

Sprowston Junior School

Recreation Ground Road, Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8EW

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new headteacher and senior leadership team have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are taking effective action to address the decline in standards since the previous inspection. As a result, the school has good capacity to improve.
- The headteacher enjoys the full support of the staff, pupils and parents. The vast majority of parents who expressed a view during the inspection would recommend the school.
- The school has a caring, inclusive ethos. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy the wide range of curricular and enrichment activities provided for them.
- Governors are now well informed about the work of the school. Consequently, they are able to provide more effective support and challenge to senior leaders.
- Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 6 in 2016 and 2017 was too low. The school's own assessments indicate that currently, more pupils are working at the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Pupils and parents agree that the school provides a safe and secure learning environment. Safeguarding procedures are effective.
- A broad curriculum develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There is a strong culture of tolerance and respect throughout the school.
- The school's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Vulnerable pupils receive effective support to overcome any barriers to learning, so that they now make at least good progress from their various starting points.
- Teaching and learning is good. New approaches are enabling current pupils to make improving progress in reading, writing and mathematics so that pupils' achievement is now improving swiftly across the school. However, these strategies have not had time to have an impact on statutory assessments.
- Leaders and governors produce strategic plans with appropriate actions to improve teaching and learning, and pupils outcomes. However, the checks they make do not focus enough on the impact of these actions, to identify what the school needs to do next to improve pupils' outcomes even more swiftly.
- Most pupils are now provided with greater challenges to extend their learning. Sometimes the most able pupils are not consistently challenged.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve pupils' outcomes so that attainment at the end of Year 6 and progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2 is at least in line with national averages by:
 - ensuring that all groups of pupils, particularly the most able, are consistently challenged so that they make the best possible progress
 - developing the new teaching approaches which are improving pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders consistently evaluate the impact of their school improvement actions more rigorously so that they identify effective next steps to ensure more rapid improvements in pupils' outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher and senior leadership team have correctly identified the school's strengths and areas of development. They are improving teaching and learning and current pupils' achievement across the curriculum, to improve pupils' outcomes throughout the school. However, results at the end of Year 6 do not yet reflect these improvements, which are clearly evident in the school. Leaders are strengthening their monitoring and evaluation skills so that they can identify sharper next steps for pupils' outcomes to improve more rapidly, but this work is not consistently robust.
- The headteacher supports senior and middle leaders well. He has ensured that they are more accountable for their roles and responsibilities to improve teaching and learning and pupils' achievement. Leaders have implemented new approaches to teaching which are improving pupils' progress across the curriculum within a stimulating learning environment. Leaders have strong capacity to improve all aspects of the school.
- The school's caring and inclusive atmosphere encompasses its aim of 'building and working together'. Effective relationships are formed between staff, pupils and their parents. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, wrote letters or spoke to inspectors were fully supportive of the school's work.
- Systems for checking the performance of staff are effective. Leaders and teachers are now more accountable for teaching and learning, and the progress that pupils make. Effective training and support from leaders are enabling teachers and teaching assistants to improve their skills. Teachers in the early stages of their career are supported well. Staff work collaboratively to meet the needs and interests of pupils. All adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- The school's assessment system is effective and shows clearly pupils' attainment and progress across each year group, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have put effective pupil-progress meetings in place to identify pupils who are underachieving. As a result, appropriate support is provided more quickly to meet the needs of these pupils. All groups of pupils are now making at least good progress from their various starting points. Evidence of this can be seen in pupils' work in books. However, the most able pupils need to make accelerated progress if they are to achieve the higher standards by the end of Year 6.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development threads through the school's exciting curriculum. School trips and visitors link closely to the curriculum to enhance the pupils' learning. Year 4 pupils returning from their visit to the Time and Tide Museum spoke enthusiastically about their wonderful day. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities; one club performed a Christmas production during the inspection, which was highly praised. Pupils learn about fundamental British values and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Inspectors observed pupils thoughtfully debating 'human rights and responsibilities' and 'right and wrong actions'.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is used well to increase pupil participation in sport, improve the quality of physical education within the school and to

provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school has achieved the Sports Gold Award for the past two years. Inspectors observed high-quality physical education learning during the inspection.

