

Dereham, Toftwood Community Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120987
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339823
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Heather Weston HMI

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	Mr Jim Hyland
Headteacher	Miss Alex Gelling
Date of previous school inspection	0 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The majority of time during the inspection was spent observing learning. The inspectors observed 13 teachers, visited 23 lessons and looked at pupils' work. They joined two assemblies, observed break-times, held meetings with governors, staff, parents and groups of pupils. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including school data, the school improvement and development plan, records of meetings and 91 parental questionnaires, staff and pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- why standards in English fell so significantly in 2008 and whether the action taken by the school has ensured continuing improved standards in English
- pupils' current standards and rates of progress, particularly in English and for pupils eligible for free school meals
- how the school gains such consistently high standards in science
- pupils' understanding of different cultures and of cultural diversity
- how effectively teachers plan to meet the needs of different ability groups in their classes or sets
- the effectiveness of guidance given to pupils as to how to improve their work.

Information about the school

Toftwood Junior School is larger than most junior schools. A lower than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of minority ethnic pupils is well below average and a small proportion speak English as an additional language. A higher than average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities with a much higher than average proportion having a statement of special educational need.

The school has the Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark for physical education. All pupils are involved in the 'Norfolk Golden Mile Challenge'.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

'I am happy in this school because everyone smiles'. This pupil's words reflect the views of other pupils, and of staff, that this is a very happy school with a real sense of community. Pupils also say that they 'love this school' and that it is 'amazing'. Staff and pupils all work well together, but not in a complacent, cosy fashion. Far from it, questioning, challenging and explaining take place at every level within a tangible atmosphere of trust. Pupils are truly 'proud to shine' and celebrate each others' successes both great and small. The school has several outstanding aspects, including pupils' behaviour, their attitude to learning and their social and moral development. Pupils feel the staff 'are great' and that the new curriculum, Toftwood Learning Adventure (TLA) is 'such fun'. This enjoyment is further enhanced by the school's outstanding partnerships which contribute both to extra-curricular activities and to pupils' wellbeing. Outstanding care, guidance and support help pupils to overcome any barriers to their learning and outstanding attention is paid to safeguarding pupils. Pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles is also outstanding. They really shine at sporting and other events such as dance competitions and all are keen to exceed the Golden Mile Challenge, that is, to walk 50 miles in two terms.

The school is so good because of the dedicated leadership of the headteacher and the enthusiasm of the staff team. The headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher have a clear commitment to making sure all pupils are excited and enthused by their learning and to enabling them all to make good progress. This is shared by the team of strong, equally committed senior leaders and together they have created a high sense of morale. All are involved in evaluating the work of the school with increasing rigour and accuracy. Improvement planning is detailed and thorough, reflecting leaders' ambition for improving standards. This aspiration is, however, not fully obvious, with targets in the plan reflecting merely satisfactory outcomes. In addition, although teachers' performance management is linked to the performance of pupils who are in danger of falling behind, there is no link between teachers' performance management and the outcomes of all pupils in their classes or sets. Teaching is good, with some that is outstanding. As pupils say, the headteacher 'is always improving teaching'. In fact, leaders at all levels are working closely to develop consistency of practice and further improve its quality. Assessment is being refined with new ongoing assessment procedures. Teachers pitch learning at appropriate levels for the majority of pupils but data are not being used to tailor outcomes precisely to pupils' learning needs, especially to the needs of more able pupils, in order to promote the best possible progress. Although some teachers share success criteria, they are not making sure that different groups of children have appropriately planned criteria so that they know exactly what it

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is that they are learning. Some pupils have personal targets for writing but practice is inconsistent and targets are changed too infrequently to enable pupils to know how to reach the next level in their work. In addition, pupils and their parents are not sufficiently aware of how much progress they are making during the year or how much progress they should be making. Data are, however, used very well to identify those pupils who have fallen behind and to ensure that they are given appropriate support through intervention.

