

Mulbarton Junior School

The Common, Mulbarton, Norwich, NR14 8JG

Inspection dates

13–14 February 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 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.

- Pupils receive a good education at Mulbarton Junior. They are well prepared for their future both academically and personally.
- The school has improved considerably in a short time under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. His relentless drive for improving pupils' progress through high quality teaching has had an immense impact. He is supported well by governors and staff.
- The headteacher makes daily checks on teaching and senior leaders make rigorous checks of pupils' books.
- Pupils' achievement has accelerated because of improvement in teaching and subject leadership. Achievement in mathematics and writing is good; in reading, it is outstanding.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and respond very positively to their teachers' high expectations. They behave well and feel safe in school.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school. All staff and governors have taken full advantage of, and benefited from, the training opportunities offered.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are a few instances where teaching requires improvement. At times, teachers do not make it clear to pupils what they are expected to have learned by the end of the lesson. On occasion, a very small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not have the right sort of work to help them make the best progress.
- Under the guidance of the headteacher, the senior leaders of the upper and lower school are developing their roles well. They make brief observations of teachers' work with the headteacher to identify possible improvements. However, they are not routinely setting targets for attainment in specific subjects areas such as reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 13 lessons, five of which were seen with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, governors and staff. Inspectors spoke with three groups of pupils, including school councillors and the eco group. A discussion was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation including: the school’s own evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan; information about pupils’ progress and the support given to pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Inspectors also looked at evidence of leaders’ monitoring of teaching and records relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils’ work in all year groups, heard some pupils from Years 3, 4 and 6 read, and discussed reading preferences with Year 6 pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 29 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke with seven parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Hopkins

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school. For the past three years, there have been more girls than boys on roll.
- There are six mixed-age classes: three Year 3 and 4 classes and three Year 5 and 6 classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below average. In this school, this extra funding is for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of one teacher and subject leader for mathematics. One newly qualified teacher, who works part time, has been appointed.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of teaching that is outstanding by making sure that:
 - teachers identify and share with pupils what they are expected to have learned by the end of the lesson
 - the work planned for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in lessons is closely linked to their targets in their individual education plans
 - the special educational needs coordinator checks even more rigorously to make sure the work they are expected to do in lessons is always appropriate.
- Strengthen the role of senior leaders responsible for the upper and lower school so that they play a bigger part in school improvement by making sure that:
 - they set challenging targets for school improvement in their subject areas by the precise use of pupil progress data
 - sufficient time is allocated for them to monitor the quality of teaching in lessons and, if necessary, help teachers to improve their practice further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well as a result of teaching that is rarely less than good and often outstanding. Pupils join the school with attainment that is usually broadly average and they make good progress. In recent years, standards at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics have risen from well below average to above average. Indeed, in reading, pupils in this school are almost a year ahead of pupils nationally.
- The proportion of pupils making or exceeding the expected amount of progress in Years 3 to 6 has risen rapidly and is good. In reading, the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected progress is considerably higher than the national average. In the recent past, the headteacher focused on making sure that Years 5 and 6 were able to make up for weaker progress in the past and attain the standards expected of their year group.
- The reason that achievement is not yet outstanding is that the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected progress in mathematics and writing is not better than that found nationally. However, in the past year, improved teaching across the school, especially in mathematics, is ensuring that all year groups are making good progress and are on track to do increasingly well by the time they reach Year 6.
- From their starting points, the achievement of the small number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is good. There were too few of these pupils in 2013 to compare their attainment in English and mathematics with that of their classmates without identifying individual pupils. However, they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The achievement of the small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good in the main. The special work planned for each pupil is at just the right level to ensure at least good progress and high self-esteem from successful learning. However, for just a small number of pupils, the ordinary classwork they are expected to do does not always meet their learning needs. For example, for pupils learning to spell commonly used words such as 'come', 'were' and 'they', suddenly being expected to learn the spelling rule of adding 'ies' to words ending in 'y', is far too difficult and slows their progress.
- More-able pupils make good progress and attain well above average standards. Teachers set very high expectations for these pupils and provide them with challenging tasks, which they relish, especially in writing and mathematics.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated to learn and succeed. For example, pupils made excellent use of a wide range of adjectives to describe how very young children felt in their labours as deck-hand, bird-scarer or chimney sweep in Victorian times.
- Pupils achieve well in physical education and sport. The expert coaching by outside professionals has a strong impact on helping pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves fit and healthy. For example, in a lesson pupils were comparing their heart rates before and after intense activity. The school has in the past had high rates of participation in sports activities and continues to do so. For example, the school's recently formed cross country team has already been successful in local competitions.

