior School

Beaumaris Road, Toothill, Swindon, SN5 8LW

Inspection dates 10–11 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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:

- Teaching is not consistently good and pupils do not make enough progress across the school. At times, teachers do not expect enough of pupils, including the most able, and this holds them back.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not make as rapid progress as older pupils, particularly in their mathematics.
- Pupils who benefit from additional support do not all make enough progress. There is a gap between the standards they reach and those of other pupils in their year groups.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have not had a strong enough impact on improving teaching and achievement across all year groups.
- Senior leaders' checks on teaching and the progress of groups of pupils are not sufficiently effective in securing improvements. At times leaders are too optimistic in their interpretation of the evidence.
- Governors have not challenged the school enough to ensure that the additional funding for some pupils is enabling them to reach higher standards.

The school has the following strengths:

- The quality of teaching has improved; teaching in Years 5 and 6 is often good. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated.
- The progress of pupils currently in Year 6 has improved. For many pupils their progress this year has been good. Recently, the progress of pupils in Year 5 has also improved.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress overall because they are well supported.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy their learning and eagerly improve their work. Attendance is above average.
- Pupils feel safe at school. Governors and leaders make sure that statutory requirements are met, including those to keep pupils safe.
- Most issues raised at the previous inspection have been tackled well. Marking is consistent and effective. Pupils have good opportunities to check their work and there are more practical activities to support learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors spent time in 16 lessons taught by nine teachers or coaches and observed sessions where teaching assistants provided pupils with additional support. About a third of these observations were undertaken in conjunction with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in the lessons, talked to them about their work more widely, and looked at teachers' plans and records about pupils' achievement. The inspectors also looked at the work pupils had done over time and some of the work they had done at home.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils about their views of the school and how they view their safety and behaviour. Inspectors had meetings with teachers, governors and a representative of the local authority. The school provided a wide range of documents which inspectors reviewed. These included: minutes from meetings; policies and procedures about keeping pupils safe; plans to bring about further improvements; and records of behaviour.
- There were 16 responses to the online survey by Ofsted for parents and carers. These were considered alongside the responses to the school's own recent survey. Inspectors spoke to a number of parents and carers informally before and after school. The views of staff were also taken into account through the 10 responses to a survey for staff working at the school.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jan Edwards

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average size junior school. There are currently two classes in each year group.
- Most pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, including African, Indian, and Any Other White heritages. Fewer pupils than usual speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of pupils with special educational needs who are supported through school action and through school action plus are average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The proportion of pupils who benefit from additional support through the funding known as the pupil premium is nearly double the national average. This is funding provided by the government to promote the achievement of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after.
- There is a breakfast club run by the school, which is open to pupils from the infant and junior schools. It is held in a common area of the two schools.
- The school is part of a hard federation with the infant school which is located adjacent to the junior school. Some spaces and resources are shared, including outdoor areas. The executive headteacher oversees both schools and there is a deputy headteacher in each of the schools. There is a single governing body for both schools.
- In 2013 the school met the current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils, set by the government.
- The school is supported by the headteacher of another primary school in the local area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to be consistently good, by:
 - increasing the expectations teachers have about what pupils in all year groups are capable of, including the most able pupils
 - ensuring that pupils have enough time in lessons to work on and complete tasks that have been set
 - developing teachers' awareness of when to step in to help pupils and when to allow them to grapple with their work.
- Increase the rate of progress for younger pupils, particularly in mathematics, so that pupils reach higher standards by the end of Year 6, by:
 - giving the most able pupils opportunities to work at the highest levels from early on in their learning
 - making sure that the additional support for eligible pupils is more effective and helps them make up ground more quickly.
- Improve the systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and the impact this has on the progress of different groups of pupils, particularly those who have additional support, by:
 - more closely focusing on the progress of pupils when senior leaders carry out checks on the quality of teaching
 - making sure that the feedback given to teachers is more precise and leads to more rapid improvements in pupils' progress.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' rate of progress, including the most able, is not rapid enough, especially in Years 3 and 4, and especially in mathematics. This is because work is not challenging enough.
- When pupils join the school, their standards are broadly average, although this varies with different year groups. Initially, progress is not as rapid as it could be but accelerates as pupils get older.
- Standards in Year 6 have previously been below average. Pupils currently in Year 6 have made better progress and have overcome some of their earlier underachievement because they have benefited from improved teaching. They are working at standards which are broadly average. However, their rate of progress in mathematics is slower than in reading and writing.
- Pupils currently in Year 5 have also begun to make faster progress although this is more recent than for those in Year 6. Again, progress in mathematics is slower than in reading and writing.
- Books, teachers' records and discussions with pupils all indicate the differences in the rates of progress of different year groups, and slower progress in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well overall. They are given effective support by teaching assistants who know a lot about what these pupils need to learn. Consequently, these pupils usually make good progress, particularly in their reading and more recently their writing. Their progress in mathematics has been slower, particularly during Year 5 this year.
- Pupils who are eligible for additional support make similar progress to other pupils, but this does not reduce the gap in their standards quickly enough. There is currently a gap in the standards these pupils are working at in Year 6 of about nine months in both English and mathematics in comparison with their peers.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language often make better progress than other pupils as they become more confident and expand their vocabulary and understanding. Otherwise, pupils from different ethnic heritages make similar rates of progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers do not always give pupils enough time to work on the tasks they have prepared for them. At times teachers do not expect enough of pupils. They step in to help pupils too quickly before they have had enough chance to grapple with what they are doing. Some teachers' explanations continue when it is evident pupils are confident about what to do, limiting the time they have to do their work.
- In Years 3 and 4, the work is not always challenging enough, particularly for the most able pupils, and particularly in mathematics. This improves as they get older. However they, too, do not always have enough time to finish work that has been set.
- Recent training means staff provide a good range of resources which pupils are encouraged to access when they need them, in their writing and their mathematics. Pupils are becoming more confident in making use of these, but occasionally still rely on adults too readily. Good resources and a consistent approach to teaching reading mean pupils become confident and enjoy reading.
- Recently, there has been a strong focus on the quality of feedback given to pupils, both verbally and through the written comments teachers and teaching assistants make about pupils' work. This is now a strength of the school. Pupils appreciate the way they are helped to improve what they are doing and increasingly use any spare time to look at how they can respond.
- The tasks pupils are given to do are increasingly well focused on what they need to learn because they are closely linked to clear statements for each level of learning, particularly in writing and mathematics. Pupils now get the chance to think about which statements they are confident in doing, and which they need to work on next. However, pupils are still being held

