

Normanton Altofts Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108208
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	377715
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2012
Lead inspector	Ronald Cohen

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Hotchen
Headteacher	Tracey Peacock
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ronald Cohen
Sheila Loughlin
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Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 15 part-lessons taught by eleven teachers, of which three were observed jointly either with the headteacher or with the acting deputy headteacher. Inspectors spent a little over nine hours in these observations. Discussions were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at monitoring information, improvement plans, analysis and tracking of pupils' progress, and records of classroom observations. They also sampled pupils' work, listened to pupils reading and checked attendance. Inspectors analysed questionnaires submitted by 10 staff, 100 pupils and 105 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a broadly average-sized junior school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with none speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those supported at School Action Plus and those with a statement of special educational needs, is average. The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has National Healthy School status, Activemark, and Investors in Pupils 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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not good because, despite success in current Year 5 and Year 6, a sustained pattern of above-expected progress by the end of Year 6 has not been achieved. However, the school is improving rapidly and strongly. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most children enter school with above average skills. Since the last inspection, results at the end of Year 6 had decreased, year on year, from being above average to average. This dip in attainment has now been reversed, and current attainment is above average. This represents satisfactory progress. The school has made success in mathematics its main priority, and it is achieving this. Achievement in writing is not yet so strong.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but there is some good practice. In the best lessons, pupils' learning and progress is accelerating because they are encouraged to learn for themselves by doing and experimenting. In some lessons, however, pupils are too passive, and activities are not always appropriately challenging for pupils of different abilities, particularly the more-able.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Their attendance overall is above average, as is their punctuality. They enjoy school and feel safe.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have successfully led the school through a period of staff turbulence to one of stability. Through professional development, managing staff performance and improving teaching, they have raised attainment. Middle leaders' expertise in monitoring and evaluating teaching and its impact is now starting to be developed. The governing body is supportive of the school, but is at an early stage of holding it to account.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that by Year 6, the standards in writing are brought up to the level of those in mathematics by:
 - enabling pupils to develop and use more advanced writing skills in English and in other subjects by providing wider opportunities for pupils to read and use detailed and complex texts.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better by:
 - ensuring that lessons provide increased opportunities for pupils to work actively and independently
 - ensuring that tasks are closely matched to pupils' different needs so that they provide appropriate support and challenge for all pupils, especially those who are more able
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
 - developing further the skills of middle managers in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning
 - ensuring that the governing body develops its understanding of the school's effectiveness and holds the school more robustly to account.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement has improved markedly in the last twelve months. The downward trend in attainment since 2009 to a point where it was average has been reversed. The attainment of the current Y6 pupils is above average overall, and, for some pupils, is well above average in mathematics. This represents satisfactory progress overall from their starting points. However, their progress has varied over their time in school, with an acceleration in the last twelve months. This is because of the actions taken to improve teaching now that staffing is stable and to compensate for the earlier underachievement. The improved achievement is also evident across the school. For example, the Year 5 pupils entered with lower attainment than the Year 6 pupils, but their attainment is already above average and they are making good progress. The gap between girls' and boys' attainment is closing rapidly. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. This is because of the good in-class support they get, together with clearly targeted and effective intervention work.

Pupils achieve above average standards in mathematics, because of the recent emphasis on improving that subject. Writing and reading skills are above average overall, though still a little behind those in mathematics. The introduction of the 'big write' programme is having a good effect on writing, both in school and in homework. Pupils' creative writing is imaginative and they increasingly use words to express in writing their ideas and feelings. Nevertheless, even more practice of this kind is required in order to bring attainment in writing in line with that of mathematics. In reading, a higher proportion of pupils acquire higher levels than is seen nationally. This is borne out by the above-average skills exhibited by pupils. Pupils read confidently, fluently and with enjoyment. Despite the improved

progress across the school in the last twelve months, pupils' comparative lack of progress in the preceding two years means that pupils' progress over time is only satisfactory.

Most parents and carers rightly feel that their children make satisfactory progress.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Some good teaching was observed, particularly in Year 6. In the best lessons, teachers explain clearly what pupils will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. They plan effective opportunities for pupils to learn and promote maximum independence through independent learning. This was particularly evident in a Year 3 writing lesson, in which pupils wrote letters of complaint to the mother of Jack (who had brought the beanstalk to the village). The pupils were encouraged to think 'outside the box' and link their complaints wherever possible to aspects of other studies in their curriculum. This resulted in several interesting letters, not least of which was one that referred to the Giant's snoring having a "terrible effect on the noise pollution in the area". At the subsequent plenary session, the buzz of excitement and interest was palpable. However, this type of lesson is not yet the norm. Some lessons, while satisfactory, are less effective because teachers speak too much and over-direct the learning, thus limiting the opportunities for pupils to discover things for themselves by working independently.