- Leaders now use the pupil premium funding more effectively to improve the progress that disadvantaged pupils make. They ensure that any barriers to learning are identified so that additional support helps pupils to catch up quickly, increasing their progress. This means that in most year groups the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils are in line with or better than other pupils across the curriculum.
- The knowledgeable and experienced leader for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities ensures that funding is spent well. More regular evaluation of the extra support provided by teaching assistants means that actions can be adapted to meet pupils' changing needs. Consequently, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities achieve well from their various starting points.
- The school's nurture provision enables pupils with complex social, emotional and behavioural needs to access the school's curriculum. Staff work effectively with outside agencies to improve the school's provision for these pupils.
- The local authority and the school's leaders work well together to improve all aspects of the school. This autumn term a focus on a robust 'eight-week plan' has improved pupils' inference skills and is helping to improve leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the school's work.

Governance of the school

- Governors are now better informed regarding school development. They have a secure knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, they are able to challenge and support school leaders more effectively regarding pupils' outcomes. Similarly, governors are in a better position to hold staff to account for teaching and learning, and the progress that pupils make.
- Governors now ensure that funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the physical education and sport grant are spent effectively to improve learning opportunities and pupils' achievements.
- Governors understand their responsibilities with regard to the safeguarding of pupils within the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that staff training is up to date and that staff are confident in their duties regarding child protection. Leaders follow up concerns with the appropriate external agencies. High-quality procedures ensure that pupils, including the most vulnerable, are kept safe.
- Governors visit the school to check that systems to safeguard pupils are effective. Statutory checks are made on all staff when recruiting adults to work with children. The school's central register is kept up to date and is regularly checked.

- Pupils told inspectors that school is a safe place and parents agreed that their children are well looked after. Pupils are taught how to stay safe when using the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and improving across the school. Inspection evidence, including the school's assessment records and work in pupils' books, confirms this.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They plan activities that engage the interest of pupils so that they want to succeed. Teachers use astute questioning to enable pupils to develop their language skills and think about their learning, so that they can explain their understanding more successfully. This is supporting more pupils to work at greater depth.
- In English and mathematics, pupils are encouraged to take charge of their own learning. They enjoy choosing from, and challenging themselves with, the options that teachers provide for them. The recent implementation of these challenges across other subjects is providing more opportunities for pupils to make good progress across the curriculum.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to learning, supporting pupils to make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and or/disabilities receive tailored support from knowledgeable and skilled staff. Appropriate support and specialist resources are targeted to improve any underachievement. As a result, current pupils are able to achieve well from their various starting points.
- Teachers have raised the profile of reading across the school. The library, with its wide range of books, is supporting pupils' enjoyment of reading. Pupils said, 'The variety of books in the library means you never get bored.' Pupils in Years 5 and 6 spoke at length about the books they read, and they read with fluency and confidence. These pupils enthusiastically discussed the electronic quizzes they complete after they have finished a book to show their understanding of the text. This reading programme is improving pupils' reading standards across the school.
- Teachers' focus on inference skills is rapidly improving pupils' understanding of difficult texts. Year 5 pupils used their new skills to explain effectively how their views of a character changed as a story unfolded. During a highly attended reading café, pupils explained 'inference' to their parents so that they could support them with their learning at home.
- New approaches to mathematics, especially the different challenging options, and the new calculation policy, are improving teaching and learning, and pupils' outcomes swiftly. Year 6 pupils used correct mathematical vocabulary and prior learning to explain how to solve complex tasks regarding coordinates. Pupils were sufficiently challenged because they chose appropriate activities which were not too easy or too difficult. Additionally, pupils moved onto more difficult activities as soon as they required a further challenge, so that they made rapid progress.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing across the curriculum to improve their writing skills. Work based on high-quality texts

engages boys and girls. For example, Year 6 pupils recorded impressive recounts of their recent visit to the living history museum at Gressenhall. They improved their Second World War knowledge regarding Anderson shelters, the work of land girls and training for the Home Guard.

