

Westwood Community Junior School

Maple Grove, March, PE15 8JT

Inspection dates 9–10 December 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has risen consistently since the last inspection. Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress.
- The school is well-led. Leaders' regular reviews of teaching have helped individual staff to improve and are raising achievement.
- Pupils' have good attitudes to their work, behave well and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Previous weaknesses have been tackled with vigour. School development planning is thorough.
- Pupils love school and enjoy their lessons. They have a great deal of confidence in the staff.
- The curriculum is well-planned and teachers in different year groups work well together to provide worthwhile learning experiences for the pupils.
- Staff assess pupils' progress in lessons systematically, match the work they set well to pupils' different abilities and use teaching assistants effectively to support pupils who need extra help.
- The school works closely with parents and families and, as a result, attendance has risen significantly. Parents express positive views of the school.
- The school provides well for pupils who require extra emotional support.
- Governors both support the school and provide it with effective challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Boys' attainment in writing and girls' attainment in mathematics, though rising, remain below average.
- Pupils do not consistently use their knowledge of grammar and spelling accurately in their writing. They are not always confident when recalling multiplication tables or calculating mentally.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 5 are not given enough opportunities to work out how to do things for themselves or use their imagination to think creatively. This hinders the development of their writing.
- The leadership of the foundation subjects is not effective enough. Consequently, the most-able pupils do not always do as well in these subjects as they do in literacy and numeracy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons. Two lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, various members of staff, three governors and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills.
- Inspectors sampled pupils' work in different year groups, examined records of pupils' progress, and read the school's own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and its strategic plan. A range of other documentation was examined, including that relating to safeguarding.
- The views of the 45 staff members who responded to a written questionnaire were taken into account.
- The inspectors looked at the 38 responses on Parent View, the government's website for parents' views about their children's school.

Inspection team

Peter Sudworth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Keith Putman

Additional Inspector

Vicky Parsey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized junior school. Most pupils transfer to it at the age of seven from a neighbouring infant school.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school midway through the academic year is high. In 2013-14, 33 pupils joined the school including seven in Year 6. Several of these pupils have attended other schools previously.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportions of pupils with a minority ethnic heritage, and pupils who speak English as an additional language, are both lower than national averages.
- About one pupil in six is disabled or has special educational needs. This is around the national average.
- Around one-third of the pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care. This is above the national average.
- The governing body manages its own breakfast club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Westwood Junior school staff includes three 'local leaders in education' who provide advice to other schools. Their specialisms are in mathematics, English and assessment.
- The school has been trialling the teaching of mathematics in single sex groups in Year 5 and 6 for one year. In English pupils are taught in mixed gender groups in Year 5 and 6 but the school runs one boys writing group in Year 6.
- The headteacher is currently supporting the new headteacher of another school in the locality.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in mathematics, particularly for girls by ensuring:
 - pupils learn their multiplication tables thoroughly and can use them quickly and accurately
 - more emphasis is given to mental calculation so that pupils can work out calculations in their heads more quickly.
- Build on the initiatives that are already taking place to improve writing, especially for boys by:
 - ensuring pupils apply their knowledge of spelling and grammar accurately in all their writing
 - always ensuring that the topic chosen as a stimulus for writing appeals to boys as well as to girls
 - encouraging pupils to work out how to plan their work for themselves and to use their imagination more effectively when writing in topic work in Years 3 to 5.
- Improve leadership and thereby pupils' achievement, including that of the most-able pupils, in the foundation subjects by ensuring that these subjects are well led so that the level of teachers' expectations and the challenge in the activities they set are raised.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school well so that teaching and good behaviour flourish and pupils are keen to learn. A teacher wrote, 'It is a pleasure to work at this school - the staff and leadership are incredibly supportive and hardworking.' The headteacher's good working partnership with the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher ensure that teachers develop their skills well.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics have provided effective advice for staff. They regularly observe teaching and suggest improvements and this is helping to raise standards and improve progress. The leadership of the foundation subjects, however, is not as strong as it is in literacy and numeracy because teachers do not receive the guidance they need to improve teaching and the leadership of these subjects is not clearly defined.
- The school's 'strategic plan' contains the correct priorities for further development. It is well-written, reviewed regularly, renewed termly and clearly indicates how success will be judged. It guides improvements effectively.
- Pupil premium money has been spent wisely on extra staffing to enable small teaching groups to be formed to support pupils who are eligible for this funding. The new inclusion manager, funded by the grant, has helped improve these pupils' attendance significantly and has worked closely with parents to encourage them to become more involved in their children's education. The school is committed to ensuring that these pupils have the same opportunities to succeed as the other pupils.
- The primary school physical education (P.E.) and sport grant has been well used. A specialist P.E. teacher has trained staff so that their teaching of P.E. has been improved. The numbers of sports clubs and inter-house sporting competitions have been increased.
- The curriculum includes a good balance of subjects. Good use is made of both mathematics and writing in topics. However, teachers sometimes give pupils too much guidance about their writing in topics in Years 3 to 5, which hinders the ability of pupils to show initiative and to try to work out how to plan their writing for themselves if they can. Good opportunities exist for pupils to engage in extra activities in the after-school clubs. The school stresses the importance of pupils learning to understand and respect cultures other than their own and the curriculum places a strong emphasis on supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Arrangements for managing teachers' performance are good. Any objectives they are set are linked closely to the national standards for teachers as well as to desired improvements in pupils' attainment and progress. There is good provision for professional development and leaders ensure that these objectives are achievable.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Staff training is regular, policies are well-written and checks on employees well-documented.
- Since the last inspection, the school has received appropriate levels of support from the local authority, which recognises the school's quality and effectiveness. Specialist advisers have helped lift standards. Reviews of the school's progress have guided future development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective. Governors are supportive but also hold the school to account by challenging and questioning leaders rigorously about the school's performance. Their regular visits to the school and to classrooms help them know about the quality of teaching and what is being done to improve it.
 - Governors know how the grants for sport and pupil premium have been spent and take careful note of the impact of this spending on pupils' achievement.
 - They carefully oversee the arrangements for determining teachers' performance annually and ensure