The quality of teaching is good

- In all classrooms, there are excellent relationships between all adults and pupils. Highly proficient teaching assistants are a valued part of the teaching team and are deployed very effectively. Teachers set very high expectations for pupils to work hard and behave well. As a result, no time is wasted. Pupils settle very quickly to their tasks and persevere with challenging work.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about learning because teachers frequently plan lessons that draw together skills they learn in different subjects, or they show pupils the practical reasons for learning certain concepts. For example, in an information and communication technology lesson, pupils learned to use the internet to locate the Norfolk Broads and the destination for their residential visit and compare aspects of the geography with Derwent Water.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' books is of a very high standard because it gives clear guidance on how each pupil can improve their work. Pupils are in no doubt what their long-term targets are for learning and what they need to do to improve their work. There is an excellent system in place to make sure that pupils read, take action and respond to their teachers' comments. Pupils say that these are 'really good at helping them get their work better'.
- All staff have had very good opportunities to update and extend their knowledge and skills. The impact of training is particularly evident in teachers' subject knowledge and enthusiasm for teaching mathematics. The subject leader has provided excellent guidance for staff so that all know which methods of calculation are taught and how to do this.
- Teachers new to the profession are developing their skills well. They have a good deal of support and encouragement from the headteacher and staff to help them develop their practice.
- The teaching of writing has been a focus for improvement since the previous inspection. Impressive improvement in standards and pupils' enthusiasm is clearly evident in pupils' keenness to write and the high quality writing on display. In all classes, skills of how to use a dictionary and thesaurus are taught very well: teachers set high expectations that these will be used, and they are. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils made excellent use of a thesaurus to find adjectives to describe a haunted house suitable for including in a 'scary' film set.
- Pupils are avid and able readers. Teachers are very knowledgeable about children's authors and make good suggestions and guidance for reading material. In 'library quest' sessions, library skills are taught very well so that pupils can easily find a book they need for research or track down work by their favourite author. Pupils in Year 6 have a notable understanding of written styles, the genres they prefer and why. They discuss enthusiastically examples of having read a book and seen a film based on the book, and why they prefer the book.
- Teaching for more-able pupils is good and often outstanding and ensures these pupils reach well above average standards. Challenging tasks are set for them, especially in mathematics. Pupils tackle these tasks with confidence because they have developed a good understanding of how to add, subtract, multiply and divide and apply these skills to solve problems and check their answers.
- Staff say there has been a 'culture change' within the school since the appointment of the present headteacher. They have welcomed the opportunities to develop their teaching skills further and teachers' increased confidence is clearly evident in lessons. In the very few lessons observed where teaching required improvement, it was because teachers had planned interesting activities but not carefully considered what they actually wanted pupils to learn by

the end of the lesson.

- Teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is generally good. The tasks set to help individual pupils build on what they already know are appropriate. In a few lessons, though, teachers do not always make sure that they take sufficient account of the pupils' difficulties and give them appropriate tasks.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good in lessons and around the school. Whether at play or in more formal activities such as assemblies, they show a good awareness of how to behave in different situations.
- Pupils talk happily about what they enjoy doing at school. They say they particularly enjoy mathematics and 'library quest' sessions, especially when illustrating the books they have been reading together. The high quality presentation in the great majority of their books and in their art work shows that they take pride in their work.
- The school's efforts to promote pupils' personal and social development are having a positive impact on helping them grow into responsible and caring members of society. For example, they have a good understanding of how, as a society, we need to conserve energy and look after the environment.
- Pupils take pride in belonging to their school community. They are polite to each other and to visitors. Many pupils have leadership roles in the school such as being an eco-warrior or as members of the school council. They take their responsibilities seriously and particularly like being a 'reading buddy' to the younger pupils. Older pupils can talk at length about how well their young 'buddy' is doing with reading.
- In the older year groups, pupils sustain their enthusiasm for learning and demonstrate high levels of perseverance. Teachers trust the pupils so that they are able to make choices for themselves in their learning. Throughout the school, pupils work very well together and show high levels of respect for each other's opinions and efforts.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of different forms of bullying and say that there is no bullying in the school. If they have any concerns, they are confident that these will be dealt with to their satisfaction. Pupils have a good idea of how to stay safe, for example, when using mobile phones or computers.
- Pupils say they enjoy school a good deal and demonstrate this with their consistently above average levels of attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has provided outstanding leadership since he started at Mulbarton Junior. His relentless drive and clear vision for a school where all pupils can achieve as well as possible has been at the heart of the school's rapid improvement. The headteacher is supported by very well-informed governors, who also require nothing but the best in pupils' achievement and behaviour. All staff and governors are committed to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed in all they do.

