

# Hethersett VC Junior School

22 Queen's Road, Hethersett, Norwich, NR9 3DB

**Inspection dates** 9–10 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils' progress from their various starting points has not been good since the previous inspection. It has only recently begun to improve.
- There have been too many differences in the rates of progress made by groups of pupils particularly the most disadvantaged, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Teaching is not consistently good across all year groups because teachers do not always plan suitable tasks for pupils to complete or adapt lessons when pupils misunderstand.
- Not all teachers effectively use the school's marking policy or have the same high expectations for the presentation of pupils' work.
- The school tracks the progress and achievement of pupils. Inconsistent use of this information means that not all leaders or governors know how well different groups of pupils are doing. This limits their ability to evaluate the quality of teaching and the impact of school action to improve pupils' achievement.
- The impact of some leaders has been limited as they have had insufficient time to monitor the quality of teaching to ensure that improvements are being sustained.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and this is reflected in their good attendance.
- The range of subjects taught is effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It prepares pupils well for their next stage in education as well as life outside school.
- The school develops positive relationships with parents. Parents speak warmly about the school especially the care for those pupils with disabilities or special educational needs. All those who stated a view would recommend the school to others.
- Inspectors found that rightly, pupils and parents are confident in the school's good arrangements to keep pupils safe.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Many lessons were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors and senior staff looked at pupils' work together. Information about pupils' attainment and progress was analysed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other staff, a representative from the local authority as well as governors and pupils.
- The inspectors talked to parents and carers and took account of 45 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View and considered responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents including school policies, safeguarding procedures, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.

## Inspection team

Karen Heath, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Winfield-Chislett

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- A very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. This funding provides additional support for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There has been a change of headteacher since the school's previous inspection.
- The school is being supported by a national leader in education (NLE) the headteacher of St Mary's Church of England School, East Barnet, Hertfordshire.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils' achievement is consistently good by:
  - ensuring pupils are given suitable work and teachers respond quickly in lessons by adapting tasks or addressing misunderstandings to help pupils make good gains in their learning, whatever their ability
  - making sure all teachers have high expectations of the presentation of work in pupils' books
  - using the school's marking policy consistently to give useful guidance to pupils about how to improve their work.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - improving leaders' and governors' understanding of data so that they have a more accurate view of how different groups of pupils are progressing and can evaluate the impact of changes
  - ensuring leaders make frequent checks to ensure that school policies and new initiatives to improve the quality of teaching are being implemented consistently.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders have not done enough to ensure consistently good teaching and achievement. The new headteacher is ably supported by two skilled and experienced assistant headteachers. However, the impact of their leadership has been limited because they have not always checked that new initiatives or policies are properly embedded. Consequently, not all teachers have adhered to the changes which have been introduced to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Governors have responded to this shortcoming by restructuring the senior leadership team with effect from September 2015 to allow leaders more time to do their work.
- Some subject leaders have not always used available data to gain a strategic view of how well different groups of pupils are doing across the school. As a result, the progress of some groups of pupils is not as rapid as it could be.
- The school has received good support from its partner school led by a National Leader in Education. The sharing of good practice and the opportunity to visit an outstanding school has helped teachers develop their knowledge and techniques. The links have helped the special educational needs coordinator to draw up an action plan to improve the progress of these pupils. However, these changes are still very recent and have not yet had sufficient time to make a real difference to outcomes.
- Since he joined the school the headteacher has shown strong leadership, drive and commitment which have resulted in rapid improvements throughout the school, creating a thriving culture of good behaviour and where teaching can flourish. Parents who spoke to inspectors acknowledged this. He has ensured that the quality of teaching has improved and pupils' progress is now accelerating. As a result, pupils are working at least at levels expected for their age.
- Performance management is used well to set teacher targets to improve the achievement of pupils. The performance of teachers is informed by the regular observations of lessons. Targets are amended and support given when issues with weaker teaching are identified and where improvement is not sustained.
- Prior to September 2014 support for disadvantaged pupils was not effective and these pupils were well behind their classmates. Governors have now appointed a 'Pupil Premium Champion' to monitor the achievement of this group of pupils. The pupil premium is now being used to provide support through additional teaching which is focussed on filling gaps in pupils' understanding. As a result, these pupils are often now making faster progress than their peers and the difference between their attainment compared to others in the school as well as nationally is narrowing.
- The subject leaders for English and mathematics have recently made some successful changes which have improved pupils' achievement in these subjects. They increasingly use school data effectively to check where progress is not good enough in individual classes. They work alongside colleagues to provide a good range of professional development to help develop their teaching expertise.
- The school has used its primary sports funding to good effect. The action plan and programme of professional development ensure that improvements in the teaching of physical education are sustainable. The school has established good partnerships with local schools to participate in local competitions. Hethersett pupils have enjoyed success in cross country, tag rugby and soccer.
- The subjects taught are varied and interesting and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Learning about the culture of the United States of America through the topic 'Stars and Stripes' and links with a school in Finland enhances pupils' cultural development. The school's 'Dragon week' focused learning on all areas of the curriculum. At the same time, it supported the local charity event 'Go Go Dragons' to raise money for a children's hospice. Pupils achieve high standards of art work and experiment with a range of medium. For example, they made models inspired by the work of the Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti and worked with a local artist to create clay fossils.