the school maintains a clear link between teachers' pay and evidence of their impact on achievement.

- Governors receive regular training, including on how to interpret data about pupils' progress, and have an accurate picture of how the school compares to others.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy lessons and have a good attitude to their studies. They cooperate in class and are polite. Lessons are invariably conducted in a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are well-behaved around school. Their greatly improved attendance is now around the national average.
- Pupils recognise that they have a 'social responsibility' to meet their own and the school's expectations for their work and conduct. They say, 'We know they want us to do our best.'
- Incidents of misbehaviour have fallen significantly over the past year with very few incidents of bullying or racism being reported to staff. Should any bullying occur, an adult mentor works with the particular individual to resolve the issue and bring about improvement in their behaviour. The school works well with parents to stamp out any unacceptable behaviour.
- Pupils play together well at breaks and participate in all the activities that the school provides. They enjoy the opportunities they are given to take part in inter-house sport. Behaviour at the breakfast club is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that they can talk to adults should they ever have a problem. Pupils feel that any incidents are dealt with fairly and effectively. They also know that they can approach house captains with any concerns they might have.
- Pupils know how to use the internet safely and are aware of the dangers posed by cyber-bullying. The school's provision for personal, social and health education provides them with good preparation for dealing with any difficulties they may face. This programme also contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils understand about road safety issues and are taught to take care when out and about outside the school. They know not to talk to strangers.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' good relationships with pupils enable lessons to proceed calmly in an atmosphere of trust. Pupils say they feel confident when answering teachers' questions.
- Teachers' joint planning in year groups ensures that all pupils receive the same opportunities to do well. Work is well-matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers constantly assess pupils' understanding during lessons and carefully check the achievement of pupils who join the school late. They take particular care when arranging teaching groups so that the content of lessons takes all groups of pupils forward towards the next stage for their learning.
- Teachers' questioning is generally perceptive and focussed. This keeps the pupils thinking, as does the teachers' effective use of individual white boards to record pupils' ideas and to direct their discussions when pupils are working in pairs
- Marking is effective. Teachers point out good features of pupils' work and also identify where they can improve. The targets teachers set are appropriately challenging and make clear to pupils precisely what they should aim for.

