

Attleborough Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120926
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358884
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Walker

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 of pupils on the school roll	386
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrea Miller
Headteacher	Chris Read
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons taught by 12 teachers. They also held meetings with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including the school's improvement and development plan, the tracking system to monitor the pupils' progress, documentation regarding the care and protection of pupils (safeguarding), and a sample of pupils' work. They also analysed responses to questionnaires completed by staff and by 141 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The inspection team explored the progress being made by all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- It observed the effectiveness of teaching in engaging pupils so that they make at least good progress in lessons.
- It examined the improvements in the personal development of the pupils.
- It assessed the effectiveness of the leadership team in monitoring, evaluating and improving performance in the school.

Information about the school

The school is larger in size than the average junior school. It takes pupils from the town and surrounding rural area. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds although a small number come from minority ethnic heritages. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average. The proportion of pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

There are three classes in each year and an additional mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class. Pupils are grouped by ability in mathematics in Years 4, 5 and 6. The school has received the Activemark and International Schools awards and has achieved National Healthy Schools status.

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

2

Main findings

This satisfactory school has continued to improve since its last inspection. Significant improvements in both the academic and personal development of the pupils have led to faster progress, although pupils' attainment remains broadly average. The school is building a secure foundation for future development and rigorous systems of monitoring teaching and tracking pupil progress are showing the signs of success. The headteacher provides effective leadership so that there is a clear vision for continuous improvement in the school. The school's very caring approach is evident in the positive relationships with parents and carers, who greatly appreciate the support provided for their children. One parent/carer wrote, 'Our child has greatly grown in confidence and independence since joining the school. He enjoys his lessons and wants to be involved in as much as possible.'

Pupils make satisfactory progress from their average starting points and the vast majority attain standards that are broadly average by the time they leave the school. Satisfactory progress in the previous three years has led to most pupils reaching average attainment for their ages. Effective professional development has significantly improved the quality of teaching so that it is now leading to good progress for most pupils during the current year. Good teaching, additional support for pupils at risk of underachieving and the school's emphasis on key skills all contribute to this better progress. There are clear signs of improvement in all year groups, and provisional results in Year 6 show that more pupils than in previous years are on track to reach average and higher levels in English and mathematics. However, the good teaching in the school during the present year has not yet had the opportunity to be translated into above-average attainment for the majority of pupils.

The school is ambitious to raise standards so that they are above the national average, particularly in English and mathematics. The skills and confidence of a significant number of pupils in writing and applying skills in mathematical calculation have not been consistently developed during their time at school, so they are finding it harder to gain the higher levels in their work. The systems for tracking pupils' progress and additional help for underachieving pupils are greatly supporting improvements in achievement. Nevertheless, there are still a small number of pupils who are not fully benefiting from this extra support. Pupils' targets are based on previous performance but are not challenging enough for all pupils.

The good quality of care, guidance and support is greatly supporting the improving personal development of the pupils. The staff are active in engaging most pupils in a range of school activities, and this creates a very positive ethos in the school. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good and this contributes to a positive atmosphere for learning. The large majority of pupils have an excellent understanding of how to adopt healthy lifestyles, as acknowledged by the Activemark award and

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achievement of National Healthy Schools status. They demonstrate this through eating healthily, and readily taking part in a range of sporting activities. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their school and the wider community.

The curriculum provision is well organised so that it provides good learning opportunities to meet the different needs of the pupils. However, the school acknowledges that subjects other than English and mathematics are sometimes taught in a comparatively isolated way. The subjects are not always linked creatively to make learning more coherent for the pupils. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used enough across the different subject areas to develop further pupils' ICT skills.

