

Wirksworth Junior School

Wash Green, Wirksworth, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 4FD

Inspection dates

25 to 26 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors do not check closely enough that the impact of their initiatives to improve standards is consistent. The quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes is too variable.
- Plans for improvement, including for the use of the pupil premium, do not set measurable enough targets to better hold leaders and staff to account.
- Some middle leadership roles are not as securely established or as effective as they could be in improving standards.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are inconsistent. Some pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, do not achieve as well as they should.
- Teachers sometimes do not use information about pupils' learning well enough to decide next steps in learning and ensure that work is well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Teachers do not tackle pupils' errors and misconceptions consistently well.
- Teachers are not equally skilled in ensuring that pupils have the knowledge they need to make the progress of which they are capable in mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' work and the accuracy of their spelling, grammar and punctuation are not consistently high enough.
- Some pupils are not as secure as they should be in reading skills, including in their use of phonics, to read and spell unfamiliar words.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. Leaders are developing a range of relevant initiatives which are improving standards. The quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes is improving.
- Pupils behave and conduct themselves well at all times of the school day. Relationships are positive and pupils are kept and feel safe.
- Pupils are taking increasing pride in their school, work and appearance.
- Staff ensure that the curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Teachers are often skilled in helping pupils to understand and use important vocabulary in different subjects.
- The number of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Senior leaders and the governing body should ensure that:
 - they check that their strategies to improve the quality of teaching and to raise standards are successful in all classes
 - they further establish and develop the roles of middle leaders so they are effective in supporting senior leaders to identify and address inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes
 - their plans for improvement, including those to enhance the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, make clearer the impact on improving pupils' outcomes that they wish to see in order to better hold staff and leaders to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' attainment and progress by ensuring that teachers:
 - consistently have high expectations of what pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged, can achieve across the curriculum
 - use effectively information about pupils' learning to adapt teaching, address pupils' misconceptions and match work accurately to pupils' abilities
 - refine approaches to the teaching of mathematics so pupils gain a deep understanding, and those who are able progress to achieve the higher standards
 - have consistently high expectations of the accuracy of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar, and that they consolidate pupils' phonics skills, where relevant, to improve standards in writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders are ambitious for the school and have recently introduced, or are developing further, well-chosen initiatives and strategies to bring about improvements in pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching in English, mathematics and other subjects. However, leaders have not ensured that these and the 'non-negotiables' they have identified are applied effectively by all staff. Subsequently, the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress are not good overall.
- Senior leaders are bringing greater rigour in many aspects of the school's work. They are sensitive to staff workload, while also focusing keenly on the aspects that need to improve. Leaders accurately identify relevant areas for improvement in the school improvement plans, and provide training and support staff to improve the quality of teaching. However, plans lack sharpness in identifying the specific improvements which need to be made to pupils' outcomes, in order for leaders and governors to hold staff rigorously to account.
- Middle leaders are committed to bringing about improvements in their areas of responsibility. They have a good understanding of their subjects and many lead staff training sessions and support colleagues to improve the quality of planning and teaching. They check standards by, for example, looking at pupils' work or visiting lessons. However, middle leaders are not as sharp as they could be in helping to ensure that staff apply agreed approaches consistently well.
- Leaders use the additional funding for physical education (PE) and sports effectively in order to support the development of teachers' expertise in teaching physical education, as well as widening pupils' involvement in sporting activities. Pupils in all classes are encouraged to participate in lunchtime physical activities. Pupils in Year 6 spoke with great enthusiasm about the sailing lessons. However, leaders do not analyse pupils' participation and improvement in PE and sports as rigorously as they could to ensure that the funding is having the maximum impact.
- Leaders and the interim coordinator of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensure that pupils receive targeted support. Pupils make positive progress from their different starting points. However, leaders' oversight and checks on the impact of the use of the additional funding for pupils with SEND is also not as focused as it could be in ensuring that leaders know the funding has the maximum impact.
- Leaders have a detailed oversight of the use of the pupil premium. They identify pupils' needs carefully and put into place well-thought-out support. For example, targeted support has been put into place to improve boys' writing. Initiatives to improve attendance, such as funding places at the breakfast club, are having positive impact. Leaders regularly meet with staff to review pupils' progress, which is improving. However, again, specific targets for improvement in the school's plans are not as sharp as they could be to ensure that the funding has the maximum impact on improving pupils' outcomes.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Enrichment activities and extra-curricular clubs complement this. Staff ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and

cultural education is effective. Pupils learn about different religions and beliefs. This is complemented by school visitors and trips to different places of worship. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for instance, visited a Gurdwara. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