- The headteacher has brought about considerable improvements in the quality of teaching through using the outcomes of his very rigorous and accurate monitoring to pinpoint areas for improvement and identify where training courses would be appropriate for staff. When undertaking joint observations of lessons with inspectors, the headteacher demonstrated an astute understanding of how teaching could be improved. It was extremely clear from teachers' views about their teaching that they have been helped to reflect, in detail, on how their teaching impacts on their pupils' progress.
- The headteacher uses data about pupils' progress and whole school priorities to set teachers demanding targets to achieve. These targets make it very clear that only good or better teaching is acceptable. The governors, similarly, set the headteacher very challenging targets related to pupils' progress and attainment. These targets also include, specifically, the progress made by pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
- The subject leader for mathematics has had a strong impact on improving teaching and pupils' progress. The improvement plan for mathematics has clear, measurable and aspirational targets. Even though relatively new to the role, the subject leader has undertaken considerable training in order to review how calculations are taught and create new guidance for teachers and information for parents.
- Senior leaders work together well as a team and share the headteacher's high aspirations for pupils' success. The main reason why leadership and management overall are not yet outstanding is that the senior leaders for the upper and lower school have not yet developed their management roles to the full so that they can take on more of the workload from the headteacher. For example, school improvement planning is tightly focused on increasing pupils' progress, however, leaders in some subjects are not including measurable targets for the school to meet. Consequently, it makes it difficult to measure progress towards the targets.
- Senior leaders complete a good deal of monitoring of pupils' work, teachers' planning and have an overview of the quality of teaching. They have not undertaken full lesson observations to pinpoint areas of development so that they too can, if necessary, support teachers to improve.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the stimulating and rich curriculum. The curriculum includes numerous opportunities for pupils to work together, go on trips and residential visits and have visitors to the school.
- The school uses the additional sports funding appropriately on training for staff and widening the range of sports clubs on offer. Each week, when teachers have time to plan lessons or analyse data about their pupils' progress, their classes are taught by professional sports coaches.
- On his appointment, the headteacher identified significant areas for improvement, such as pupils' attainment in mathematics and to improve the quality of teaching across the school. The local authority has provided good support in these areas, especially in mathematics. Good training provided for governors has helped them to become more rigorous in their role.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There has been considerable improvement in governance since the previous inspection. Governors have attended many training sessions about key areas of the school's work, such as how to interpret data about pupils' progress and attainment. This training has developed their knowledge and confidence. They now know the right questions to ask so that they can hold the school to account for its performance. Governors provide the right amount of support and challenge for all leaders and have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and the link

between performance and pay.

- Governors know how well pupils are doing compared with schools nationally and locally. By visiting lessons, talking to pupils, parents and teachers, the governors develop their own view of the quality of teaching and how well the school is doing. They use school data and 'Data Dashboard' information to set the headteacher very challenging targets for pupils' performance and make regular checks to see if these will be met.
- Governors track finances well and assist the school in deciding how to spend additional money to support pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, including checking its impact, and to extend sports and physical education.
- The governing body makes sure that the school meets the current national requirements for safeguarding and child protection.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 120991 |
| Local authority | Norfolk |
| Inspection number | 432101 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 175 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Sam Bartram |
| Headteacher | David Oldham |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 February 2013 |
| Telephone number | 01508 578242 |
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