

Wirksworth Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112652
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	363354
Inspection dates	11–12 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gisela Vidal
Headteacher	Lesley Grover
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited 11 lessons undertaken by seven teachers and held meetings with a representative from the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed pupils' work, and looked at documentation related to safeguarding, health and safety, assessment of pupils' progress, teaching and the curriculum.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What has been the impact of the school's progress in improving provision and in raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection?
- What is the quality of assessment procedures, current pupils' progress and how do staff use this information?
- How has the strengthening of leadership and management, specifically in relation to the monitoring of what is happening in the classroom and in developing the school, impacted on improvement?
- How is the school ensuring that the current government regulations for safeguarding are fully met?
- Is the school ready to be removed from special measures and sustain its capacity for improvement at all levels.

Information about the school

The school was placed in special measures in October 2009 because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the people responsible for leading, managing or governing the school were not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. An interim acting headteacher was appointed for two terms following the inspection and a new substantive headteacher took up post in September 2010. Two new members of staff were also appointed to the senior leadership team from the autumn term 2010. There has been substantial change to the governing body, with new members bringing wider expertise and a rearrangement of roles and responsibilities. A temporary teaching arrangement has continued this academic year in Year 6 on four afternoons each week to reduce the class size in science and other subject areas. The governing body and the local authority are considering class arrangements for the coming academic year. There are currently 147 pupils on roll. There is a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities but, of these, a lower proportion than is typical with a statement for their special educational needs. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and most speak English as their first language. A lower percentage than is usual is eligible for free school meals.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Wirksworth Junior School now provides a satisfactory standard of education because pupils' achievement and progress is rising, outcomes for pupils have improved and the leadership team demonstrate a good capacity to improve still further. In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The senior leadership team, with effective support from the governing body, is committed to turning the school around. Staffing across the school is increasingly stable and there is a dedicated, professional team who are keen to learn from best practice and address any issues with immediacy. As a result of high quality support from the local authority and utilising the skills of new staff, the quality of teaching and learning has significantly improved, with the percentage of good or better lessons rising. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated. Lessons in literacy and numeracy, in particular, are of good quality across the school. Pupils are focussed and have positive attitudes to learning, which has significantly improved their enjoyment and success. In particular, the school better accounts for the range of pupils' needs, including those that may require additional help or extra challenge. Accurate data and the careful monitoring of pupils' progress by senior leaders means that those with learning difficulties are identified quickly and well supported, so that their progress is in line with other pupils and they are not academically disadvantaged. Behaviour across the school is consistently good and pupils are settled in classes. They respond well to staff's high expectations, which have improved the amount of work produced, the accuracy of their spellings and their presentation.

Pupils usually enter the school with standards that are fairly typical for their age. However, this is variable with each cohort and, in some year groups data shows that pupils are below what is age typical. The last Year 6 cohort had improved their progress from their earlier years and left the school achieving standards approximately in line with the national average in English and just above the national average in mathematics. This was the school's best performance for many years and can be attributed to the improvements in teaching, aided by the establishment of rigorous assessment procedures and the more effective use of this information to set challenging targets for each pupil. The school recognises it has more to do to ensure that all groups of pupils are doing as well as they can. Analysis of this has already begun and has identified where girls' and boys' achievement differs. Progress towards targets is monitored closely in English and mathematics, but monitoring of other subject areas, including science, is not as far advanced.

The school has begun to develop links between the different areas of the curriculum. Whilst this has greatly enthused pupils, it has not yet been fine tuned to ensure adequate subject coverage, or to ensure that groups of pupils do not repeat some elements.

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Planning is not sufficiently refined to ensure that pupils adequately build on their existing knowledge and skills, including their writing, mathematical and technological skills across all areas of the curriculum. With leadership of these areas improving at a pace, and with closer monitoring of what goes on in lessons, the gathering of pupil views and regular sampling of work, staff are now equipped to maintain improvement. The care, guidance and support offered to pupils includes more effective use of marking and adult support inside and outside of the classroom, leading to better pupil progress.

