

George White Junior School

Silver Road, , Norwich, NR3 4RG

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Strong leadership and management of the school have secured a marked improvement in teaching and in achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good. They are proud of their school. They have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school.
- The school provides good additional support for the pupils who need it and this means that all groups of pupils achieve well.
- Attendance has continued to improve over recent years and is above the national average. This is an important factor in improving pupil progress.
- Teaching is good in all subjects and sometimes outstanding in mathematics. Good subject knowledge and very good relationships contribute to the positive atmosphere found throughout the school. Pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- The school ensures each individual pupil is fully involved in all aspects of school life. For example, pupils supported through the specialist resource base are well integrated into the main school.
- Leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, have successfully focused on improving pupils' experiences of learning. Since the previous inspection the range of activities has improved.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are inconsistencies in pupils' achievement in writing. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write in a range of different subjects.
- Especially in writing, the expectation of those pupils who could do more difficult work is not high enough.
- Not enough teaching allows pupils to become independent in their learning. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use homework to help pupils to show initiative and make choices about their own learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by ten teachers including those in the specialist resource base. Three were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons and heard a sample of pupils read.
- Meetings were held with governors and staff and the headteacher of a partner school. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Formal and informal discussions were held with pupils about their work, their learning and their behaviour in the school.
- A wide range of documentation was looked at, including school self-evaluation, assessment data from the monitoring of pupils' progress, and improvement plans. School policies and performance management documentation and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance, together with the school's safeguarding procedures, were also evaluated.
- The inspector took account of the 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of several parents who spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- Questionnaires from 21 staff were considered.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Mayle

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average junior school.
- The school runs specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs for 10 pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- A significant number of pupils join or leave the school between Years 3 and 6.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra funding from the pupil premium (which is provided to support the learning of pupils who are entitled to free school meals or in the care of the local authority) is significantly higher than that in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupil supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just above average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which determine the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring expectations of what more able pupils can achieve are sufficiently high, particularly in writing
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently both by themselves and through better use of homework activities.