Overall attainment has been significantly above average since 2006 although this fell in 2008 because standards in English dropped to significantly below average. Standards in science have been high for a number of years, due to the strong, practical emphasis on investigation and the development of thinking skills in science. Standards in mathematics were just above average in 2009, as were those in English, as a result of swift and decisive action to improve attainment in English. This emphasis on improvement and the impact of the actions already taken to improve provision demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- – Further raise standards in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that all teachers plan specifically for the needs of different ability groups in their classes or sets and increase the level of challenge for more able pupils
 - using assessment data to identify learning outcomes so pupils know exactly what they are meant to learn
 - refining the use of targets, ensuring consistency in their use and making sure that they are shared with parents
 - ensuring expectations regarding rates of progress are shared with staff, pupils and parents and that these expectations are included in staff performance management.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Many pupils enter the school with below average attainment, and few join with higher levels of attainment. They make good progress, and leave the school with standards which are just above average in English and mathematics. The learning and progress of all groups of pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and minority ethnic pupils, is good. Those pupils with special educational needs and or/disabilities make good and in some cases, outstanding progress. Although progress in English has been significantly lower than average in recent years, action taken by the school to improve pupils' reading and writing skills has ensured that pupils across the school now make good progress in English as well as in mathematics and science. This is demonstrated from the schools' own tracking data, from pupils' work and from lesson observations. The rich curriculum enables pupils to reach high standards in other areas such as art,

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drama and sport. In addition, pupils have increasingly well-developed thinking skills because of the continual challenge to explain their reasoning and in the nicest way possible to challenge the thinking of others (including that of their teachers).

Pupils are quite adamant that they feel safe in school and that they are good at looking after each other. They say the anti-bullying week gave them a clearer understanding of issues and how to deal with them and that peer mediators give good support. Pupils are very polite and courteous. They behave extremely well during lessons because they are interested in learning and know how they are expected to conduct themselves. They behave well when moving around the school and in the playground. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and all are engaged in decision-making through the school and class councils. They make a good contribution to the life of the school and demonstrate a sense of ownership and pride in their school. They become involved with the wider community through partnerships, through the good range of sports opportunities with other schools and through regular fund-raising for charity. The good opportunities for applying their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, their ability to work well together and their developing skills in independent learning mean that pupils are well prepared for the future. Attendance is satisfactory, with a below average number of pupils who are persistently absent. Pupils' spiritual development is good. Their cultural development is satisfactory although exciting strategies are in place to improve this aspect of their development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<p>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</p> <p>Taking into account: Pupils' attendance¹</p>	2
	3
<p>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</p>	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers really do make learning fun. The pace of learning is brisk, especially in outstanding lessons, although where teaching is weaker this pace slows. Adults encourage pupils of all abilities to actively participate throughout lessons. They frequently use good quality questioning techniques, often challenging pupils well to extend their knowledge and understanding. Behaviour management is excellent. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together as teams and support pupils with special educational needs very well. The marking of pupils' written work is mostly very good so that pupils understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Marking is effective in mathematics but less informative about what pupils need to do to improve.

The school has worked effectively over the past two years to build a dynamic curriculum which develops pupils' skills and knowledge well. The thematic approach has brought more cohesion, allowing pupils to extend key skills in other subjects. Some subjects are appropriately taught separately and there is still a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. There are good developments in the teaching of these areas, for example there is consistency in the methods teachers use for calculation and problem-solving, so that pupils do not become confused as they change classes. Significant improvements have been made in the provision for ICT. Excellent partnerships aid learning, including the links with a local high school whose staff trained teachers in primary languages so that the lessons in Spanish and French are successful. As well as sports, there is a very wide range of club activities that are well attended and suit the interests of most pupils. The many visitors and visits considerably enhance the curriculum and increase the enjoyment of pupils.