The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are effective in promoting school improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and realistic so that the school is well aware of the strengths and areas for development. Strategic planning in the school is good and there are clear actions for improvement. The effective leadership of the headteacher and senior leadership team, the improving record of pupils' progress and the clear strategies for improvement indicate that this school has a good capacity to improve further.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attainment of pupils across the school so that standards are above the national average in all subjects by:
 - building on the systems for tracking pupils' progress and providing additional support for pupils identified as at risk of underachieving
 - further developing pupils' abilities and confidence in writing, and in applying skills in mathematical calculation
 - ensuring that staff and pupils are working to achieve rapid progress and reach challenging targets.
- Improve the curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics by:
 - making the curriculum more creative and integrated so that there are greater links between the different subjects
 - ensuring that the use of information and communication technology is developed across the different subject areas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most pupils enjoy learning and have made satisfactory progress during their time at school. The majority of pupils are now making good progress during the present school year because they are receiving more effective teaching which is focused on learning. For example, Year 5 pupils made good progress in a well-structured lesson in English when they followed up a role-play exercise on creating a sense of suspense, developing their skills in writing and using paragraphs. Higher expectations by teachers and additional support for pupils at risk of underachieving have accelerated the progress of pupils in Year 3 and reversed a previous dip in performance in this transition year. The school also identified some underperformance by girls in mathematics and subsequently introduced

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single-gender groups in Years 5 and 6 which are supporting improvements in results for girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are adequately supported by teaching assistants so that they have made satisfactory progress since joining the school, in line with others. The majority are now making good progress through better teaching and the additional support which helps them gain confidence in their work. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds have also made satisfactory progress over their time in the school, in line with other pupils, although their progress is now good.

Pupils are proud to be part of the school and they develop into friendly and confident young people. They feel safe in the school and have a good awareness of issues relating to safety. Attendance is above average and reflects the pupils' enthusiasm and willingness to engage with school. Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities to take responsibility, such as acting as prefects, sports leaders and peer mediators. The school council is active in supporting improvements in the school, such as the new lunchtime arrangements and the use of the field. Pupils raise money for a range of charities and make an excellent contribution to the local community by organising events such as litter picking, planting flowers and visiting the local residential home. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. Pupils show respect and empathy towards each other. Pupils' basic skills and ability to work with others are developing satisfactorily. As a result, they are adequately prepared for their secondary education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

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How effective is the provision?

The majority of teaching is good and represents a considerable improvement on previous years. The better teaching is leading to good progress for pupils during the current year and helping them to begin to make up for their slow progress in the past. In a small number of lessons, teachers talk too much and tend to do the thinking and problem solving instead of asking the pupils to participate. Classrooms are attractive learning areas with good examples of pupils' work on display. Teachers' planning normally ensures that tasks are appropriate for the range of attainment represented in the class. There is an emphasis on linking the work to real life contexts which greatly supports pupils' interest and understanding. In the better lessons, teachers plan a range of interesting activities which motivate and engage the pupils in their learning. As a result, pupils display enthusiasm and sustain high levels of concentration. A number of teachers are particularly good in their use of questioning to promote understanding and to allow them to make better progress. Most teachers provide pupils with good feedback on their work and advise them on their next steps in learning. However, there is some inconsistency in the marking of work in mathematics.

The school places a strong emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy, which supports the improving picture of pupils' progress. A detailed programme of personal, health and social education strongly promotes pupils' personal development. All pupils benefit from a comprehensive and regular programme of physical education which is supported by the local School Sports Partnership. Numerous visitors to the school, including representatives from the local community, provide additional experiences for the pupils. A number of visits, including those to Duxford Air Museum, Sculthorpe nature reserve and a residential centre in Sheringham, provide good enrichment for the curriculum. There is a good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities, which greatly enhance the pupils' enjoyment and experience of school.