- This is an improving school. Changes in leadership and staff absences have undoubtedly presented challenges to more swiftly bringing about improvements. While their plans for improvement are not as sharp as they could be, leaders have a clear vision for improvement. The impact of their work to develop a 'mastery' approach to the teaching and learning of mathematics, for example, is clearly evident in pupils' work. Leaders and staff have established ambitious expectations for the quality of pupils' writing. Staff are committed to bringing about improvements.
- Leaders support staff and provide training to improve the quality of teaching. They hold meetings with teachers to discuss pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils. They identify pupils who are falling behind and set targets for improvement. This is increasingly effective in helping pupils to catch up in their learning.
- External support from the local authority has been effective in developing leadership roles. Leaders are outward looking and have sought and acted on the advice of external consultants, as well as working with other schools to improve many aspects of the school's practices, such as ensuring more accurate assessment. Leaders and other staff are working increasingly closely with partner infant schools to improve transition arrangements.
- Parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, have mixed views about the school. Many expressed their concerns about staff changes in recent times. However, many also commented about positive changes since the establishment of the new leadership team. The large majority of parents said their children enjoyed school.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very clear on their role to both support and challenge leaders. They are knowledgeable and have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas in which it needs to improve. The governing body has managed effectively a challenging period of considerable changes to leadership and staffing.
- Members of the governing body undertake regular visits to the school to meet with leaders and other staff to review standards. This helps governors gain a deeper understanding of the school's work. The minutes of the committee meetings show that governors ask challenging questions about different aspects of the school's performance, including the use of the pupil premium. They are not, however, as fully effective as they could be in holding leaders to account, because the targets in improvement plans lack sharpness.
- The governing body has received a range of relevant training to support its work, including for safe recruitment practices and in relation to the 'Prevent' duty.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a secure culture of

safeguarding. Leaders ensure that the record of recruitment checks they carry out for staff, governors and visitors meets requirements.

- The designated leaders for safeguarding ensure that all members of staff are kept up to date with the latest guidance on keeping pupils safe in education. Staff are clear on the procedures for reporting concerns about pupils' welfare. Leaders record these carefully.
- Leaders take prompt actions when they have concerns about pupils' welfare and well-being. They are tenacious in involving external agencies when this is appropriate and keep detailed records of the actions they take.
- Pupils say they feel safe and the very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View, or who spoke with the inspectors, said their children are safe.
- Instances of derogatory behaviour and bullying are rare. However, some parents did raise some concerns. This was explored during the inspection. School records show that concerns brought to the attention of leaders and staff are followed up carefully and they take appropriate actions to resolve these as fully as possible. The large majority of pupils say bullying is now rare and they are confident staff will resolve any concerns that they have.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes not high enough. Sometimes pupils, including the most able, are not challenged to achieve as well as they could or produce the standard of work of which they are capable.
- Teachers sometimes do not use information smartly enough about pupils' learning to decide when is the right time to move learning on to more challenging work, nor ensure that work is matched well to pupils' abilities. Sometimes, teachers do not address well enough pupils' errors or misconceptions.
- Teachers' use of agreed school approaches, including in the teaching of mathematics and spelling, to giving pupils feedback, or to handwriting, is too variable. This contributes to pupils' progress not being as good as it could be.
- In mathematics, there is evidence that teachers are implementing the school's agreed approach to the teaching of mathematics. Teachers spoke positively of this work and the impact it is beginning to have. Teachers often make effective use of visual imagery to support pupils' learning. However, teachers are not equally skilled in helping pupils gain a secure knowledge and understanding of the mathematical concepts which would enable them to successfully solve problems and develop their reasoning skills.
- Teachers do not have equally high expectations of the accuracy of pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils make frequent and sometimes repeated errors. Teachers do not always give pupils clear enough guidance on how to improve nor teach them how to improve their writing to help them make the progress of which they are capable.
- Some teaching is of high quality. Such expertise is increasingly shared among colleagues. In most classes, teachers use a consistent approach to ensure that pupils know what they are learning. Teachers often encourage and praise pupils' use of

important vocabulary. Classroom resources are well organised to support learning. Teachers usually have sound subject knowledge and are often skilled in encouraging pupils to provide quality contributions in lessons.

