

North Walsham Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	121009
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380147
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2012
Lead inspector	Declan McCarthy

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	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul East
Headteacher	Ruth Brumby
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2009
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy

Additional inspector

Nick Asker

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed parts of 12 lessons taught by eight teachers; six of these were joint observations with the assistant headteacher. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, with staff, five representatives of the governing body, a group of eight parents and carers and a local authority representative. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including school development planning, safeguarding policies, minutes of meetings of the governing body and school data for tracking pupils' progress. Inspectors also scrutinised samples of pupils' work from each year group, jointly with a senior leader. Questionnaires returned from staff, pupils and 38 parents and carers were analysed.

Information about the school

North Walsham is slightly larger than the average sized junior school. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, supported at School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is well above average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. A separately managed Children's Centre is on-site and the school also works with the adjoining infant school to support a breakfast, after-school and holiday club which is managed by a private provider and subject to a separate inspection.

There have been a number of changes since the last inspection. The headteacher is currently on authorised leave. The governing body has entered into a hard federation with the infant school and the senior leadership team has been restructured. The deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher are overseeing the work of the school. The headteacher of the infant school has been appointed as executive headteacher designate of the federated schools and will take up post in September 2012. There have been improvements in the outdoor learning environment with the addition of a wildlife garden and observation mobile classroom.

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	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	4

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.
- The school is not satisfactory because leaders have not been effective enough in improving the quality of teaching or in accelerating the progress of all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' achievement from well above average starting points is inadequate and, by the end of Year 6, their attainment drops in English and mathematics to only average. There is significant underachievement among all groups of pupils, although occasionally a few pupils make good or better progress.
- While teaching has improved recently, over the past year it has been inadequate and has had too little impact on helping pupils to improve their knowledge and skills. Teachers do not help pupils sufficiently to develop basic skills when they are being taught different subjects, and they do not use their assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills to set suitable targets. This means that the work given to pupils does not match their different abilities well enough. Teachers' marking misses opportunities to tell pupils how well they are doing against their own targets and what they may need to learn next.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils usually work well together, listen carefully to their teachers and focus on their learning tasks.
- Senior and middle leaders have not carried out enough lesson observations, or focused their attention sufficiently on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. Teachers are not fully held to account for the progress pupils make. Although the use of performance management has led to a gradual rise in

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attainment in recent years, it has not been rigorous enough in ensuring that all groups of pupils make satisfactory or better progress over time. The governing body has not been well enough informed about pupils' achievements or the school's effectiveness to enable it to challenge and support improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise attainment in English and mathematics so that pupils make consistently good progress by:
 - setting high expectations for pupils' learning
 - using information about pupils' prior learning as a starting point for setting challenging targets
 - matching tasks to pupils' different abilities
 - informing pupils about how well they are progressing towards their targets and what they need to do to improve when their work is marked
 - ensuring pupils practise their literacy, numeracy and information technology skills across all subjects.
- Develop leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders regularly monitor the impact of teaching on pupils' achievements and use this information to enable staff to extend the learning of all pupils
 - there is greater rigour in the management of teachers' performance
 - the governing body works closely with school leaders in reviewing and evaluating the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is inadequate because they make too little progress in reading, writing and mathematics over time. As a result, their attainment is only average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 despite well above average attainment on entry to the school. Attainment has risen slightly in recent years from below average to broadly average, but this has not been fast enough to enable pupils to maintain the high attainment they achieved before entering the school. For example, in discussion, parents and carers of pupils in Year 3 confirmed that their children were making insufficient progress because they were repeating learning from Year 2. Attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. The scrutiny of pupils' books and the school's data on the progress of current pupils shows that a significant minority in each year group are making inadequate progress. Only a few are making good or better progress. Although the school's data show that attainment has begun to rise, the actions taken by the school to improve the quality of teaching have not been rigorous enough to ensure that all pupils are making at least satisfactory progress.

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In almost all classes some pupils find learning too easy and others find it too difficult. In one Year 3 lesson, pupils of differing abilities were asked to record three imaginative words in developing an adventure and mystery story. Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs found this too difficult without the support of teaching assistants. More able pupils found this too easy and were not challenged enough, for example, to use similes or metaphors as was seen in a parallel Year 3 lesson. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, all pupils were given the same task in calculating, measuring and understanding shapes and some completed the task in five minutes, finding it too easy. Progress for all pupils in developing literacy, numeracy and information technology skills is limited because there are not enough opportunities to practise these skills in other subjects. Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs have made weak progress over time, but now make satisfactory progress in most lessons because of improvements in the support they receive.

Although the majority of parents and carers in the questionnaire returns believed their children are making good progress, a significant proportion did not. Most parents and carers who spoke with inspectors believe that their children are making insufficient progress over time and inspection evidence supports their views.

Quality of teaching

Senior leaders agree with inspectors that the school's information about how pupils are doing and their work show that the quality of teaching is inadequate, despite some satisfactory and good teaching seen during the inspection. In nearly all classes, pupils' work shows that they are given the same tasks to complete irrespective of their abilities and aptitudes. This results in insufficient challenge for the majority of pupils. The teaching of reading is not promoted well enough and there are limited opportunities for pupils to read in different subjects. In the sample of pupils' reading records seen there were no comments made by teachers on the quality or the progress pupils were making in reading.

