

# Mulbarton Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120991
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	358898
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Mason

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	173
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sam Bartram
<b>Headteacher</b>	Beulah Chatten
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	The Common Norwich NR14 8JG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Ten lessons were observed and other short visits were made to classes. All six teachers were seen at least once. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, senior staff members, and the chair of the governing body. Inspectors also observed other aspects of the school's work, such as how pupils interacted at break times. They looked at a sample of pupils' books, analysed the 64 parental questionnaires submitted and reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding, support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, governing body meetings, local authority monitoring and school development planning.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The progress pupils are making, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The capacity of leaders and managers to drive and sustain improvement in teaching and other aspects of provision.
- The extent to which pupils' personal development is a strength of the school.

## Information about the school

Mulbarton Junior School is smaller than most primary schools. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion with statements of special educational needs. In September 2007, the school changed from middle to junior school status, a consequence of school re-organisation in the area. The school holds the Activemark award. Privately run childcare before and after school is available on-site. This is inspected separately.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Mulbarton Junior School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is a happy school where pupils feel safe and well supported by an experienced staff. Pupils' attendance is high. Although provision is satisfactory overall, there are some good aspects in the pastoral care of pupils, in the wider curriculum and in extra-curricular programme. These contribute significantly to pupils' well-being and their enjoyment of school. In particular, pupils speak positively of the many active subjects, such as science, information and communications technology (ICT), cookery, music and sports. They respond well to the many opportunities for them to take responsibility in and around the school. As a result, they become rounded and communicative young people who recognise the advantages of working together for the common good. Their keenness for choral singing, in school and the community, and their success in competitions also reflects the sense of community they develop. Pupils are well aware of how to stay healthy through their enjoyment of sport and exercise. They grow their own produce which they often savour at lunch.

Pupils' attainment is broadly average and this represents satisfactory progress from their starting points. Inspection evidence and the Year 6 test results of 2010 indicate that teachers are successfully addressing the very disappointing results in national tests in writing and mathematics in 2009. In particular, teachers have sharpened their assessment and tracking of pupils' progress, so that they now support any pupils who are underachieving much more promptly. However, because further use of assessment techniques to gain feedback as to how well pupils understand in lessons is variable in quality, not all pupils are reaching their full potential. Not enough of the more able pupils capable of reaching the higher Level 5 are doing so in English and mathematics and some others do not have a clear enough understanding of the standards to which they can aspire in tasks in lessons.

Socially, pupils in Year 3 settle well because of the good programme of linked activities with the neighbouring infant school. However, they do not consistently listen and concentrate carefully enough in lessons to get off to a good start academically. Younger pupils take too long to acquire the key skills of accurate spelling, well-structured sentences, secure working with number and clear presentation because their skills as confident, independent learners are under-developed. The school's development plan identifies the need to target these skills more effectively.

Subsequent to both reorganisation and the loss of a deputy headteacher position, a re-structured middle management team has been skilfully guided by the headteacher to address the key priority of raising standards. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve because there is growing teamwork and shared responsibility among staff. As a result, the school's procedures for evaluating its provision are satisfactory. The governing

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body is supportive. It has recently instigated an initiative to engage parents and carers better in their children's schooling. Along with middle leaders, however, it does not analyse data in sufficient depth to robustly challenge the school to raise standards.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards for all pupils in English and mathematics by ensuring that pupils are more confident at an earlier stage in their education in working with number and in writing accurately.
- Ensure teachers use tracking data and assessment techniques in a more robust and consistent way, so that:
  - lessons are better tailored to improving individual pupils' progress
  - pupils in Year 3 settle more rapidly into good learning habits which help them to quickly become confident, independent learners
  - all pupils have a clearer understanding of the standards they are aiming to achieve in their work
  - more able pupils are challenged so that a higher proportion attain Level 5 in the national tests in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that middle leaders and the governing body thoroughly analyse data in order to provide greater rigour in contributing to school improvement and raising standards.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils' attainment on entry is a little above average most years. In some years, it is average. With the exception of the marked dip in attainment in 2009, this picture is broadly reflected in assessment tests at the end of Year 6 and in the standard of work of the current Year 6. This indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. Standards in English are average and improving, due to the whole-school focus on improving writing. However, younger pupils still do not master basic spellings, fluent handwriting and skills of structuring sentences soon enough to enable them to express themselves with confidence in their writing. Pupils make better progress in their reading and express themselves well orally in class. In mathematics, standards are held back through pupils' slow development of number and calculation skills in the younger classes. In science lessons, pupils make good progress because they engage well in practical work and think independently about what they have learned. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Except for some of those with particularly complex needs, most make comparable progress to their peers. There is no significant difference between the progress of boys and girls.

Pupils develop good moral awareness and social skills. They develop good teamwork skills through the many extra-curricular clubs and regular residential visits. As a result, their self-confidence and attitudes to school improve as they get older. They enjoy

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opportunities to deepen their spiritual and cultural understanding, such as through choral singing or through learning about different faiths in religious education. They responded particularly well when French and German teachers visited the school recently. They engage in a wide range of charitable activities. Pupils understand well the differences between right and wrong. They know that fighting and bullying are unacceptable and confidently report any occasional incidents that occur in the knowledge that adults will deal with them appropriately. Pupils interact well at breaks and lunchtime, with many taking responsibilities around the school to help others. However, behaviour is satisfactory overall, because some younger pupils find maintaining concentration in class difficult and this sometimes slows the pace of learning. Pupils have satisfactory skills to equip them for their futures because their core literacy and numeracy skills provide only an adequate basis. Nonetheless, they do well in ICT and involve themselves enthusiastically in enterprise projects, like producing a newspaper, and sustainability issues, through the Forest School project, for example.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers have good subject knowledge and deliver lessons in a confident manner that engages the pupils. As teachers have become more skilled in using assessment and tracking information, they are focusing better on tailoring lessons to meet the learning needs of each individual pupil. However, tasks which encourage pupils to articulate what