Staff know pupils very well, and the pastoral care provided for the pupils is strong. The school has made good use of the advice from staff at the neighbouring special school and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are helped to make good, and often better progress. Very good links are in place with a wide range of support agencies and the school provides a high level of care and support for all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Pupils with particular needs are supported in class by the highly effective nurture provision or by interventions provided in the inclusion room.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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<p>The quality of teaching</p> <p>Taking into account:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The use of assessment to support learning</p>	2
	2
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	2
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders are highly successful in inspiring all staff to share a real sense of purpose. The robustness of tracking systems and the quality of teaching are both improving due to the pursuit of continuous improvement. Governors are strongly focused on promoting pupils' personal development and have recently taken effective action to create the vision statement 'proud to shine'. They are aware of strengths and relative weaknesses through their own monitoring and by asking challenging questions. However, although they do monitor provision effectively, they have not been sufficiently involved in monitoring the impact of initiatives on standards in order to ensure the best possible progress is made by all pupils.

The school works hard to develop its partnerships with parents and carers and has established good links with them. A variety of information is provided, including newsletters and meetings about the curriculum. The majority of parents speak highly of the school and like the 'open door' policy. Governors are aware of the need to strengthen these links in order to involve parents more fully in their children's learning. Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the work of the school. Good provision ensures all pupils are included. Pupils are very aware that they are all treated the same. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities including those in need of emotional support are helped to take part in all activities. Provision for able, gifted and talented pupils is well monitored. In some lessons, able pupils are given additional, challenging activities but practice is inconsistent across the school. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school reaches out into the local community but links beyond this are less well developed. Plans are already in place to address this with the start of a link with a school in Uganda. However, these plans are not yet well enough established to show the impact on pupils' learning. Safeguarding procedures to ensure the safety and security of pupils are rigorous.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<p>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</p> <p>Taking into account:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The leadership and management of teaching and learning</p>	2
	2
<p>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</p>	2

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers feel that the school keeps their children safe. Almost all feel that their children enjoy school and most are happy with their experience at the school. A minority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that the school does not deal effectively with behaviour. Inspectors do not agree with this view and found that pupils' behaviour was very mature, due to the highly effective use of behaviour management procedures. A small minority of parents and carers feel the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors do not agree that the school does not take account of their suggestions, although they feel that parents and carers are not sufficiently involved in contributing to their children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dereham, Toftwood Community Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection, of which 90 were analysed. Responses in the 10 questionnaires received after the analysis was carried out were all in agreement with the statements. In total, there are 348 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	61	32	36	2	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	55	61	35	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	42	43	48	8	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	53	36	40	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	49	54	36	40	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	44	42	47	6	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	38	42	4	4	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	39	43	42	47	5	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	47	41	46	1	1	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	38	40	44	12	13	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	31	48	53	9	10	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	38	42	45	50	3	3	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	57	31	34	5	6	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dereham, Toftwood Community Junior School, Dereham, NR19 1JB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently, for talking to us and showing us your work. We very much enjoyed our visit and finding out about the enjoyable and interesting things you do in lessons and in clubs. We really liked the TLA. We could see you why you say that school is such fun. Everyone seems so happy and to enjoy being in school! We found that you are very polite, respectful and sensible. Your outstanding behaviour is reflected in the way that you are all so clearly 'proud to shine' yourselves and also proud of others who shine. We also found that all the adults at school work very hard to help you do your work.

Your school is a good school, with many special qualities. The way you are looked after and the way the school helps you to be healthy are both outstanding. You all make good progress, and some of you who find learning hard are making outstanding progress. However, those of you who find learning easy are not always given enough challenge to help you make even better progress. To help you all make even better progress we have asked the governors, the headteacher and the staff to do these things:

- continue to raise standards in English and mathematics
- make sure that your work is neither too easy nor too hard
- make sure that you know how to carry out a successful piece of work
- make sure targets are used well in all classes and that both you and your parents know your targets
- ensure everyone, including you and your parents, know how much progress you make during the year and the progress you should be making.

You can help by continuing to have such a mature attitude to your learning and by using your success criteria to help you make really good progress.

Yours sincerely

Heather Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector

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