The strengthening of the senior leadership team has been instrumental in the overall improvement in the school. The new head teacher and restructured governing body have been very effective in challenging the school and in tackling weaknesses, which the school has monitored closely and evaluated accurately. The whole leadership team has worked tirelessly to address the points for improvement and each individual is clear about their personal role and collective contribution. The governing body is now holding the school to account in all key aspects of its work and better understands the data. The school's improved capacity is demonstrated through securing improved outcomes. This includes improving rates of pupil progress and achievement through strengthening the quality of teaching and robust and rigorous tracking systems. Whilst progress and achievement are still not completely even across the school, robust assessment in English and mathematics ensures that staff are aware of any pupils who are not on track or in danger of not meeting their targets. The school is beginning to work with the community and local partners in education, such as the federated infant schools and high school, and recognise the benefits of this in ensuring effective transition and accurate transfer of data at both ends of the school. Planning has begun for providing a wider range of extra curricular opportunities to enhance the curriculum and enthuse and stimulate pupils' writing. Safeguarding procedures meet with statutory requirements and are now good. The school ensures that no child is discriminated against and works hard to ensure it minimises any inequalities between groups of learners. The school has worked hard to build its relationship with parents and carers, and their involvement, for example through the types of homework projects given to pupils. This is beginning to add to pupils' enjoyment of learning and their application of a wider range of knowledge and skills.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the curriculum by:
 - ensuring pupils receive a sufficiently rounded curriculum incorporating all foundation subjects
 - ensuring that planning across the foundation subjects builds on children's existing knowledge and further increases their interest and skills
 - providing greater cross curricular links so that opportunities for pupils to use their writing, mathematical skills and information and communication technology are integrated into other subject areas
 - providing further extra curricular activities and developing a range of community links.
 - Further develop transition links at both ends of the school.

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- Refine the use of assessment data and the monitoring of identified groups of pupils to ensure they all attain as well as they can.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Last year's Year 6 cohort performed well in their end of year assessments and much better than in previous years. Overall, performance in English was close to the national average at the expected Level 4 and above, but with much improved progress, specifically in writing, which had been a whole school focus. Standards in mathematics were also just above the national average at Level 4 and above. The number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 also improved on previous years, with more Level 5 scores achieved in English than mathematics and more pupils gaining Level 5 in reading than in writing. However, as the cohorts are always hugely variable in size and prior attainment, it is important not to see this as an indication of trend.

During the inspection pupils' progress in almost all lessons was good: a reflection of the improved teaching and learning in every year group. This concurs with the school's own monitoring and is beginning to impact on pupils' progress over time. Almost all children are making at least satisfactory progress with many making good or even very good progress, including some pupils with special educational needs or disabilities. There are more effective systems of assessment, enabling staff to identify which groups are not making sufficient progress. Staff fully understand where there are gender differences in achievement, with girls surpassing boys in expected and higher levels in English in 2010 and in expected achievement in mathematics. However, more boys than girls achieved the higher levels in mathematics in 2010. Staff have continued to analyse any current Year 6 gender differences.

Around half of the current Year 3 pupils have made reasonable progress in their reading and around a third have made reasonable progress in their writing and mathematics mid-way through this academic year. However, some current Year 3 pupils, despite the consistently good teaching they receive, have plateaued or even receded in terms of their achievement since their last formal assessment at the end of Key Stage 1. The school is doing everything it can to improve the rate of progress of its lower achievers. Progress in the other year groups is now mainly in line with the targets set by the school, and staff know exactly which pupils are behind, on track, or who have exceeded their targets. Pupils are now better aware of their targets and what they need to do to achieve them.

The legacy of under-achievement is beginning to work through so that pupils have fewer gaps in their knowledge and skills. Procedures for learning spellings have begun to impact positively and spelling, whilst still an issue for some groups, is improving across the school. The presentation of work in all classes is much improved and expectations are high. It is evident that there has been a whole school focus on handwriting and standards are more consistent across the school.

Pupils' personal development has notable strengths. The school encourages pupils to be tolerant and considerate, and their positive response demonstrates their strong social and moral development. Pupils behave well, have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy their lessons. They show genuine concern for the well-being of others and respond enthusiastically when encouraged to make a wider contribution to the school community by readily taking on specific responsibilities. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They have a satisfactory understanding of healthy lifestyles. They work collaboratively with

