

Danesholme Junior School

Motala Close, Corby, NN18 9DT

Inspection dates 15–16 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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

- Attainment is broadly average but too few pupils make good progress, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Pupils' skills in mental calculation and problem solving require improvement as does their ability to spell, punctuate and structure longer pieces of writing.
- There is not enough good teaching. Questions are not always used to challenge pupils or check their understanding. Work is not matched well enough to pupils' abilities. It is sometimes too easy for the most able.
- Teachers' marking is not consistently focused enough to help pupils do better. Teachers do not always check that pupils have used their marking comments to improve their work.
- Support staff do not sufficiently encourage pupils to try to work problems out for themselves.
- Although teachers' performance is regularly appraised, the school's current arrangements have not led to marked improvements in the school's performance. Until this year, leaders have not been sufficiently focused on bringing about rapid improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Senior leaders do not analyse information about pupil progress regularly enough or ensure that action is taken swiftly once concerns arise.
- Subject leaders have not yet received sufficient training to enable them to analyse pupils' work effectively or identify and address areas which need improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The new leadership team and re-constituted governing body understand where teaching and pupils' progress need to be improved and are working more effectively to bring these improvements about.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy their learning. They behave well, show concern for one another and feel safe in their school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons, six jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors listened to pupils read and observed a number of groups receiving additional support from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Meetings were held with pupils, three members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a range of staff, including senior leaders.
- The inspectors took account of the 45 responses from parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), as well as the school's own findings from their questionnaires. The inspectors also met with parents and carers informally.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, safeguarding documents and records relating to attendance, behaviour and bullying.

Inspection team

Elaine Long, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector
Helen Booth	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Danesholme Junior is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are three classes in each of the four year groups.
- Most pupils are White British and only a minority have English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, supported through school action, is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school appointed a new headteacher in May 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching by ensuring:
 - the most-able pupils are given work which is carefully matched to their capabilities so that they make more rapid progress
 - teachers use questioning effectively to probe pupils' understanding and move their learning on
 - all teachers consistently provide pupils with clear guidance on how they can improve and check that they respond to teachers' comments and do not repeat mistakes
 - teaching assistants do more to help pupils develop their ability to work problems out for themselves.
- Raise standards and accelerate progress in English and mathematics by improving:
 - pupils' skills in mental calculation and in solving problems
 - pupils' ability to organise and structure longer pieces of writing, paying particular attention to punctuation and spelling skills.
- Make leadership and management more effective in raising achievement by:
 - checking progress towards the priorities included in the school's plan for improvement more systematically, tackling weaknesses and taking robust actions as soon as concerns arise
 - improving the arrangements for appraising teachers' performance
 - analysing information about pupils' progress more regularly and with greater focus so that teachers can be held to account for the progress of pupils in their class
 - developing the roles of subject leaders so that they make a more significant contribution to the areas they are responsible for so that pupils make more rapid progress and standards rise.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has remained broadly average since the last inspection in all tested subjects, with writing being slightly weaker than reading and mathematics. Official data suggests the progress of pupils from Key Stage 1 is lower than it should be in mathematics and writing, with too few more-able pupils making really rapid progress given the high standards they reached in Key Stage 1. However, the school's own entry assessments for this group suggest that progress was better overall in 2013 than official figures would suggest and often very good in reading.
- Although pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to achieve broadly average standards overall, their achievement in mathematics is set to be much lower than in 2013. The school has rightly identified mathematics as a priority for this group of pupils and put in significant training but percentages achieving Levels 4 and 5 are both lower than last year.
- Results in spelling, punctuation and grammar showed a dip at Level 4 this year even though they were higher than the latest national average at Level 5. Scrutiny of pupils' work showed that middle-ability pupils do not get enough opportunities to write at length and that, although work is carefully marked and mistakes identified, this does not always result in an improvement in standards.
- Progress across Key Stage 2 is uneven and some pupils make too little progress in Year 5. The school's improvement plan to raise achievement has correctly identified the priorities for improvement but actions have not yet had the impact needed. Half-termly pupil reviews are used to identify pupils who are in danger of falling behind but action is not always taken swiftly enough to address the reasons for this and ensure they catch up.
- Inspection evidence shows that while good progress is being made by a number of pupils, there is still too much variation within each year group and between subjects. In particular, the work set for pupils of higher ability is not difficult enough and does not really extend their learning or improve their overall achievement.
- In 2013 pupils supported through the pupil premium were approximately three terms behind in reading and in writing and over four terms behind in mathematics. The provisional results for current pupils in Year 6 show that these gaps are closing, particularly in reading and mathematics. The school's tracking shows eligible pupils often make good progress in most year groups. Funding has been used to provide effective additional one to one teaching, intervention work, pastoral support programmes and enrichment of the curriculum, and this has improved pupils' motivation and confidence.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that made by other pupils. Most make expected progress from their starting points. Where slower progress has been identified, additional support is now in place.
- The school has used the primary sports funding to employ specialist teachers to work alongside teachers and help them devise high quality lesson plans to use with pupils. Staff have developed their skills quickly and the quality of lessons has improved. Pupils really enjoy physical education lessons now and both their skills and their levels of participation in sports activities have increased. The use of inspirational guest speakers and the school's investment in better quality and quantity of materials has led to pupils' having increased success in local sporting competitions.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because the work is not always well-matched to pupils' abilities. Sometimes the work, especially for the most able, is too easy. Pupils themselves told inspectors that they would like to be given work which is more difficult and which made them think really hard.
- Teachers do not question pupils regularly or effectively enough to probe what it is that they know or struggle with, so that they can quickly provide pupils with work that fully supports them in the next stage of their learning.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked but it is not leading consistently to improvement in their achievement. This is because the guidance teachers give is not always clear or specific enough to move the pupils' learning on, and also because they do not check that pupils have reflected on what they have been told and used this advice to make their work better.
- Pupils do not receive enough opportunities to write at length and they find it difficult to organise and structure their work. Teachers mark spelling, punctuation and grammar regularly but this is not yet resulting in rapid improvement in their skills.
- In many lessons support staff work really well alongside pupils, asking questions to check their understanding and providing useful prompts to help them learn. In some lessons, however, support staff do too much for the pupils and this prevents them from working out how to solve problems themselves, and thereby making better progress.
- Classrooms are well-resourced and spaces are used creatively to support pupils' learning. Pupils know where to find prompts, reminders and resources to support them as they are working. Most teachers encourage them to show initiative and they respond well. Work in books is well-presented and pupils take pride in their work.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and their willingness to work are high. There is a strong sense of mutual respect between pupils and adults which results in really warm and productive working relationships in the classroom.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Year 6 pupils displayed maturity and good understanding of quite complex moral, cultural and spiritual issues in an English lesson which explored the very sensitive issue of a soldier's reflection of the first time he had killed a man. The quality of pupils' spoken and written responses was very high and pupils engaged very thoughtfully with their work and found the experience moving.

