

Lionwood Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120955
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	327399
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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 (total)	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Bradshaw
Headteacher	Miss Sarah Shirras
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2006
School address	Wolfe Road Norwich Norfolk NR1 4HT
Telephone number	01603 433014
Fax number	01603 701464

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2009
Inspection number	327399

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than other junior schools. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Although there is a lower proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups than is usual nationally, within the school 20 ethnic groups and 13 home languages, other than English, are represented. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is most often below average. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils who find it hard to learn for specific reasons, often associated with early language and literacy skills. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is more than twice the national average.

The school has moved buildings twice during the last 12 months. It has been in newly built accommodation and spacious grounds since September 2008. There have been several staff changes since last summer, for reasons beyond the school's control.

The school holds the Activemark award in recognition of its provision for physical education.

The Starting Out Day Nursery, which is located on the school site, is run by a private provider; the findings from the inspection of this setting will be reported separately.

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, providing satisfactory value for money. Many parents expressed their appreciation of the headteacher's success in promoting a caring and supportive school ethos. The views of many are summed up by the comment: 'The school has a wonderful happy atmosphere. Staff are approachable, helpful and kind.' One consequence of this effective teamwork and good pastoral care is pupils' good personal development and well-being. The behaviour of most pupils is good in lessons and around the school. Although there is a small group of pupils with particular needs that can present challenging behaviour, they are managed well. The parent of a pupil with a learning disability wrote: 'For the first time in his life my son has been really happy at school.' Pupils like their teachers and say that their friendliness is one of the best things about the school.

The good curriculum is also a major factor in pupils' enjoyment. Links between subjects and whole-school themes add interest. One parent wrote about her two children, 'They have both been captivated by the new space theme', and another that her son was still talking and reading about last summer's Greek mythology work. Overall standards at the end of the current Year 6 are below national averages. However, there are variations between subjects and year groups. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English and science and good progress in mathematics. The school has correctly identified that in the recent past some year groups have not made sufficient progress, especially in writing. Staff have worked hard to address this by increasing opportunities for pupils to write in a more relevant context. Improving standards in writing is work in progress. The school has sensibly determined to review the teaching of key skills for the youngest pupils. Although there are some differences in rates of progress between year groups, they have become much reduced. In the past, girls have made less progress than boys but this is not the case at present. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities progress at the same rate as others because of the appropriate support they receive.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with examples of good and outstanding teaching. These better lessons are characterised by extremely well-pitched expectations of all pupils. Nevertheless, in too many lessons expectations are not sufficiently high to accelerate learning. On these occasions lessons are planned conscientiously but opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding are missed. There are similar variations in the usefulness of academic guidance. Considerable effort has been made to provide more helpful marking and to involve pupils more in assessing their own work. This is most evident in the marking of writing, but there are inconsistencies in other subjects. There are also inconsistencies in the use of individual targets for pupils. Because of these variations, the quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Recent teamwork among senior managers provides a clear and consistent direction for further development. However, they do not always specify their improvement intentions precisely. Similarly they do not routinely identify how they will measure their success. Governors, who are highly supportive of the school, have not been as rigorous as possible in challenging the school to be very precise about its aims and means of evaluating success. Information about how well pupils are doing is being discussed more regularly. This is contributing to more widely understood plans for school improvement and is helping to increase staff accountability. Systems enable governors and senior staff to have a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The commitment of the current leadership team, and the

evidence of improvements since the previous inspection, demonstrate the school's sound capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed plans to develop pupils' key skills and raise standards further in writing.
- Increase the consistency of good teaching and marking in school so that it becomes the norm.
- Involve governors and staff fully in a more precise analysis of the impact of school developments and in determining how to measure successes.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness 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

