

George White Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120940
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	313802
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Newell

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 on roll	
School	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Louise Culley
Headteacher	Mr Paul Stanley
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2004
School address	Silver Road Norwich Norfolk NR3 4RG
Telephone number	01603 425515
Fax number	01603 483687

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school was re-designated as a junior school in September 2007 and at this date half of the pupils were new to the school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. More pupils than nationally need help with their learning and the proportion with a statement for their special educational need is well above average. This is because the school houses a twelve-place Learning Support Centre (LSC) for pupils with complex learning and emotional needs who are often, but not exclusively, taught, with support, in the main school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and few are at an early stage of acquiring English. A small number of children from travelling communities attend the school. The school has gained national Healthy School and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Most parents appreciate the school's efforts to provide a caring and supportive environment for their children to learn in. The headteacher, staff and governors are committed to taking the school on to the next level, whilst fully recognising that this will involve rigorously tackling identified areas of weakness. The school's track record of improvement suggests the school is appropriately placed to help this vision become a reality.

The school's data indicates that attainment on entry is generally below average, but on the evidence of the current Year 3 pupils, improving. Standards by the time that pupils leave school are below average and although progress and achievement overall are satisfactory, the issue is the inconsistency. When teaching is good and at times outstanding, pupils' learning accelerates at a fast rate, they are motivated and enthused and there is a high level of expectation and challenge for all. However, there is not enough of this high quality to promote consistently good achievement and for good progress to be the norm. The school has rightly identified the need to ensure that the good practice, evident in some classes, of using assessment data to help guide teaching and of marking that gives clear pointers for pupil improvement becomes embedded in all classes. Pupils with additional needs in literacy and numeracy make sound progress because their provision is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development and the curriculum on offer are satisfactory with good aspects. The continued hard work of the school has seen attendance improve to close to the national average. Pupils have a good awareness of how to follow fit and healthy lives and to manage risk in their lives and by the time that pupils leave school they are adequately prepared for their future lives. The curriculum is enriched well by a good range of clubs and activities and some pupils learn French and play the violin. There is little doubt that this is a school where the care and welfare of pupils, including those in the Learning Support Centre (LSC), is given a high priority. All staff, including teaching assistants and the learning mentor, play their part in ensuring that pastoral care and guidance are strengths of the school. Academic guidance, although improving, is satisfactory because assessment data is not yet used to have the best possible impact on pupil achievement.