- The school actively promotes British values and prepares pupils effectively for life in modern Britain. It ensures that discrimination is not tolerated and includes teaching about individual liberty, democracy, the rule of law, tolerance and respect for other faiths and beliefs in its curriculum.
- While the school is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all pupils, it is aware that in the past, achievement of some groups of pupils has lagged behind, such as for disadvantaged pupils and those with disabilities and special educational needs.
- The local authority has supported the school and set it on the way to improvement, linking it with a National Leader of Education.
- The school ensures that safeguarding arrangements are good. Staff are appropriately vetted before appointment, complying with all the latest requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a good understanding of its role in providing both support and challenge to staff with leadership responsibilities.
  - Governors ensure that tolerance and respect for people with no faith or a different faith is promoted to develop the qualities and values that prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
  - Governors receive regular reports from the headteacher about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching to bring appropriate skills and expertise to improve the school further.
  - They are familiar with the school's data information tracking pupils' achievement but this has not been received in a consistent format to provide governors with comparative information on how different groups of pupils are doing across the school.
  - Governors are aware that the most disadvantaged pupils have not achieved as well as other pupils. An allocated governor is now nominated as a 'Pupil Premium Champion' to monitor the achievement of this group of pupils. This has improved governors' understanding of the impact of the pupil premium.
  - Due attention is given to staff performance in linking pay increases to the progress pupils make.
  - Regular checks by a nominated governor ensure that the school's safeguarding procedures are robust and fully meet requirements.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are courteous and they conduct themselves around the school in an orderly way. Attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils are attentive and work well in pairs and groups, concentrating and maintaining focus during lessons. Behaviour during playtimes is good. Pupils enjoy the open space and activities provided for them. Both parents and pupils are confident in the school's systems to address bad behaviour as well as reward good behaviour. Some pupils told inspectors how the school had helped them deal effectively with their own behaviour when experiencing difficulties. There are very few incidents requiring significant intervention.
- Pupils are proud of their responsibilities and take them seriously. 'Playground Pals' act as mediators to help others resolve conflict. Pupils actively support a range of charities identifying worthy causes for fund raising events. During the general election they held their own elections to vote for house captains who had to prepare their own manifesto. Participation in events such as these help pupils to gain a good understanding of environmental issues, democracy and the responsibilities of life in modern Britain.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance levels are above average. The school uses effective systems for promoting and checking attendance.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The policies to keep children safe are applied consistently well and staff training is up to date. Staff are fully conversant with the school's procedures for

safeguarding children.

