

Wilnecote Junior School

Smithy Lane, Wilnecote, Tamworth, Staffordshire B77 5LA

Inspection dates

29–30 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Ambitious and rapid action by a new leadership team is improving standards after a lengthy period of decline. New approaches to teaching, a better curriculum and higher expectations of pupils' behaviour in the classroom have improved the rate at which pupils make progress.
- Teaching is energetic and enthusiastic. Lessons are generally planned very well and teachers work hard to make sure that pupils are interested and engaged in learning. In writing lessons, the work set is not always well matched to the intended learning.
- The curriculum has been refreshed. Pupils study the subjects of the national curriculum, including by doing project work, while keeping a suitable focus on reading, writing and mathematics. New approaches to teaching mathematics have been introduced and these are proving very effective.
- Despite these many improvements, some pupils do not yet do well enough. This is largely because of weaker teaching in the past.
- Many pupils have gaps in their understanding of mathematics, particularly in Year 6. Most other pupils are generally working at levels suitable for their age.
- Some pupils make unnecessary mistakes with handwriting, spelling and punctuation. At times, their presentation is untidy and erratic. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to edit and improve their writing.
- Although the pupils' conduct is often good in classrooms, it is uneven around the school at break- and lunchtime. A few pupils act irresponsibly when the adults who supervise them fail to promote good behaviour.
- Senior and middle leaders check regularly that new initiatives are being introduced properly, but a few inconsistencies do remain.
- A few parents have expressed concern about incidents of poor behaviour but these are very rare. If they occur, they are dealt with swiftly and sensitively.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership and management, including governance, are very effective.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Effective training, along with staffing changes, have transformed teaching in the school.
- Nearly all staff, parents and pupils recognise that the school is much better than it was. They fully support the changes made.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is improving.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen pupils' writing across the school by:
 - improving pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation
 - adjusting the tasks set for pupils in lessons so that they always support the pupils in achieving the expected learning
 - providing more guidance to pupils about how to edit and improve their writing.
- Continue to fill gaps in pupils' mathematical understanding.
- Promote good or better behaviour more effectively during break- and lunchtime.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- A lengthy period of decline in pupils' progress has been halted by the arrival of the new headteacher and a new leadership team. The school has emerged from considerable staffing difficulty and turbulence, which included having five headteachers over a period of five years.
- The new headteacher swiftly introduced new ways of teaching, updated the curriculum and set higher expectations of behaviour in the classroom. Her systematic, strategic and supportive approach to introducing these changes has won the unstinting support of the overwhelming majority of staff, parents and pupils.
- There is a notable team spirit in the school. Senior and other staff in the school share an ambition for pupils to be taught and cared for very well. Over the last two years, the ethos in the school has been transformed from 'few of these pupils do' to 'all of these pupils can'.
- The school's values of 'pride, respect, inquisitiveness, determination and enthusiasm' permeate the daily life of the school. With the exception of some unstructured time, pupils usually live up to the high expectations that teachers and staff have of them.
- Senior leaders have created a culture where teachers and other staff work hard to improve their skills. They are well supported in this by a reorganised middle leadership team. Middle leaders are given a clear steer about how to introduce and manage initiatives so that workload is kept manageable.
- Teachers and other staff are given regular feedback on how well they are doing. Regular coaching and modelling from senior staff support middle leaders and other staff well. Leaders support teachers in evaluating and improving their own performance. Checks on the effectiveness of new initiatives are mostly thorough, although in a very few instances staff do not implement new expectations of pupils' behaviour consistently.
- Teachers and other staff benefit from a very good programme of training. For example, a programme of training in teaching mathematics has improved teachers' specialist subject knowledge and introduced new approaches to developing reasoning and problem solving. This has improved rapidly the progress made by most pupils in mathematics.
- Pupils study a good range of subjects. They enjoy a suitable focus on reading, writing and mathematics while also studying the other subjects of the national curriculum. A new approach to studying national curriculum subjects, often through working on a project, is fostering pupils' interest and developing knowledge, skills and understanding in new and different contexts.
- Around two thirds of the teaching staff are new. Many have been at the school for fewer than 24 months. New staff are very well supported when they arrive at the school.
- The school is an attractive and welcoming environment. Vibrant displays, which are up to date, illustrate the high standards expected by school leaders. The library is well

stocked and recent investment in books and learning equipment, including for mathematics, has strengthened teaching and learning. Physical education and sport premium funds have been used carefully to purchase new equipment for recreational sport and play at break and lunchtime.