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they understand are not always fully effective and work which stretches the most able is not given with enough regularity. Most lessons have a good range of different activities to engage the pupils, often helping them to learn well in pairs or table groupings. In the Year 3/4 classes, pupils' concentration is not always sufficiently well sustained to enable pupils to become confident and independent learners quickly enough. Older pupils use the targets they have been given to improve their work. Work is marked regularly and, in English, pupils appreciate the opportunity to remark upon the teacher's comment to help them reflect on their learning. Marking in mathematics is more superficial. Teaching assistants support written work and reading well, but teachers do not always give them sufficient guidance as to how they could contribute better during whole-class explanations, demonstrations and in assessments.

Pupils particularly enjoy the practical learning of the wider curriculum. In response to concerns over writing and mathematics, teachers are planning more opportunities to extend writing and number skills in areas such as art, topic work and ICT. Science provision, in particular, is enriched through the well-equipped laboratory, links with the local specialist science college and the hands-on Forest School learning sessions. Enrichment, such as clubs, visits which extend the curriculum and sporting opportunities are good and varied, appealing to pupils' different interests. Links to enhance the international dimension of their learning lapsed after the European Union 'Comenius' project terminated last year and plans to introduce a new programme of activities to support pupils' understanding of current national issues have yet to be established. The quality of planning for gifted and talented pupils is inconsistent.

Many aspects of care are good, but arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of pupils are satisfactory. In the past, the gate has not always been locked when it should have been, but the school has become more vigilant. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early, so that well-targeted support and effective intervention programmes can be quickly put in place. Good links with external agencies support their care. The extended school services, the parent support adviser and the openness of specialist staff successfully engage families and/or carers in their children's education. A good proportion of parents attend consultation evenings. Pupils feel confident in transferring to secondary education because of the many good links with the local high school. Cooperation with the main feeder infant school to develop greater consistency in tracking pupils' progress as they move from Year 2 to Year 3 is at an early stage.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has built an ambitious new middle management team which has a secure grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Many are quite new in post but, through sampling pupils' work and talking with pupils, they have identified and put into effect some successful strategies for raising standards. Their experience advising colleagues through observing lessons is currently limited. The governing body supports the school energetically and fulfils its statutory duties. It recently went through a period of temporary leadership, but the new chair has the determination to organise the governing body to become better equipped to challenge any weaknesses in school provision.

Equal opportunities and community cohesion are promoted by some good provision, such as facilitating all pupils to go on residential trips and close work with the community police support officer. However, these aspects are satisfactory because full audits of the school's provision in these areas are incomplete. As a result, provision to challenge the most able is inconsistent and provision to support understanding of multi-cultural aspects of United Kingdom society is not sufficiently robust. Staff have been suitably trained in matters of child protection and safeguarding. Policies are in line with government requirements and are reviewed systematically.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers expressed similar views to the inspection team. Most expressed the view that their children like coming to school and that the school helps children to stay healthy, safe and enjoy their learning. Some parents had concerns that inappropriate behaviour was not always effectively dealt with by the school. Inspectors judged that some complex cases quoted by parents were appropriately addressed by the school, but



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understood that wider parental perceptions may not always have concurred. Other parents were concerned that pupils did not make enough progress. Inspectors agreed that some more able pupils, in particular, are not reaching their full potential. Although pupils underachieved in 2009, progress has since improved.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mulbarton Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 173 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	48	30	47	2	3	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	29	45	34	53	0	0	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	34	36	56	5	8	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	38	30	47	7	11	3	5
The teaching is good at this school	22	34	36	56	4	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	22	41	64	4	6	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	27	43	67	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	25	33	52	5	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	30	30	47	8	13	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	19	36	56	11	17	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	27	36	56	7	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	23	36	56	7	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	36	33	52	6	9	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



22 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Mulbarton Junior School, Norwich, NR14 8JG**

Thank you very much for being so friendly and helpful when the inspection team came to your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you about the school, reading your questionnaires and seeing how you get on in lessons. Please also thank your parents for taking the time to complete their questionnaires.

Mulbarton Juniors is a happy school. You told us that you enjoy the range of activities of the different lessons, the clubs, the music making, the sports and the visits. These help you to enjoy staying healthy and to contribute to the life of the school. You like your teachers because they all care for you and always try to make lessons interesting. A few of you told us that you get upset occasionally because of the behaviour of others but that adults in school sort things out quickly and fairly. You feel very safe at school. We were pleased that you all recognise the importance of coming to school every day, so that you can learn and meet your friends.

We agreed with your headteacher and her team that you make satisfactory progress in your learning. In some areas you make good progress, for example in science but, so that you progress well in all lessons, we have asked the school to do the following things:

- help you to write and work with number more accurately and confidently, so that your standards in English and mathematics improve, especially in the younger classes
- check that teachers give you work which you find challenging whatever your ability, so that younger pupils settle into good learning habits more quickly, more pupils gain Level 5 by the end of Year 6 and all of you have a clearer understanding of the standards expected from the work you are given
- make sure that staff and the governing body check on your progress more carefully to see what can be done to make lessons better and to raise the standards of your work.

Of course, you can help your teachers by politely telling them if you find work too easy or if you do not understand something.

With best wishes from all three inspectors.

Yours sincerely

John Mason

Lead inspector

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