- The school's chosen marking policy is used consistently by all teachers. Pupils report that they find the feedback that they receive from teachers helpful to improve their work.
- Teachers provide interesting activities across a range of subjects which engage pupils in their learning. This was observed straight after an exciting Christmas lunch, when pupils in every class were concentrating on high-quality learning tasks, including making Greek pillars for temples, discussing the Ten Commandments, describing historical artefacts, improving their physical education skills and recording information about the life of the Buddha.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy school and show positive attitudes towards their learning. They were polite and spoke thoughtfully to inspectors.
- In all classes, pupils show respect to each other to make Sprowston a friendly school. Pupils listen attentively to each other and consider different views, cultures and faiths. Classrooms are generally calm and friendly places where low-level disruption is rare.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have confidence that staff will help them if they have any concerns. Vulnerable pupils are well cared for. The vast majority of parents agreed that pupils are well looked after and are safe in school. Many parents in their text messages praised the work of the school and shared the sentiments: 'My child is very happy here, it's an amazing school and has a lovely atmosphere. All the teachers and headteacher go above and beyond – they always put the children first and make learning fun.'
- Pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils can talk about how to stay safe when using the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around school and work hard in lessons. Occasionally, when not sufficiently challenged, some pupils become restless and lose concentration. Pupils display growing levels of maturity as they move through year groups.
- Pupils play and socialise happily together during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- School records confirm that there are few incidents of poor behaviour and exclusions. Any incidents are recorded and followed up appropriately.
- Leaders take effective action to ensure that the few pupils with low attendance are supported, so that persistence absence is declining. Attendance is in line with national figures.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Standards at the end of Year 6 in both 2016 and 2017 were low. Progress for pupils from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 was in the lowest 20% for reading and mathematics. Progress in writing declined in 2017 but remained broadly in line with the national average.
- The school's tracking of current pupils' progress, supported by observations and detailed scrutiny of the work in pupils' books, shows that current pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across all year groups.
- Pupils are making better progress because teaching and learning are good and improving across the school. The new approaches to teaching and learning are raising attainment and the progress that pupils make, but these changes did not have time to have a positive impact on the outcomes of Year 6 pupils in 2017.
- Work in pupils' books and the school's tracking system indicate that a higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 are currently working at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics than at this time last year. Additionally, a greater proportion of pupils are working confidently in English and mathematics.
- The school's new reading programme had a positive impact on reading standards in Years 3, 4 and 5 last academic year. It was not used by last year's Year 6 pupils, so did not have a positive impact on 2017 results. However, since September, the programme is being used successfully in all year groups, especially in Year 6.
- Current disadvantaged pupils are making similar good or better progress to other pupils in the school. In the past, these pupils have not made the progress necessary for them to achieve as well as others nationally by the end of key stage 2. Any barriers to learning that these pupils have are now identified more quickly so that well-targeted and effective support is raising achievement for the disadvantaged and most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are given support that meets their individual needs so that they are making better progress from their various starting points. Most pupils also make strong progress in their social, emotional and behavioural development.
- Previously, the most able pupils have not achieved as well as they could. However, the new challenge system is enabling some most able pupils to make faster progress in lessons. As a result, a greater proportion of most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, have recorded work at a higher standard in their English and mathematics books, but this is not consistent throughout the school.
- Current Year 6 pupils are confident learners who can explain their learning well. They choose appropriate learning options to challenge themselves. This is preparing them well for their secondary education.

School details

Unique reference number	120852
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10041529

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Weeks
Headteacher	Matt Walton
Telephone number	01603 425150
Website	www.sprowstonjunior.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	office@sprowstonjunior.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 November 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The proportion of pupils who receive SEN support is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- There have been a number of new appointments to leadership posts since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including: teachers' planning; the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses; information on pupils' attainment and progress; records of behaviour and safety; the monitoring of teaching and management of teachers' performance; minutes of governing body meetings; and safeguarding documents.
- A discussion was held with a group of pupils, as well as informal conversations with pupils during lessons and at breaktimes. The inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about books they enjoy.
- Inspectors considered 86 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the free-text comments and two letters. Views of parents were also informally sought at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors also took account of the views of four pupils and 19 staff who responded to their online surveys.

Inspection team

Julie Harrison, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

John Crane

Ofsted Inspector

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