- Teaching assistants are deployed well and give very good support to disadvantaged and disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs. Teachers ensure that teaching assistants know their role in lessons. Their involvement with small groups is effective.
- Teachers generally plan their lessons well in literacy and numeracy, and use learning resources effectively to help the pupils, for example to assist their understanding in mathematics. However, the teaching of the foundation subjects is not as strong as it needs to be because teachers do not consistently receive the same high quality advice on how to prepare lessons in these subjects as they do in English and mathematics.
- Teachers use classroom walls effectively to display reminders about important features of mathematics and language. Pupils use these as a reference when working, for example when deciding how to select appropriate verbs. Good attention is paid to ensuring individual pupils correct their mistakes when they spell words wrongly.
- Teachers explain tasks well. Materials for these are well-prepared and organised so that pupils can quickly begin when lesson introductions have ended.
- The teaching of reading is good, and there are specific sessions to help pupils understand texts. The new trial to teach writing by grouping boys and girls separately in writing is already making a difference in some classes. However, teachers do not always encourage pupils to take sufficient responsibility for planning their writing for themselves and their writing is not as imaginative as it could be. Not all teachers have ensured that the topics chosen for writing excite boys as well as they do girls.
- Teachers match the work well to pupils' development in mathematics, and girls' confidence is increasing as a result of being taught separately in Years 5 and 6. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils know their multiplication tables well enough or develop the kind of quick mental skills they need to help them work out more complicated problems.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The school's own accurate assessments of pupils' attainment on entry indicate that this is below average. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 show that overall attainment has been rising each year since 2011 with a significant increase in 2014. However, pupils' attainment in 2014, whilst broadly average overall, was still below average in writing and reading.
- School data and the work in pupils' books show that achievement is continuing to improve. All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, are making good progress in English and mathematics. This is because of good teaching and the careful way in which work is matched to pupils' different abilities in these subjects.
- The school undertakes its own assessments of pupils' attainment when they enter the school at the start of Year 3. Inspectors saw clear evidence that these assessments are accurate. On the basis of this data, almost all the Year 6 pupils in 2014 made expected progress in mathematics and nearly one third made better than expected progress. In reading nine-tenths of the pupils made expected progress and just over a quarter better than expected progress. In writing, just over nine-tenths made expected progress and one quarter made better than expected progress.
- Evidence from lessons shows that, in literacy and numeracy, the school's most-able pupils are challenged appropriately and achieve well in English and mathematics. Their workbooks indicate that they make good progress. They are able to write lengthy, well-written and mature accounts in different styles, for example when pupils were asked to write persuasively to support fair trade. In mathematics these pupils show a very good understanding of metric conversions and calculate accurately. In the foundation subjects, however, their achievement is more uneven. Teachers' expectations are not as consistently high as they are in other subjects and the most able-pupils are not always given work that fully challenges them. This sometimes hinders their achievement in these subjects.

- School data indicates that pupils currently in the school, who are entitled to the pupil premium, are making rapidly improving progress that is similar to that of their peers in each year group. Officially published data, however, indicates that in 2014, the gap between pupil premium pupils and their classmates leaving Year 6 widened in reading and writing even though it narrowed in grammar, spelling and mathematics. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils was around a year behind their classmates in these subjects, and was behind all pupils nationally by a similar margin. In contrast, their classmates attained at levels above the national average in mathematics, knowledge of spelling and grammar, and equalled the national average in writing and reading.

- Boys do better in mathematics than the girls and the reverse is true in writing. Some pupils do not have quick enough recall of multiplication facts and mental calculation and this slows their progress. Pupils do not consistently transfer their knowledge of grammar and spelling into their writing tasks.

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	110641
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	448978

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	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Field
Headteacher	Gill Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	12 December 2012
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