In the few lessons seen where teaching was good, teachers made good use of questioning to challenge the thinking of the more able pupils, while simplifying questioning for pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, more able pupils were challenged to use the correct tense in their writing of flashbacks, and those with low prior attainment were encouraged to read the key elements of flashbacks before attempting their writing.

The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is now satisfactory because of the recent improvements. Support provided by teaching assistants in lessons has improved as a result of the training provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator. During group activities teaching assistants focus on clarifying tasks, learning intentions and technical vocabulary. They demonstrate new concepts through examples and encourage pupils to arrive at their own solutions.

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When teachers are speaking to the whole class, teaching assistants are not always deployed well enough, and teachers do not always extend the thinking of all pupils by asking them sufficiently challenging questions. Although the quality of marking has improved since the last inspection, it has not improved enough to enable pupils to understand their targets and how well they are achieving. Furthermore, marking does not always identify the next steps for learning.

Pupils' moral and social development is promoted appropriately through, for example, opportunities to share ideas in pairs and through good relationships between staff and pupils. Their spiritual development is fostered through activities such as those in the wildlife areas of the outdoor learning environment, which promote a sense of wonder. Pupils' cultural development is promoted in activities such as comparing different regions in the African continent in terms of their populations, capital cities and national flags.

Inspection evidence does not support the mainly positive perceptions of parents and carers about the quality of teaching.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils generally collaborate well in lessons, listen to each other and take turns. They are polite and courteous to visitors. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and inspectors observed that they move around the school and use the internet safely. Bullying is usually dealt with effectively. However, pupils do not have enough understanding of the different forms of prejudice-based bullying. Pupils said that behaviour is usually good but behaviour from boys, 'with a bad attitude,' in lessons is occasionally poor, and inspectors found that sometimes the misbehaviour of a few pupils can slow the pace of learning. In discussions with inspectors, parents acknowledged that the school is now more effective in managing behaviour and bullying than was the case in the recent past but, while the majority of those parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire believe that behaviour is good and pupils stay safe in school, almost half expressed some concerns either about behaviour, bullying or pupils' safety in school.

Attendance is broadly average and pupils are usually punctual to school.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are inadequate. Leaders and members of the governing body have not been effective enough in securing the necessary improvements in the quality of teaching to ensure all pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Weaknesses in teaching identified at the last inspection have not been fully remedied and improvements have therefore been too fragile, limiting the capacity to improve. The school has relied on local authority support to bring about improvements to teaching. The monitoring of teaching by all leaders is limited and not focused sharply enough on the learning and progress of different groups of pupils. Despite a recent rise in attainment to broadly average by the end of Year 6, improvements brought

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about by the management of performance have been too slow and have made little impact on the inadequate progress of a significant number of pupils. As a result of gaps in performance between different groups of pupils, the school's promotion of equality of opportunity is inadequate.

School self-evaluation has been inaccurate in the recent past but is beginning to improve. However, it is still not based on an accurate enough analysis of the progress of different groups of pupils, and does not involve members of the governing body and subject leaders in the review of progress and achievement across the school. Not all staff have been sufficiently involved in evaluating the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress over time. In discussion with inspectors, parents and carers expressed strong views about the poor communication between home and the school in the past. The low rate of response to the inspection questionnaires confirms the school's inability to engage all parents meaningfully in the work of the school. Governors' concerns have prompted a reorganisation of leadership arrangements and the school has entered into a hard federation with the infant school. The governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met, particularly for safeguarding. Vetting procedures, required policies, relevant training and adequate levels of supervision are in place to ensure the welfare and safety of pupils.

The curriculum provides a range of learning experiences for pupils, including some good opportunities for promoting sports, through partnerships with local schools. Pupils have been successful in winning a range of sporting trophies, for example for football. A wide range of after-school clubs and the new outdoor learning environment are facilitating greater enjoyment for learning. Partnerships with external professionals in supporting pupils from the most vulnerable circumstances have a positive effect on their well-being.

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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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 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.
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.



28 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Walsham Junior School, North Walsham, NR28 9HG

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We were very grateful to hear your views about the school and those expressed by some of your parents and carers. We have judged that your school requires 'special measures' because teaching does not ensure that you make enough progress in reading, writing or mathematics by the time you leave the school. Your school will receive more support and other inspectors will return to see how much it is improving. Your behaviour is satisfactory and we were pleased to see that most of you behave well in lessons and around the school. You do well in sports and we saw all the wonderful trophies you have won. You also told us how much you enjoy your new wildlife areas.

We have asked your school to improve teaching, so that you all make more progress in English and mathematics, by giving you challenging work which is set at the right level for each of you. We have also asked the school to make sure that marking always helps you know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve. We have asked school leaders and governors to check how well you are progressing so that they know what improvements are needed in your school.

You can help by telling your teachers if your work is too hard or too easy.

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy
Lead inspector

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