All groups of pupils now make satisfactory progress: standards are rising but are below average overall. The school recognises, and the inspection confirms, that rates of progress have been uneven in the recent past, varying between year groups. The legacy of underachievement is most apparent in Year 6. These pupils are attaining broadly average standards in mathematics, although their standards in English and science are still well below average. They have made satisfactory progress during the year and good progress in mathematics, where they are taught in ability groups. The lower attainment in English arises from weaknesses in pupils' acquisition of key skills earlier in the school. Well below average standards in science arise from a limited curriculum in previous years, as well as weak literacy skills. The satisfactory progress that pupils have made recently has not been sufficient to enable them to catch up fully. The current Year 5 pupils are on track to reach broadly average standards in English and science and above average standards in mathematics. These represent satisfactory progress since the beginning of Year 3 in English and science and good progress in mathematics. Evidence from displayed work and discussions with subject leaders indicate that pupils reach broadly average standards in art and information and communication technology.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their new school. They arrive gleefully each morning and say, 'learning is fun'. The upturn in attendance rates, which are currently above the national average, bears this out. Behaviour, typically, is good. The school deals with occasional incidents of unacceptable behaviour swiftly and effectively, enabling pupils to feel secure and appreciate the importance of safety. Pupils have a good understanding of how and why they should lead healthy lifestyles and they enjoy the daily fitness sessions. They are eager to help in the running and improvement of the school community, as team captains or making suggestions through the 'big ideas club'. They make the most of a satisfactory range of opportunities to support their local community. Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. While their understanding of cultural diversity within contemporary British society is limited, pupils are thoughtful, reflective, sociable and tolerant. Combined with their satisfactory academic achievement this leaves them soundly prepared for future challenges.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships between adults and pupils are consistently good. These make a major contribution to pupils' readiness to learn and their confidence in participating in lessons. There are examples of outstanding teaching within the school. This is characterised by extremely skilful questioning that challenges pupils and meets their needs very effectively throughout the lesson. In contrast, much teaching is satisfactory and expectations are not as high. In these lessons, while activities are planned to develop learning sequentially, opportunities to challenge some pupils are missed during some parts of the lesson. Teachers make good use of electronic white boards to add pace and interest to learning. The school has worked hard to improve the usefulness of marking, to share learning targets with pupils, and to involve pupils in assessing their own learning. As a result there are examples of good practice in these areas, but the developments are still relatively new, not fully embedded and remain inconsistent. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially for those who find learning difficult.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is increasingly effective, designed now to steadily increase pupils' understanding of different communities. Greater links between subjects are helping to enrich learning, for example, through the use of drama. An impressive range of clubs is much appreciated by parents and pupils. This includes the popular breakfast club which runs on a daily basis. A wide range of educational visits, visitors, and cross-school themes enhance pupils' experience and their personal and social development. The decision to re-emphasise the development of key skills, and apply these through challenging and practical activities is having an increasingly positive effect on pupils' attitudes and learning, most noticeably in mathematics. Many now declare mathematics to be their favourite subject, because it is, 'fun and exciting'. The programmes for pupils needing extra help are satisfactory overall.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are well cared for by a dedicated team of staff who the pupils trust and value. They know that adults will, and do, listen to them if the need arises. The school's arrangements to safeguard pupils meet statutory requirements. Because of the priority given to all aspects of their welfare and emotional well-being, pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils with particular emotional or learning needs receive sensitive support in class from their teachers and teaching assistants. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. Basic procedures are in place for checking pupils' progress but their use is not equally well established in all classes. There are similar inconsistencies in the effectiveness of target-setting and marking as tools for raising standards and achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has maintained a clear commitment to improving the quality of education for pupils, while steering the school through a period of considerable change. She has been ably supported this term by the current senior management team. They are working effectively together in analysing pupils' progress and helping teachers to improve their practice. Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed appropriately, with notable successes in improving attendance. The strategic development of the curriculum contributes satisfactorily to community understanding and cohesion. The school reaches out to parents and the local community and recognises the need to further broaden pupils' awareness of their place in a global community. The management team is making increasingly effective use of the information held about pupils' progress, but there is more to be done, particularly in becoming more precise about what they are aiming for and how to judge their level of success. Staff involvement in this process varies. Governors care deeply about the school and are highly supportive of it. They visit the school regularly, but their visits are not planned with a consistently clear focus and the outcomes of visits are not formally recorded. However, their understanding of the challenges faced by the school is good.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lionwood Junior School, Norwich NR1 4HT

Thank you very much for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing your work and talking with you. We were very pleased to hear how much you enjoy school and that your attendance has improved. It is good that when you have a chance to take responsibility you do so sensibly. We were very pleased to hear about, and see for ourselves, how well most of you behave most of the time. You have a good understanding of how to stay healthy, fit and safe. We were pleased to see you joining in with the exercises at the beginning of the day so enthusiastically.

You are now making the progress expected in English and science. You are making good progress in mathematics and it was good to hear how many of you are finding mathematics fun. Your progress in writing is not as strong as in other subjects, but it has begun to get better now you have your targets and more of your teachers are using 'three stars and a wish'. Your headteacher and teachers have further ideas to help you even more with writing. We have asked them to continue with these plans.

You told us that some lessons are more interesting and challenging than others. We agree with you and have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to make sure that the work you do is always hard enough for you. They are determined to help your school become even better. They know what is working well and what they need to do to improve things. Sometimes the school's written plans are a bit vague and do not show how to measure success. We have asked the school to get better and be more precise in planning, because it will help everybody to keep improving your school and your learning. You can help by always behaving well and working hard.

Thank you again for being so welcoming. We wish you every success in the future.

With best wishes

Jill Bavin

Lead inspector