Pupils are taught in mixed-ability classes. In the more effective lessons, account is taken of pupils' different abilities when planning work and so they make good progress. However in some lessons, work is not closely matched to the full range of ability and so it is not always appropriately challenging, especially for more-able pupils. Less-able pupils and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs are well-supported. Intervention in classes and in withdrawal groups is planned for and implemented well. In the most successful lessons, extension work kept pupils on appropriate tasks.

The provision of art and music workshops makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, opportunities to promote these aspects as an integral part of lessons are sometimes missed. The marking of pupils' work is regular and supportive and often reassures pupils about how well they have done. It also tells pupils what needs to be done in order to improve their work. Most parents and carers believe that their children are taught well. Inspectors found that teaching is satisfactory overall.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour in the playground at breaks and at lunch-time is good. Pupils also behave well around the school, and school documentation shows that this is generally the case over time. A very small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs occasionally display inappropriate behaviour in class, but teachers quickly and effectively deal with it, so there is minimal disruption to other pupils' learning. Parents and carers believe overwhelmingly that their children are safe in school. Pupils also say that they feel perfectly safe and happy in school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, and they understand safe and unsafe practices and situations, including those associated with the Internet. They recognise different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know how to respond to them. A small number of parents and carers believe that behaviour in class is sometimes disruptive, and their children are not sufficiently protected in the playground

from incidents of bullying. However, pupils say that it very rarely happens, and when it does, they know who to go to, and they feel that the matter is dealt with swiftly and effectively. They know the school's procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour and they think behaviour is generally good. Attendance overall is above average and pupils are punctual. A small group of pupils lose schooling because they are taken on holiday in term time. The school tries hard to discourage this, although it has not yet employed legal sanctions to do so.

Leadership and management

The school has responded well in the last year to the challenges of declining standards. A strategic plan was introduced which is central to their rapid recovery. The plan has an emphasis on pupils' learning and outcomes. The headteacher is very ably supported by the acting deputy headteacher, and they are guiding staff towards improving their teaching and performance in this regard. Their efforts have halted and reversed the decrease in attainment and have laid down a well-communicated vision for the school, based on a drive for continued improvement. This is embraced by all staff. However, middle leaders have not sufficiently developed the skills of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on pupils' achievement in lessons and over time. Members of the governing body are wholly committed to supporting the school. However, their role in evaluating the impact of the school's actions to improve achievement, in order to hold senior leaders to account, has not been sufficiently rigorous.

A strength of the good curriculum is the provision of enrichment activities, which range from 'boxercise' to baking and from music to mad science. The school is aware that most of its pupils are from white British backgrounds, and helps to prepare them for life in a multi-cultural society with a range of programmes that include visits into school by African drummers. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. For example, the school has made significant inroads into narrowing the gap between boys' and girls' performance, but the higher-ability pupils are not always catered for. The school does not tolerate any form of discrimination. Arrangements for safeguarding comply with current requirements. Appropriate policies, procedures and records are in place. Partnerships with outside agencies are strong, and have a positive impact on pupils' welfare and progress. The school has good transition arrangements with partner feeder schools, and the "Inspire" morning programmes are very successful at getting parents and carers to learn with their children.

The improvements in terms of achievement in Years 5 and 6, together with the successful development of teaching, and better tracking and monitoring procedures, indicate that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



17 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Normanton Altofts Junior School, Normanton, WF6 2NF

Firstly, may I say what a lovely time my colleagues and I had when we visited your school recently. Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work. We were interested to learn what activities you enjoy such as boxercise, and those 'Inspire' days when you learn together with your mums and dads, or other adults who look after you. You told us you think your school is a happy place where you have lots of friends and feel very safe, because, as one of you told us "everyone acts nicely". We agree that your school is safe. We think that Normanton Altofts is a satisfactory school. We also think it is getting better. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and so you are making satisfactory progress, but we think that the school can help you do even better. We have asked your headteacher, other teachers and your governors to do certain things to bring this about. Here is what they are:

- Firstly, we have asked your teachers to set you work to help improve your writing so it matches level of attainment you reach in mathematics.
- Secondly, we have asked your teachers to give you as many opportunities as possible to let you work things out for yourselves and for doing so with your class mates. We have asked them to give you work that is at the right level for each of you and that makes you think really hard. This is to help with your progress.
- Finally, we have asked the governing body and some of the teachers with subject responsibilities to check a little more often what is going on in your classroom. This way, they will know how well you are doing.

You can help by always being willing to try to work things out for yourself, even if you don't always get it right first time.

All best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely,

Ronald Cohen
Lead Inspector

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