- The additional pupil premium funding received by the school is spent judiciously. It is improving the progress of the pupils it supports.
- Nearly all parents, staff and pupils are very supportive of the changes being made to the school. They say that the school is happier, friendlier and more successful than it has been in recent years. The changes being made are usually communicated and explained well. A small minority of parents have concerns about the pupils' conduct outside lessons.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. The governing body works successfully with the newly appointed leadership team.
- A new chair of the governing body was appointed recently. She leads the work of the governors well. Other new governors have joined the board in the last few months.
- The governors have a wide range of relevant skills and experience, including in safeguarding. This allows them to hold school leaders to account for the performance of the school.
- All governors benefit from a sound programme of regular training, including in relation to keeping pupils safe.
- Governors work through a well-organised committee structure, which ensures that they maintain judicious oversight of pupils' progress, and finance, health and safety and staffing.
- Monitoring of the implementation of policy, and the welfare of pupils, is undertaken regularly, including through visits to the school. This helps governors support the work of the school and its staff.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and are aware of what needs be done to improve further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established safeguarding as a priority for the school. The approach taken by the school to safeguarding is fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.
- A programme of regular and wide-ranging training ensures that all staff, regardless of their different roles, understand what to do if they have a concern about pupil safety.
- Vigilant and early liaison with other agencies helps to prevent pupils from possible harm and ensures that they are kept safe whenever any serious concerns arise. Leaders in the school are quick to act if they become aware of a safeguarding issue.

- Pupils say that they feel safe. They know what to do if they encounter any difficulties. They are helped to understand the risks around them, including online, and how to stay emotionally and physically healthy.
- The building is well managed and secure. A relevant programme of risk assessment is in place, including for visits and trips.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have a very good understanding of what pupils need to learn. In most instances, they plan work that is well matched to the pupils' needs. It offers suitable challenge and ensures that pupils' progress is improving. In writing lessons, the activities set do not always readily support pupils in meeting their learning objectives.
- Teachers' approach to lessons is usually energetic, enthusiastic and engaging. It reflects their commitment to ensuring that all pupils make rapid progress. They work hard to fill what can be significant gaps in prior knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers usually plan lessons jointly. Detailed guidance about what should occur in each lesson supports the many new staff well. Teachers are encouraged to adjust lesson activities and the work set so that these match the needs of the different pupils in each class. Mostly, and aside from occasionally in writing, this ensures that work is challenging for pupils.
- Substantial recent training on teaching mathematics has strengthened teachers' subject knowledge. Teachers know the age-related expectations for each year group well. They understand what pupils need to learn in mathematics and adjust lessons adroitly to match pupils' needs. This is helping pupils make more rapid progress in developing their mathematical fluency, reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils. Pupils respond eagerly to teachers when they are asked questions, which are often skilfully phrased. Pupils enjoy the attention given to them as individuals.
- Pupils are given clear targets to aim at. They know what they are expected to achieve. Parents are given helpful guidance about what their child should be able to do and understand in each year at school.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They usually concentrate well. In the few instances where it becomes necessary, teachers are usually quick off the mark in reminding pupils of the need to maintain focus in lessons. Many pupils particularly enjoy project work, which gives them interesting opportunities to study in depth subjects such as art, design, geography and history.
- Teachers usually provide clear guidance to pupils about how to improve their work. Where needed, they repeat explanations and clarify misconceptions. For pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, this helps to fill what can be large gaps in earlier knowledge and understanding.
- The support provided for pupils who have SEN, including through the flexible intervention sessions, is good. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to help pupils who need extra support.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop confidence, resilience and self-belief during their time at the school. They are well cared for in a supportive but challenging environment. Many pupils are supported directly by additional adults in classrooms. Individual needs are well known to all relevant staff.
- Pupils benefit from, and enjoy, a range of innovative interventions, including a regular 'relax' meditative session, which improves their welfare and self-belief. They are all encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school.
- In most years, pupils are developing well into keen and hardworking learners. They have good work habits and take great pride in what they accomplish. In Year 6, a few pupils are less certain of how to be a successful learner and still need considerable support before they are ready for secondary school.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally good. Aside from a few instances of silly behaviour outside classrooms, pupils have a strong sense of what is right and wrong. They understand the importance of respecting each other and themselves. They are proud of their school, the work they do, and of the friends that they make.
- Pupils are supported very carefully when they arrive at the school, particularly if they arrive at a time other than at the start of the school year. Transition arrangements with the associated infant school are exemplary. Further work is planned on improving the transition to the local secondary school, which is the usual destination for most of the pupils.
- Pupils' attendance is good. Any concerns about individual attendance are dealt with robustly. Punctuality has improved and it is now good also.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils listen to their teachers in classrooms, and follow instructions from other staff when asked to do so. They know what is expected of them and, when they are supervised well, live up to the school's new and higher expectations well. In some unstructured time or when moving about the school and playground, however, they can rush or become a little boisterous.
- The pupils' conduct in lessons is mostly good. Pupils are usually quick to follow instructions and settle to their work without any fuss. There is, occasionally, too much chatter during parts of lessons that ought to be quiet, but the great majority of teachers intervene quickly to stop this.
- Pupils' conduct at break- and lunchtime is more unsettled. The dining hall can become rather noisy and some older pupils can be tempted to become involved in horseplay. Clearer guidance and more active encouragement of good behaviour from lunchtime