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory. The school has undergone considerable changes in the past three years both in terms of its transition from a middle to a junior school and the changing nature of its intake. The headteacher has played an important role in managing this process well and in accurately identifying the key areas the school needs to address to improve. The headteacher has rightly identified the need to ensure that the role of the senior leadership team and subject leaders is rigorous and relentless in its pursuit of improving pupil achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the incidence of good and better teaching by ensuring lessons are challenging, motivate the pupils and have a high level of expectation.
- Ensure test and assessment data is used rigorously to improve achievement by regularly reviewing pupils' progress, setting challenging targets and holding teachers accountable for pupil progress.
- Ensure leaders at all levels play a rigorous role in monitoring teaching, standards and achievement and in doing so secure and sustain improvements.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall performance is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school's detailed analysis of pupils' attainment on entry indicates a general picture of below average attainment, with the current Year 3 cohort, the school's first, much closer to the national average with a number of pupils working at higher levels. The standards of the current Year 6 pupils are below average. Pupil progress is satisfactory but this does not tell the full story because progress is too variable across the school. It is often more rapid for the youngest and oldest pupils, of all abilities and ethnicities and at times for the LSC pupils, because of the good quality of teaching. However, this benchmark of good progress is not prevalent enough and some pupils, particularly the more able, do not always achieve as well as they could. In addition, insufficient use is being made of the school's extensive assessment data to regularly set and review challenging targets for pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils especially enjoy the good range of sporting clubs and activities on offer and the more practical lessons. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. Many pupils behave well, particularly at break times and have good attitudes to learning where teaching is good or better. However, a minority, particularly boys, do not take enough responsibility for moderating their own behaviour and lack a sense of self-discipline. Pupils have an appropriate awareness of Britain as a culturally diverse society. The school has worked successfully to improve attendance and it is now at an average level. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy, talking sensibly about the importance of eating a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. The school council makes good use of its role within the school to help pupils make some positive contributions to their community and their suggestions have been taken seriously. Pupils' make satisfactory progress in developing literacy, numeracy and other key skills to help them in their future lives. Pupils supported by the LSC have good understanding of what they need to do should they have any problems within school and have good self-esteem.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but too variable across the school to ensure good progress is the norm. Less effective teaching, and on the odd occasion, inadequate teaching, lacks a sense of urgency and vibrancy to enthuse and motivate pupils or simply lacks high expectations. On the other hand, there is some good and outstanding teaching, which is packed full of pace, challenge, enthusiasm, and fun, which leaves the pupils wanting more. Questioning is sharp and incisive and pupils are under no illusion as to what is expected of them in terms of behaviour, contribution and the quality and quantity of work. It is in these instances that learning springs to life, pupils work hard and their progress is rapid. The good marking of pupils' work, evident in a number of classes, is not consistent in others in giving pupils clear pointers for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and includes French for the older pupils. The school has taken advantage of funding from 'Widening Opportunities' to provide violin lessons for all Year 4 pupils. The school is seeking to establish a more cross-curricular approach to learning where key skills are developed across different subjects in a bid to raise pupils' achievement and enjoyment. While some shoots of success are clearly apparent, it is still in its embryonic stage. The current curriculum sees pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills promoted in a satisfactory manner as good progression routes are not consistently well embedded across the school. In science and personal, social and health education, pupils have good opportunities to learn how to eat a healthy diet, and to keep fit and safe. Pupils supported in the LSC are fully included in the life of the school. There is a good variety of clubs including sports and a range of visits and visitors that together add much to pupils' enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care for all pupils is good. Staff know pupils' needs well and go the extra-mile to ensure any difficulties or unhappiness are noted and dealt with quickly. As a result, pupils feel safe and valued and know they have a voice that is listened to and respected. Pupils are adamant that bullying is not an issue. Safeguarding procedures are secure and robust. The learning mentor is having a good impact through her support for pupils and their families. Good links with outside support agencies ensure that additional help is on hand, for example, for pupils with learning difficulties, children from travelling communities or vulnerable children. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Assessment information is not yet used to best effect to guide and inform teaching or to set challenging interim targets. Pupils' knowledge of their targets is patchy and pupils do not play an active role in setting their own targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has managed the school well through its transition from a middle to a junior school. He has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, which are clearly articulated in the generally accurate, but at times, optimistic, school self-evaluation. The headteacher, and increasingly the school's leadership team, monitor the quality of teaching and learning in a manner that has led to improvements. They recognise there is still work to be done, to improve the consistency of teaching and achievement and to build on the recently introduced initiative of meetings where the progress of pupils in different classes is evaluated. The role played by subject leaders has improved since the last inspection but this remains work in progress in terms of the significant impact on pupils' achievement. Governance is satisfactory and the effective chair of governors is aware of the need to continue to develop the role governors play in challenging and questioning, as well as being supportive of the work and performance of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of George White Junior School, Norwich, NR3 4RG

You will probably remember that we visited your school not too long ago and I am now writing to let you know what we found out. But before I do, I would just like to say thank you for making us feel welcome and for being so ready to share your thoughts about George White Junior School. We had a chance to talk to quite a lot of you and I have told your teachers how you were so helpful and polite. It was good to hear that many of you enjoy school and that bullying is not an issue.

We found that staff care for you well and make learning enjoyable through the clubs and other activities. The school is good in helping you to keep fit, safe and healthy. Mr Stanley, the staff and governors want to make the school an even better place to learn and I know that you want the same! Many of you behave well but occasionally some children could behave a little better but I am sure the good behaviour of many can spread across the whole school! Many of you listen well in lessons, are keen to learn and show good levels of respect. Keep up the good work!

We have talked to your teachers about how they can help make the school a more exciting place for you to learn. They are going to help you reach higher standards, make teaching more challenging to help you make good progress, regularly check on the quality of teaching and how you are doing and to give you targets to aim for.

The staff and governors want the school to improve. I know you will want to play your part by continuing to work hard and behave well. We wish you every success in the future. It was a pleasure to meet you.

Martin Newell

Lead inspector