The behaviour and safety of pupils **are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They support one another well when working in groups, taking it in turns to make contributions. When working without direct help from adults, pupils do not give up when the work becomes more difficult; they try harder, wanting to do the best they can. Pupils appreciate the help they are given. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. There is a friendly purposeful atmosphere as the day begins. Pupils arrive promptly and show by their enthusiasm they are keen to learn. Attendance comfortably matches national averages.

- In and around the school, in assemblies and at break and lunchtime, behaviour is always good. Pupils treat each other with respect. They are polite, friendly and courteous. They enjoy taking on a variety of roles, such as school councillors, house captains, mentoring buddies and 'community champions'. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- The school's effective support for pupils' emotional needs and development is responsible for their positive behaviour. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They enjoy belonging to a school where everyone gets along with one another, and understand and respect each other's differences.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Through lessons and assemblies, pupils are given the skills they need to manage everyday risks for themselves. For example they know how to use the internet safely and are aware of the dangers associated with the road, fire, talking to strangers.
- Pupils know who to go to in the school if they feel worried or upset. Parents and carers, who responded to Parent View, agree that their children feel safe and happy at the school.
- In lessons and assemblies, the school teaches pupils about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Pupils know what to do if they are bullied because they are given clear guidance. They report that bullying is rare and would be dealt with, if it were to occur. They feel the school is a friendly and supportive place where they feel safe and cared for.
- Parents, carers enjoy being invited into school. They talk about their children being happy, becoming more confident and well prepared for the next stage of their education. They spoke well of the new headteacher and the changes which have been made.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The school has made satisfactory progress against most of the key actions from the last inspection. However, although the new headteacher has started to drive the necessary improvements more rapidly, she has not been in post long enough to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement sufficiently.
- New systems and processes for charting pupils' progress have been introduced but have not yet ensured good progress and achievement across all subjects and year groups.
- School leaders recognise the school's strengths and weaknesses and their self-evaluation is accurate. However, the school improvement plan does not focus sharply enough on the actions needed to bring about improvement, and monitoring, although regular, is not rigorous enough. When concerns arise they are not dealt with as quickly as they should be.
- There are new appraisal arrangements in place but these have not yet resulted in consistently good teaching or in all groups of pupils making really rapid progress.
- Teachers who lead subjects do not consistently monitor the quality of teaching and target the specific areas which need improvement or evaluate the impact of any action taken on pupil achievement. Although the school is working hard to develop the role and skills of these leaders they have not had sufficient support in the past to help them drive rapid improvement in their subjects.

- Staff support the headteacher fully in making improvements and morale is high. There is a common sense of purpose and current information on pupils' progress shows that, while there is more to do, the school's actions are beginning to have a positive impact on their achievement. This demonstrates the school's capacity to improve. There is still some unevenness in this improvement, however, particularly in Year 5, because support designed to help pupils make up previous gaps in their learning is not yet having sufficient effect.
- Lessons are visited regularly by leaders and detailed feedback provided to teachers so that they can improve. Teachers know that they will be held to account for pupils' progress and achievement.
- The curriculum is well planned. Lessons are frequently combined with activities and visits which provides pupils with good opportunities to explore and learn about their world, and develop their understanding of what others believe and why. The school's multi-cultural week has produced a range of really exciting art work and displays reflecting countries such as India, China, Australia and Africa. Pupils' art work is full of vibrant colour and reflects the high quality of their work as well as their imagination and creativity.
- The school works closely with a range of partners within the local community. These links have a positive impact for all members of the school. The school works with a cluster of schools to share best practice and develop its expertise.
- The local authority continues to provide invaluable and timely support to the school, ensuring that staff have access to a wide range of training. Officers have ensured that the new headteacher is fully supported in her new role by arranging mentoring from other headteachers who are leading good and outstanding schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been re-constituted in the past year and the new team feel far more knowledgeable and able to hold the school to account. They fully support the actions being taken to improve the school and are aware that more needs to be achieved in this respect. They undertake appropriate training and have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas which need to be developed. They take part in a wide range of monitoring exercises and are becoming increasingly skilled in being able to evaluate the school's effectiveness. They have a good understanding of what the data on pupils' progress is telling them and have made sure that the funds available through the pupil premium have been used well to improve achievement. They have a clear understanding of performance management and ensure that teachers' pay is only increased if pupils make good progress. They ensure all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding 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	122104
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	441934

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	366
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	J Askew
Headteacher	Karen Rolf
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2013
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