- Teaching assistants are generally deployed well and provide effective support for pupils of different abilities and learning needs.
- Relationships are positive. Teachers ensure that classrooms are calm, orderly and positive places to learn. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and apply themselves to all that is asked of them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are polite and confident. They were happy to talk with the inspector about their work and learning. Pupils take increasing pride in their school and their appearance.
- Staff promote effectively pupils' well-being. The nurture group initiative, for instance, provides time for pupils to reflect on and understand their emotions or just have someone with whom to talk.
- Pupils' personal development is enhanced by the roles the school offers them. These include being a school counsellor or a sports leader. The pupils' 'playground pals' help to make playtimes more positive by supporting relationships and helping to resolve any fallings out. Such roles help pupils to understand the importance of being responsible.
- Pupils understand the school's values, which staff promote through the curriculum and their interactions with pupils. In an assembly about the Windrush generation, for example, pupils learned about discrimination. Staff ensure that pupils understand the importance of respecting others. Pupils explained it was important to respect people of different faiths and religions or who may have different family backgrounds because, 'We're all the same. We're all human.'
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of right, wrong and fairness. They understand the British values, for example democracy. Pupils explained how voting in the Houses of Parliament was similar to their voting for the new school house names.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. This includes when they are online or in relation to fire and road safety. They understand different types of bullying and what to do if they have a worry, for example using a class worry box or speaking to a teacher.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct in classrooms, corridors and on the playground is good. Staff manage behaviour consistently well and pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils respond quickly when staff ask for their attention. Many said that behaviour had improved and that behaviour was important because 'you have to behave well in life'.
- Staff praise pupils for their contributions and efforts. In lessons, pupils pay attention, concentrate and try hard to complete all that is asked of them. They only lose focus

when they are unsure, or if work is not matched well to their ability or needs.

- Overall attendance was above the national average in 2018. Current attendance is a little below the national average. This is largely due to a period in the spring when many pupils were ill due to a virus. Leaders, including the new attendance officer, are committed to improving attendance. They regularly scrutinise figures and emphasise the importance of high attendance with parents. The current attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved and persistent absence has reduced compared with the previous year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders and other staff are bringing about improvements, and outcomes overall are improving. However, current pupils' attainment and progress are inconsistent in different classes and subjects. Outcomes still require improvement because some pupils, including the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable in English, mathematics and other subjects.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2018, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics were similar to the national average. However, writing was below average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was similar to the national average for reading, but below average in writing and mathematics.
- Current pupils' work shows that pupils write at length in different subjects and in a range of styles. However, the quality of pupils' writing and the progress they make in this skill is inconsistent. The often-strong content of their writing is frequently let down by weak spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Pupils are making improving progress in mathematics. This is particularly strong when teachers plan sequences of lessons that help pupils understand, for example, calculation methods. However, pupils sometimes do not gain a deep enough understanding of the important ideas in mathematics or they are not as confident as they could be in using their knowledge to solve problems and reason.
- Reading initiatives are promoting positive attitudes to reading. However, while pupils' attainment and progress in reading are improving, some pupils are not as secure as they should be in using and applying their reading strategies, including consolidating their phonics knowledge, to read and spell unfamiliar words.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress from their starting points at least in line with their peers because they receive effective support across the school.

School details

Unique reference number	112652
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10087340

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jannine McCarthy
Headteacher	Isabel Webb
Telephone number	01629 822 457
Website	www.wirksworth-junior.com
Email address	office@wirksworth-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2017

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the current headteacher was appointed in April 2018. The former acting headteacher is now a member of the senior leadership team. An attendance officer has been appointed. There have also been changes in the membership of the governing body.
- The school receives support from the local authority through regular visits and support.
- Wirksworth Junior School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has a breakfast club.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well below those seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff. The inspector met with members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority. Discussions explored a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspector observed nine lessons jointly with the headteacher. During these visits, the inspector looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils to evaluate the quality of their learning. The inspector scrutinised pupils' work with leaders. The inspector listened to pupils read and met pupils informally, as well as meeting with a group of pupils.
- The inspector spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day and account was taken of the 61 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text responses. Account was also taken of the 10 responses to the staff questionnaire and 64 responses to the pupils' questionnaire.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, pupils' attainment and progress, and staff performance. The inspector looked at plans for improvement as well as leaders' evaluation of the school's performance. The inspector also considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

John Lawson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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