back, especially in Years 3 and 4, because work is not always sufficiently challenging.

- Teaching assistants have a good understanding about how to help those pupils they are usually with. They provide a good level of support while making sure pupils do the work for themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are very keen to work hard, eagerly improve their work and enjoy the topics they study. Around the school they are courteous to adults and kind to one another. This makes the school a harmonious place to learn and develop.
- Pupils help to keep the school environment well organised and tidy. For example, some pupils help to grow plants outside through the gardening club which they run largely themselves. Older pupils get the chance to help younger pupils with their learning, particularly in reading, improving their own confidence in the process.
- Pupils are of the view that the systems to make sure behaviour is good are fair, and that this encourages everyone to be well behaved. Pupils respond quickly to any light reminders about what is expected.
- Pupils from different backgrounds get along very well. There is no discrimination. If pupils occasionally fall out, it is sorted out quickly because there is always an adult or 'buddy' to talk to about it.
- The very few pupils whose behaviour can be more challenging are supported by well-informed adults who help them to understand the impact of poor behaviour. This has been effective and the behaviour of these pupils has improved.
- A very few parents and carers are not yet convinced that behaviour is good. Inspectors found that good behaviour means lessons proceed smoothly. Behaviour outside of lessons is also good. The school effectively fosters good relationships. Pupils get along amicably in lessons and at breaks and lunchtimes.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. There have been significant improvements in the behaviour of pupils, attendance has improved and pupils feel they get good opportunities to take on responsibilities.
- Pupils feel safe at school, and know how to keep themselves safe, for example when cycling or when using the internet.
- Pupils know what different forms bullying might take and they say that any incidents that might occur would be dealt with quickly.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Although leaders and managers have established good behaviour throughout the school, they have not had the same impact on improving the quality of teaching.
- Senior leaders have not yet ensured that teaching is good in all classes. While they have made sure that any inadequate teaching has been tackled, senior leaders' feedback to teachers focuses more on what teachers are doing rather than the progress pupils make. It does not always help teachers make sure that particular groups of pupils are making as much progress as they should.
- The systems to collect information about the observations senior leaders make of teaching and pupils' work are not sufficiently well organised. This means it is difficult to identify clearly whether improvements have had the intended impact on the progress of pupils or of particular groups of pupils.
- Middle leaders have worked effectively together to improve the curriculum around which teachers plan the tasks for pupils. This includes engaging experiences, often to start or end a topic. For example, pupils particularly enjoyed the work they did when they 'discovered'

evidence of someone living in the school.

- The breakfast club is well used and gives those who use it a good start to the day, including 'Tasty Toppings' pupils can try on their toast. School leaders make sure that all pupils can access this, one of the school's strategies to promote equal opportunities. However, the school is not yet fully effective in promoting equal opportunities, given the differences in pupils' rates of progress. The school also uses the additional funding for eligible pupils to give them more time with teachers and other adults, particularly those who are least and most able.
- Some parents and carers feel that they do not get enough information about how well their children are doing, particularly if there are any concerns about their progress. The school has increased the number of times each year that teachers and leaders discuss the progress of pupils and this now better informs meetings with parents and carers.
- There are an increasing number of opportunities for parents and carers to find out about the school's approach to teaching particular aspects, such as written methods of calculation, or teaching reading. However, the proportion of parents and carers who attend these meetings is not always high.
- Sports funding has been used well. The quality of physical education has improved through the use of sports coaches, who motivate the pupils well and have increased teachers' confidence in teaching this subject. There has also been an increase in the sports clubs available after school, which pupils look forward to eagerly.
- The local authority has provided the school with appropriate levels of support over the past few years and continues to do so. This includes some time from another headteacher who is a local leader of education (LLE). The school works closely with the federated infant school as well as other schools within the local group of schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the federation of the two schools, there have been substantial changes in the members of the governing body. Some of those currently on the governing body are new to this role. They have undertaken training and benefited from support through the local authority to understand their role. They have improved their understanding of data, and what this information shows about the performance of the school compared to other schools. Governors and senior leaders have improved the use of information about the quality of teaching, so that this better informs the decisions they make about pay awards and encourages the best teaching. Governors are well informed about the school's work to tackle underperformance and about performance management in general.
 - Governors make sure that the requirements for keeping pupils safe are reviewed and kept up to date and that any adults who work with the pupils are safe to do so.
 - Governors have too readily accepted how the additional funding is spent for pupils who are eligible, without reassuring themselves that this is having sufficient impact on the achievement of these pupils.

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	126440
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	431103

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Howarth
Headteacher	Rhian Cockwell
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 May 2012
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