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partners or in teams, as is demonstrated in purposeful discussions, in mathematical challenges, and on field trips. These attributes help prepare them for their next stage of education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has shown a term by term improvement, particularly in English and mathematics. There is good teaching in all year groups as a result of better planning, a greater focus on assessing pupils' work and progress, and well-tailored support for staff. Assessment information is consistently used well in English and mathematics to plan work which is sufficiently challenging to all groups of pupils. The needs of the more able Year 5 and 6 pupils is specifically addressed through weekly mathematics lessons which significantly challenges their thinking and ensures they do not repeat work they have previously covered and are already capable of. Additional support is arranged for those pupils who are not on course to reach their targets, for example those who have yet to grasp a basic understanding of phonics, or those who are challenged by dyslexia, behaviour or integrating positively with other pupils. These initiatives and intervention strategies are monitored most carefully for their impact on pupil outcomes and are shown to have positive effect. The provision for pupils has improved through making the most of adults' skills and specialisms. The separation of the large Year 6 cohort, for example, has

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ensured that pupils receive good quality support in literacy and mathematics and that they have greater curricular opportunities in the afternoon sessions.

Curriculum development is progressing satisfactorily, although the school recognises it has more to do to ensure pupils' core skills are effectively utilised across all curriculum areas and that expectations remain as high across foundation subjects. The school has begun to broaden local community links through maintaining regular participation in the town's carnival, traditional well dressing and art and architecture trails, as well as taking part in interschool sporting events and musical performances. However, the school recognises it has not yet effectively embraced wider community through the curriculum. The school cares well for its pupils. It provides good quality guidance through marking work consistently thoroughly, which is a further significant improvement since the last monitoring visit.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership and management of the school are now strong. The team is ambitious for what the school and the pupils can achieve individually and collectively. Target-setting is suitably challenging and outcomes are improving strongly. Staff and governors have driven improvement briskly and consistently, as was required. The expertise brought into the school to share, together with greater clarity of roles and specific responsibilities, has motivated everyone to work efficiently and to use all of the information available to them intelligently. Through effective monitoring and reflective practice, staff and governors know their school well and have prioritised sensibly. Consequently, the leadership and management of teaching and learning, which also now involves governors, has strengthened. With new expertise within the governing body and improved knowledge and skills of longer serving members, the governing body is now better challenging the school and helping the team address weaknesses. Governors are aware of their statutory responsibilities and ensure these meet requirements, including procedures for safeguarding.

The school has made some strides in involving parents in pupils' learning, with new methods of task based homework for pupils, which are supported by their families. The school continues to work hard to improve pupils' attendance. The relationships with feeder infant schools are improving, with more contact between schools and greater thought to transition arrangements and moderation of data transfer. As a result of carefully thought out interventions and effective use of resources, the progress of all learners is more

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evenly matched. The school continues to work on developing opportunities for community cohesion and increasing pupils' knowledge of communities further afield.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

No parental questionnaires were distributed during the inspection, but the school's own surveys of parental opinions demonstrate an increasingly improved level of satisfaction with the school's provision and the outcomes that pupils achieve.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



13 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wirksworth Junior School, Matlock, DE4 4FD

Thank you for the welcome you gave to me during my last visit. I agree with you and the local authority that your school is much improved and the excellent news is that it no longer needs special measures. I am so delighted to be able to tell you this!

As you know, I have been visiting Wirksworth Junior over the last four terms to assess the progress the school has been making. The whole of the team leading your school, including Mrs Grover and the governing body, has worked exceptionally hard to turn your school around. It is so heartening to see what has been accomplished.

Teachers have been committed to delivering better quality lessons and to helping you achieve well. Most of your lessons are now good and you are interested in what you are learning and doing your best. Last year's Year 6 did much better in their English and mathematics than in previous years and achieved virtually as well as, or in some cases slightly better than, pupils in other schools. This was the best record for Wirksworth Junior School for several years. You are all enjoying your lessons more and many of you are on course to reach your targets. Those of you that need greater support to do better are receiving it. The school feels like a better place to learn and everyone cares more about it.

I want your school to keep improving, so I have asked for work to continue on:

- making sure all groups of children all do as well as everyone else through asking your teachers to assess you and check your progress, for example making sure that girls don't do better than the boys, or the other way round
- giving you opportunities for writing, using your mathematical understanding and computer skills in lots of subject areas and for your teachers to have the same expectations for your writing, presentation and progress as in literacy and numeracy
- making sure you do enough of all subjects (such as music and art) in the new creative curriculum you receive; that you have enough extra curricular opportunities (such as after school and lunchtime clubs) and that you have the chance to make wider community links (learning about other communities outside of Wirksworth)
- developing closer links with the two infant schools and the upper school in Wirksworth.

You can support the school and your own learning by remembering your targets and always trying your hardest. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne

Her Majesty's Inspector

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