There are good arrangements for pupils' care, guidance and support. Pupils are well known as individuals and they told inspectors that there are always members of staff to talk to if they have a problem. There are good systems of individual support for all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Positive working relationships between the school and external agencies benefit pupils, ensuring their social and learning needs are met through effective programmes. There are rigorous procedures for monitoring students' attendance and following up absences. The parent support adviser has been active in reducing the number of persistent absences and improving the level of attendance in the school. In other respects, the school is very effective in working with parents and carers so that they can fully support the development of their children. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are well supported so that they settle quickly into the school. Good arrangements are in place to support smooth transitions from the local infant school and to the nearby high school.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides strong and knowledgeable leadership so that all staff are involved in the improvement of the school. He is very clear about the areas for development and is supporting the staff in raising the academic outcomes of the pupils. The senior leadership team also provides a strong impetus for improvement across the school so that there is a positive atmosphere for learning and an emphasis on success for all pupils. Despite a number of staff changes, the headteacher and senior team have developed a greater consistency of approach this year which has supported the recent improvements in progress.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and is effective in its evaluating and monitoring roles. Governors are well informed of the school's progress and areas for development. The governing body regularly checks that all practices and procedures fully meet health and safety requirements. Robust procedures for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and underpin the school's very caring approach. There is a strong commitment to inclusion and tackling discrimination. The school analyses in detail the performance of different groups in the school and ensures that any gaps in attainment are narrowed through intervention and support.

The school has developed positive relationship with parents and carers. They are given regular information about school events and the progress of their children. The school has good partnerships with the local infant and secondary schools, a range of external services and the local consortium of schools, which greatly support the improving achievement and well-being of the pupils. Joint work on assessment with the linked infant school is bringing a more consistent understanding of the higher levels of attainment at the time of transition. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion and works closely with the families from minority ethnic heritages to welcome them into the school. The school is presently providing after school workshops for a small group of parents from Latvia, Lithuania and Russia to help them support their children's learning. The International Schools Award recognises the links with schools in Europe, South Africa and Uganda which provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of communities beyond the United Kingdom.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are positive about the work of the school and its impact on their children's enjoyment. Responses to the questionnaire included a number of detailed comments emphasising the positive atmosphere in the school and the caring approach of staff towards their children. A small minority of respondents suggested the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found clear evidence that the school deals effectively with the very few pupils who display challenging behaviour. A few respondents suggested the school does not take into account suggestions and concerns from parents and carers, or that the school is not led or managed effectively. Inspectors noted the regular promotion of the Parents Forum, which specifically encourages all parents and carers to raise concerns and suggest ways to improve the school further. They also found that leadership and management are good and are driving significant improvements in the school. A few parents and carers felt that their children are not making enough progress at this school. Here, inspection evidence supports parents' views, and improved progress is included as a key issue.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Attleborough 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 141 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 386 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	40	72	51	10	7	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	60	43	73	52	6	4	2	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	25	90	64	13	9	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	22	86	61	21	15	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	28	87	62	10	7	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	28	81	57	17	12	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	28	98	70	4	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)	41	29	90	64	9	6	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	26	88	62	9	6	7	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	16	79	56	23	16	12	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	22	83	59	13	9	8	6
The school is led and managed effectively	32	23	81	57	13	9	10	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	32	80	57	12	9	4	3

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



18 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Attleborough Junior School, Attleborough, NR17 2NA

Thank you for making us so welcome and for sharing your views with us during the inspection. We really enjoyed watching your lessons and looking at your work. It was also good to see you during assembly, playtime and lunch. Your school is a satisfactory one which has made significant improvements since the last inspection. There are many positive things about your school.

You enjoy school, attend well and work hard in your lessons.

You are friendly and well behaved.

You show kindness and consideration to others.

You have an excellent understanding of issues related to healthy lifestyles.

You make a very good contribution to the school and the wider community.

Your teachers plan interesting lessons for you.

The teachers and the support staff care greatly for you as individuals.

The school's leaders do a good job.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governing body to do the following things to make the school even better.

Develop your skills and confidence in writing and mathematical calculation so that you all make good progress.

Provide additional support for pupils who need extra help with their work

Review the teaching of all subjects other than English and mathematics so that the subjects are more creatively linked together.

Encourage you to use your computer skills across the different subjects.

You can help by behaving well and working hard. Keep enjoying the many things you do at Attleborough Junior School.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector

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