- Ensure consistency in pupils' attainment and progress in writing by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length, for different purposes and in different styles in subjects across the curriculum
 - applying the same rigour to checking pupils' progress and setting targets for improvement as found in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Learning throughout school is good and occasionally outstanding. There has been an improving trend in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics over recent years. By the time they leave, pupils achieve at least as well as others of their age and sometimes better. They develop the skills they need for the future.
- The proportion of pupils who make expected progress or more than expected progress, given their starting points on entry to Year 3, compares favourably with national figures. Lesson observations, standards of reading demonstrated by pupils and scrutiny of work confirm that current pupils are making good progress. This supports parents' view that their children make good progress and achieve well.
- The well-planned teaching of the sounds letters make (phonics) enables pupils of all abilities to develop good reading skills. Pupils read widely and frequently, and reading attainment is average by the time they leave the school. Inconsistencies in the planning and teaching of writing have resulted in a slower rate of improvement than in mathematics.
- Progress is rapid in mathematics. This is because the school has placed great emphasis on linking mathematics to real-life situations, and on developing pupils' problem-solving skills.
- In an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were fully engaged because they had a variety of well-planned practical activities that not only grabbed their attention but also moved their understanding forward stage by stage. As they moved around the school to solve well-constructed mathematical problems, the teacher asked questions that challenged pupils to think for themselves. There was evidence of fervent concentration from pupils as they strove to work out the solutions.
- The attainment gap between English and mathematics is closing. Improvements to the curriculum and teaching have made some difference but there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in writing across a range of subjects. Pupils enjoy tackling demanding tasks, although occasionally, because the level of challenge is not sufficient, more able pupils find some activities too easy.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and the needs of those who join the school part way through the year, are identified early when they join the school. These groups benefit from well-targeted provision through individual support or through group work.
- Pupils in the specialist resource base make the same good progress as their peers because the individual attention they receive ensures their needs are well provided for.
- Those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium achieve well because of the extra provision they receive. This demonstrates how the school fulfils its vision to provide equality of opportunity through, for example, its good use of this additional funding, and takes care to ensure that there is no discrimination.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and the vast majority is good or better, with just a very small amount that still requires improvement. As they want their pupils to be successful learners, staff have made good use of external support and training to make their teaching even better.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, use skilled support staff effectively and regularly check that pupils understand what they are doing. They also build very positive and caring relationships with pupils that help to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils say that they enjoy school and feel that they are taught well.
- In the most effective lessons, pupils are fully engaged in creative, practical learning activities that 'stretch' them. Learning takes place at a good rate and timed activities keep pupils focused on their work. Pupils' books show that work is marked regularly and the school's marking system is already helping pupils to understand better what they have to do next in order to improve their work.
- The teaching of mathematics and reading is stronger than the teaching of writing throughout the school. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching of writing result in pupils in some year groups not always making as much progress as they should. This is especially so for the more able. Sometimes, tasks are too easy because activities lack sufficient challenge for pupils to reach higher levels or to practise their writing skills in other subjects.
- In a few lessons, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use their own initiative to work by themselves and opportunities are missed to develop this ability through, for example, homework activities.
- Teachers know what they are trying to achieve with pupils and what the next steps in learning for each pupil are. This is because the school has sharpened its tracking of pupils' individual progress. Teaching is making increasingly effective use of the resulting information to match tasks to the needs of different groups of learners.
- Teachers make a successful contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through activities such as school assemblies, singing together and in the wide range of activities used to motivate pupils in their learning.
- Teaching assistants are used well in the classrooms to support learning or to provide targeted programmes for those pupils who have special educational needs. This means that those who have been identified as requiring extra help always make or exceed expected progress.
- The teaching of pupils in the resource base is good. Early identification of individuals' needs and close working with outside agencies mean that pupils receive good support.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite and well mannered; they get on well with adults and each other. Most pupils behave well in all situations around the school, though it occasionally dips. The overwhelming view of parents is that behaviour is good. The caring ethos of the school is promoted effectively through the strong relationships between pupils and staff.
- Pupils are well supported by the praise and rewards they receive and the methods staff use to manage the few incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils understand and value the rewards and sanctions system where their attitudes to work and behaviour can result in gaining a 'Golden Ticket'.
- Pupils have an eagerness to learn which helps them to concentrate well in lessons and make good progress. Pupils know their academic targets and what they should do to achieve them. An impressive feature of the school is the way all pupils get on well and support each other. Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures, many joining the school at different times throughout the year, are well supported, settle quickly and make friends.
- Pupils understand the various forms that bullying may take, including name calling, cyber-bullying and bullying as a result of prejudice. They know what to do should bullying issues arise and have great confidence that the adults will sort out any incidents quickly. Pupils report they feel safe because they are well cared for by teachers and other adults. They understand how to keep themselves safe. Parents agree that their children feel safe.
- Pupils enjoy the range of responsibilities they can take, for example, as anti-bullying ambassadors, members of the school council and captains of school teams.
- Weekly 'Celebration of Achievement' assemblies are valued by the pupils and motivate them to work hard and behave well by celebrating exemplary behaviour, excellent work and achievements outside school.
- Attendance rates have been improving and are now above average. This reflects the good work the school has done with families and pupils' enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is a driving force in setting the school's vision and direction. Her high expectations are clearly shared by the whole school community, senior leadership team and governors. The head of the specialist resource base leads with a strong sense of purpose and ensures that pupils receive the individual help they need to progress well.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and is used effectively by leaders and managers to set school priorities. Weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been successfully tackled. Leaders' responsibilities are better shared out and all staff work well together as a strong team. Staff morale is high. Achievement has gone up and pupils' progress has accelerated as a result of improvements to the quality of teaching. All pupils, whatever their ability or background, are given equal opportunities for success.
- The strong focus on improving teaching and learning has been based on observation of lessons and review of the work in pupils' books, with clear feedback to staff to help them build on good practice and eliminate weaknesses. In parallel with this, better checking of pupils' progress, in

regular meetings with teachers, has given a clear picture of how well individuals and groups are doing. This is used to identify and provide extra help.

- The link between performance management, improvement in outcomes for pupils and pay progression is firmly established. The quality of teaching is monitored regularly and accurately by the headteacher. It leads to discussion with teachers about the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and the identification of effective professional development to improve its quality and impact on learning.
- Although pupils are provided with exciting topics which link subjects together, not enough opportunities are being provided for pupils to use and develop their writing skills across subjects. There is a wide range of enrichment activities that make a major contribution to pupils' excellent personal development. The specialist teaching of music makes particularly strong contributions to spiritual and cultural development.
- The impact of intervention programmes is measured carefully. The pupil premium funding has been used well to ensure that eligible pupils get any extra academic help they need and this has led to them making the same good progress as their classmates.
- The local authority has provided effective support that has contributed well to improvements in teaching and pupils' progress. Beneficial links with an outstanding partner school and local cluster schools have helped the senior leaders to receive good training and share good practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body regularly undertakes training, is well informed, and actively involved in holding the school to account for its work. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, its performance in relation to other similar schools as well as an understanding of and involvement in performance management and teacher pay. They make certain the budget provides value for money including the use of the pupil premium funding. They ensure it is used well to provide targeted support for pupils which has helped to improve their progress. With other leaders, they make sure that all safeguarding and child protection practices fully meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120940
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	405980

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	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Fox
Headteacher	June Sewell
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2010
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