

South Wootton Junior School

Hall Lane, South Wootton, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 3JZ

Inspection dates 13–14 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have not risen in line with improvements nationally, and are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection.
- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough. They do not always set pupils sufficiently challenging activities to do. This affects the quality of pupils' written work and the rate of progress evident in their books.
- The appointment of several new teaching staff has led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- Not all pupils have well-formed, joined-up handwriting. This lowers the quality of the presentation of their written work.
- The school has a well-established marking policy but not all staff, especially those who are new, give pupils specific guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. When they receive suggestions, pupils do not always respond to them appropriately.
- Planned improvements have not had enough time to make significant impact upon raising pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and governors are now acting decisively to tackle weaknesses, particularly in teaching. There is a strong drive for improvement.
- Successful actions taken since the headteacher joined the school enabled pupils' progress to improve last year.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now learning at a faster rate so that the gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils are closing.
- The progress of current pupils in reading is good.
- Behaviour has improved. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, feel very safe and behave well.
- There is extensive and good quality provision for sport and physical education.
- Pupils of Indian heritage achieve particularly well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, five of which were seen jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' written work for both the current and the last school year. They listened to some pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, the school's senior leaders and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 47 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including plans for improvement and records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. They also considered local authority review reports, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the systems used to track pupils' progress.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sa'ad Khaldi

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- South Wootton Junior School is an average-sized junior school.
- Nine out of ten pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.
- About one in every seven pupils is disabled or has special educational needs. This is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible to free school meals and those who are looked after) is about one in every nine pupils. This is well below the national average.
- Due to the local authority's reorganisation of schools, the current Year 6 is the first year group to have spent all of Years 3 to 6 in this school.
- There have been significant changes in staffing, both at the beginning of and during this term.
- The current headteacher joined the school in September 2013.
- The school has the support of a National Leader of Education, who is the headteacher of Sheringham Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - all staff demonstrate high expectations of pupils, and set them challenging work to do to improve the quality of their handwriting and written work
 - the level of challenge for pupils is high
 - teachers' marking provides pupils with clear guidance about what they need to do next to improve their work, and that teachers check that pupils respond meaningfully to this advice.
- Build upon pupils' improving achievement throughout the school and ensure that:
 - pupils make rapid progress in all subjects
 - the school implements, in conjunction with its partner infant school, an agreed approach to the teaching of handwriting.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders recognise that standards are not high enough and have taken suitable steps to reverse the school's decline. They have a clear understanding of what they need to do to maintain good behaviour and to accelerate progress and further raise standards. Better learning and progress are beginning to make up for pupils' previous underachievement.
- Leaders have been effective in driving improvement, including significant improvements in pupils' behaviour. However, changes in the teaching team, both at the start of the current term and more recently, have caused a slight loss of momentum in the progress made by some pupils. Planned improvements, for example, in marking and pupils' handwriting, have not made a full impact on raising pupils' achievement.
- The school's work to improve teaching is based on accurate checks and close evaluation of its quality. Feedback to teachers is detailed and supports improvement increasingly well. Senior leaders have quickly challenged and tackled weak teaching. Consequently the profile of teaching in the school is improving.
- Systems to manage teachers' performance are rigorous. Teachers' targets are closely linked to what pupils should achieve. The school has reshaped the staffing structure, creating staff teams to oversee groups of related subjects. This is enabling staff to extend their experience and further develop subject leadership capacity.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate in all key respects. The improvement plan is focused on appropriate priorities. All staff understand their role in school improvement. Staff have detailed information relating to pupils' attainment and progress and, under the guidance of leaders, are beginning to use this more successfully to plan increasingly challenging lessons. Pupils are now beginning to make more consistently rapid progress.
- The deployment of funding is having a positive impact on these pupils' attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils. Funding is rightly-focused on the specific needs of individual pupils.
- School leaders promote pupils' personal and social development effectively. Consequently, pupils are kept safe and behave well. Safeguarding requirements are met.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are taught to be tolerant and respectful of others and are well-prepared for the diversity of life in modern British democratic society. There are, for example, regular visits to a range of places of worship. The highly-skilled choir, and specialist musical training, contribute strongly to pupils' cultural development.
- Leaders have reviewed the structure and content of the curriculum to reflect recent national changes. The school works cooperatively with other schools through local 'clusters' to ensure that what is taught engages pupils' enthusiasm. School leaders ensure that pupils have a wide range of experiences to enhance their learning. 'Theme' days enable pupils to bring depth to their learning. The school is introducing a modified assessment system to replace levels as these are phased out.
- Sporting provision is a strength. Activities funded through the primary school sport funding have increased pupils' already significant participation in sports clubs and in competitions. A new all-weather playing area, paid for partly through this additional funding, is well used and greatly enhances what can be offered to pupils. Additional staff training, for example in dance, ensures that the new provision is sustainable.
- The school receives good support from the local authority. The school has good relationships with most parents although some parents of pupils affected by recent staff changes are less positive. Links with the partner infant school are improving.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a strong commitment to the school. Following a recent review, they have tackled