supervisory staff would reduce the incidence of irresponsible behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' results in the external national tests at the end of Year 6 show that standards are rising. In 2017, the proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading and writing increased and was in line with the national average. In mathematics, pupils did less well and the pupils' rate of progress was below average.
- Progress in mathematics is improving because of better teaching. Most pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 are working at the level expected for their age or are making good progress from their starting points.
- However, progress is not yet evenly good and many older pupils have large gaps in their mathematical knowledge and understanding. In Year 6, for example, many pupils struggle with basic concepts and too few are working at the standard expected for their age. A large proportion of these pupils are disadvantaged or have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Pupils across the school mostly read with fluency and interest. A new programme of guided reading has made a notable difference to the amount and quality of pupils' reading. However, some weaknesses remain in the way that older pupils infer meaning from texts.
- In writing, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to edit and improve their own work. In some instances, they are given little guidance to help them do this. Handwriting, spelling, punctuation and presentation need some attention, particularly in Year 6.
- In other subjects, pupils are usually well taught and make reasonable progress. They respond very positively to the way that foundation subjects are taught and develop skills, understanding and knowledge in ways that are appropriate for their age.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make reasonable progress. They are supported well through careful teaching and a flexible approach to intervention, although some of the Year 6 pupils are doing less well than they should. Leaders in the school consider thoughtfully who is best placed to provide intervention and what it should be, and this helps make best use of available resources.
- Pupils who receive support from the pupil premium, or who are disadvantaged, are generally supported well across the school. With the exception of a few pupils in Year 6, these pupils make steady progress from their starting points.

School details

Unique reference number	124157
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10037895

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

Type of school	Junior deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs L Baker
Executive headteacher	Mrs K Williams
Telephone number	01827 213875
Website	www.wilnecotejnrandheathfieldsinf.co.uk
Email address	office@hiwj.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 April 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. It meets the government's current floor standards.
- The school is similar in size to most other junior schools. It is in a hard federation with Heathfields Infant School and shares an executive headteacher and the same governing body.
- The leadership team has undergone significant changes over the last two years following a period of instability and recruitment difficulties. The executive headteacher of the federation is also the headteacher of Wilnecote.
- The school is a member of the Tame Valley Cooperative Learning Trust, which consists of seven other schools in Tamworth. The schools work together to improve outcomes for children.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is in line with the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school's pupil population is predominately White British.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons and observed pupils at work across the school. They spoke with groups of pupils, both formally and informally, and gathered evidence about pupils' progress by watching pupils work, by listening to pupils read, and by checking on their books. They observed the pupils' conduct in lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and interviewed senior leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors gathered the views of parents by speaking with some before the school day and by looking at the results of Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire. Inspectors took account of 39 Parent View responses, including 24 written comments. Inspectors considered the views provided by staff, including 18 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including performance information, school records, staffing information, minutes of meetings and plans for improving the school.

Inspection team

Mike Cladingbowl, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Deborah Campbell

Ofsted Inspector

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M1 2WD

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