- Pupils know how to stay safe on the internet. This was demonstrated during the inspection when pupils received further training from outside providers about internet safety.
- Pupils respect people's differences and have a good understanding of different forms of bullying including any related to gender or race. Discussions with pupils show incidents of bullying to be rare. The school's log of bullying incidents confirms that this is the case. Pupils say they would have no hesitation in telling an adult should they have any concerns and told inspectors how they felt safe in school.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- While teaching is improving, it is not consistently good. Pupils are not always directed sufficiently well so that they can tackle work at an appropriate level. This means that pupils may have work that is too difficult and rely on their peers for support. Occasionally when given a choice, some pupils take the option to do work that is easy and this limits their progress.
- The teaching of mathematics has been reviewed to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. Additional resources have been purchased to provide pupils with practical reinforcement when learning new concepts. Sometimes, the use of these methods are successful in helping pupils make progress in their understanding and they show a competence in applying a range of strategies to solve mathematical problems. However, not all teachers respond quickly to address misunderstandings and adapt their teaching during lessons and this means pupils do not always achieve as well as they should.
- There are some good examples of pupils taking real pride in the presentation of their work and responding effectively to teachers' marking which results in improvements. However the quality of presentation and marking in both mathematics and writing books varies. Not all teachers have the same high expectations or apply the school policies consistently. This hinders the progress pupils make and gives 'mixed messages' about what is acceptable and what is not.
- Pupils enjoy reading and a good variety of books is available in an attractive library area, the school has recently purchased resources to support those pupils less confident in reading to ensure they have structured support and this is proving effective in accelerating the progress of weaker readers. The teaching of reading when directed by an adult ensures pupils achieve well. Teachers' questioning is effective in helping pupils respond to a text exploring any misconceptions by retrieving information or inferring what the author means by referring back to the text. In some lessons teachers do not always plan activities which fully develop reading skills when pupils are working on their own without the guidance of the teacher and this limits the progress they make.
- Improvements in the teaching of writing have been enhanced by the introduction of a more systematic approach to spelling and a greater emphasis on grammar and punctuation. Consequently, standards of grammar, punctuation and spelling are above average. Pupils speak of their interest in writing and are able to discuss their preference for writing different genres. Writing in books shows pupils are confident in using new vocabulary, particularly through descriptive language. Pupils are able to write at length maintaining a consistent standard; this was one of the improvement points from the school's previous inspection.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- In 2014, when compared to the national average, Year 6 pupils attained standards that were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the grammar, punctuation and spelling test, pupils attained above-average standards. However, the progress these pupils had made in reading, writing and mathematics since entering the school in Year 3 was inadequate. The school's data and the tracking of pupils' progress show that pupils currently in the school are doing much better and there is no sign of underachievement now, although progress is inconsistent.
- Disadvantaged pupils leaving Key Stage 2 in 2014 were over two years behind their classmates in mathematics, reading and writing. This was a similar gap when compared to pupils nationally. The gap in

reading was slightly narrower, where the disadvantaged pupils were just under two years behind other pupils nationally. Additional teaching and focused group work to support the most disadvantaged pupils in each year group is resulting in accelerated progress for this group of pupils. They are rapidly making up lost ground and gaps in attainment are narrowing.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not always make sufficient progress. This varies according to how well teachers adapt the work to suit the specific learning needs of the pupils or the quality of support they receive from teaching assistants. In some lessons, pupils are not clear how to do a task and are often too reliant on support from more able peers and this hinders their progress in gaining a thorough understanding, particularly when new work is introduced.
- Pupils from minority-ethnic groups achieve well. For those who enter school with limited English they soon grasp the language because of the support the school provides. As a result, these pupils make good progress in lessons and over time.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is good. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils do better than the national average in reading and writing. The recent changes in teaching have improved the way tasks challenge the most-able pupils. Consequently, they make good 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121042
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	462057

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	235
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Banfield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Parslow-Williams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 July 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01603 810498
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