identified weaknesses promptly, updated their training and recruited new members including a new, experienced chair. They bring a range of skills and expertise to their roles. They challenge school leaders with increasing confidence, and are better placed to contribute to the school's improvement. Governors understand how the school's performance compares with that of schools nationally. They successfully promote good relationships across the school. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weakness of teaching. Governors have used the opportunities offered by recent staff changes to ensure that pay increases and promotion properly reflect individual teachers' effectiveness. Governors are fully committed to ensuring the school promotes tolerance of others, provides equality of opportunity and tackles any hint of discrimination. They understand the need to check the impact of additional funding on gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others. They ensure, along with senior leaders, that statutory duties are met, including those for the safeguarding of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show mostly positive attitudes to learning. They work well in small groups but do not always take the initiative in extending their own learning by finding things out for themselves.
- Pupils undertake duties as 'buddies' and play leaders, and contribute well to the smooth running of the school.
- Inappropriate behaviour and exclusions have declined since the appointment of the current headteacher. Disruptive behaviour is tackled firmly and pupils recognise the higher expectations that the headteacher has introduced. Behaviour is well-managed in all classes and pupils behave well at breaks and lunchtimes. Records of incidents are carefully maintained. Pupils understand how their actions may affect others. Relationships are good.
- Attendance is above the national average. Pupils understand that frequent attendance is important.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders ensure that the school site is secure and well-maintained. Risk assessments are carried out rigorously. Staff are fully checked prior to their appointment. Safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements.
- Pupils feel safe in school, confident that adults will manage any concerns they may have.
- Pupils are aware of the risks of cyber-bullying. The school regularly draws pupils' attention to these risks and works hard to help pupils protect themselves from the dangers posed by internet abuse.
- Pupils know that bullying is unacceptable and that it may take different forms. They feel that it is not an issue in the school. Parents expressed some concerns about the school's response to bullying when it occurs. However, inspectors found that the school's current processes for investigating bullying are secure and no evidence was found during the inspection that they are not applied rigorously.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although there was significant improvement last year, since the last inspection teaching has not enabled pupils to make consistently good progress in writing and mathematics. Consequently, standards are not as high as they were when the school was last inspected. Typically, progress has been slower in Years 3 and 4 than in Years 5 and 6. Tasks have not always provided sufficient challenge to accelerate the progress of all pupils. The school has acted resolutely to eliminate recent weak teaching in Year 5.
- Learning in the current school year has become increasingly effective as recently appointed staff settle in. However, the quality of pupils' written work is sometimes compromised because of poorly formed handwriting, and is not of a consistently high standard. Teachers have not, in the past, placed enough emphasis on the development of pupils' writing skills and progress is slower than it should be. Pupils are

now given more opportunities for writing.

- Systems are in place for checking and improving pupils' progress and are beginning to secure improvement. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, there is still some variability, partly as a result of staff changes, in identifying specific points that will help pupils improve their work. Pupils do not always respond to the guidance teachers give through marking.
- Disadvantaged pupils, with well-targeted additional support, now make at least the expected progress, as increasingly do the most able. The support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs enables these pupils to make similar progress to other pupils, and some of them make good progress. Teaching assistants are well prepared and they ensure that they give pupils the right level of support according to their needs.
- Where teaching provides a good level of challenge, as in Year 6, pupils make more rapid progress. In one very successful lesson, Year 6 pupils were extending their understanding of mixed-number and improper fractions. Each group of pupils had an appropriate level of challenge. The most-able pupils were ordering fractions, expressed in differing formats according to their size. This required them to think hard about what each expression represented. Pupils were motivated by the challenge offered.
- Although not all parents and carers feel that homework is purposeful, pupils have a more positive response. On the evidence seen, homework is well-planned and contributes effectively to pupils' learning. Tasks seen provide scope for pupils to be creative, and are completed and marked regularly.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2014, the attainment of Year 6 pupils was broadly average. This was a better picture than in 2013, but lower than results achieved in 2012. Standards are not yet high enough.
- Since the last inspection, pupil achievement has not been good enough. However, this underachievement is being addressed. Pupils made better progress last year than had been the case in 2013, particularly in writing and mathematics, and pupils are currently maintaining this improvement.
- Despite the improvements seen, there are still variations in the quality of pupils' written work. For example, there were significant weaknesses in the work done by Year 5 pupils earlier in the current term. Following staff changes, this situation is recovering rapidly. Handwriting is, however, a relative weakness for some pupils, who have not learned to join their letters. The school is working to tackle minor weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was approximately two and a half terms behind others in the year group in English and mathematics and one year behind other pupils nationally. However, the gap is closing year on year. Throughout the school, these pupils make increasingly good progress because of the well-targeted support they receive.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are accurately identified. They mostly receive appropriate support. They make at least the same progress from their starting points as other pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6 and in reading across the school.
- Progress in reading is now good. For all year groups, pupils' progress in reading is now mostly above what is expected nationally. Pupils' knowledge of phonics (the linking of sounds to letters) is secure and any weaknesses are successfully tackled in Year 3. The improving picture means that pupils read regularly and are generally competent readers.
- With more carefully targeted work, the most-able pupils are now learning more rapidly, particularly in Year 6. The proportion of older pupils working at the higher levels is increasing.

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	121197
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	448512

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Dewey
Headteacher	Jonathan Rice
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2010
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