

North Walsham Junior School

Manor Road, North Walsham, NR28 9HG

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The progress that pupils make is not consistently good in all subjects and classes.
- Not all teaching consistently challenges pupils, especially in subjects other than mathematics and English.
- Subject leaders do not yet consistently use information on how well pupils are learning to drive up standards.
- Teachers' salary progression is not yet firmly dependent on the achievement of their pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The progress that pupils make is faster than in the past and the standards that they reach are higher.
- Pupils feel safe, and parents and carers agree.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Their attitude to learning has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- The headteacher and senior leaders know the school well. They understand exactly what needs to be done to make this a good school.
- Governors support senior leaders very well. The governing body is very effective in holding them to account for the improvement of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 14 lessons taught by nine teachers. All classes were visited on at least one occasion. In addition, inspectors looked at samples of pupils' writing and mathematics book from all year groups.
- Inspectors observed several intervention and support sessions. They also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, and one had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Too few parents and carers responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for information to be available. Inspectors took account of the 15 responses from the school's own parental survey. In addition to this an informal meeting was held with a small group of parents and carers.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including self-evaluations, school improvement plans, records of meetings of the governing body, and those concerned with the observation of teaching and pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Ian Seath, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Piers Ranger

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- North Walsham is an average-sized junior school. It is part of a federation with North Walsham Infant School and Nursery, with a single governing body.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is higher than the national average for schools of this type. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To raise the standards to above the national average, improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that all lessons are pitched at a level that challenges every pupil, especially in subjects other than mathematics, reading and writing
 - making sure that all pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve their work.
 - ensuring that teachers give more time for pupils to work independently and to contribute to the lesson.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making sure that teachers' pay increases are tightly linked to their performance and the success of their pupils
 - ensuring that teachers with responsibilities for subjects make better use of information on how well pupils are learning to check that the lesson planning and teaching challenges all pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Published examination results for 2012 showed a school where most pupils underachieved. Standards had remained below national average for a number of years and the progress that pupils made was well below expectations. Gaps between the performance of different groups were significant, for example disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs made significantly slower progress than their peers.
- The standards that pupils reach and the progress that they make have improved markedly. For pupils in the current Year 6, the proportion making expected progress in English is now better than the national average. For mathematics it is close to national average. The proportion attaining levels above those expected is now close to national averages for English but below for mathematics.
- Since the last inspection the number of pupils on the special needs register has been closely reviewed. As a result there are now far fewer and most receive additional support from teaching assistants. The standards attained by this group are now in line with national expectations because the progress that they make has improved markedly since the last inspection.
- Those pupils supported through pupil premium funding reach standards in mathematics and English that are around a term behind their peers until they reach Year 6. In their last year in school their progress accelerates in all subjects so that by the time they leave they have reached standards that are close to their peers.
- Pupils' literacy skills develop quickly in all year groups. This is because their needs are already understood when they transfer from the infant school and support is put in place quickly for those who need it. In all year groups this support places a strong emphasis on speaking as well as the correction of spelling and grammar.
- In lessons, pupils' ability to work independently has improved markedly. This is because many lessons include opportunities for pupils to solve problems by themselves or in small groups. This is particularly noticeable in Years 3 and 4. Pupils, including those who receive additional support, read capably in all year groups.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The school has eradicated the inadequate teaching seen at the last inspection. Inspectors observed teaching that is not yet consistently good, although a small proportion is outstanding. In some afternoon lessons activities are pitched at too low a level and learning slows. Pupils sometimes become restless in these lessons because they are bored. Sometimes teachers talk too much, dominating the lessons so that pupils are unable to contribute.
- Teachers' planning of mathematics and English lessons is good. These lessons now have a better pace and structure, but they vary in other subjects. Excellent examples were seen in science, with the lessons pitched at a level sufficiently high to challenge all pupils. In other examples this was not the case. In these, planning allowed some pupils to achieve less than their classmates because for some the work was less demanding.
- Marking of written work is much improved and class time is devoted to the correction of mistakes. Occasionally spelling mistakes are not corrected, however. Some pupils are not clear about what they need to do to improve their work because their teachers have not told them

how to go about it.

- The school caters well for those pupils who need extra support in mathematics and English. This has led to marked improvements in achievement in these subjects. Small-group and one-to-one intervention sessions are commonplace, often led by very effective teaching assistants. Pupils' confidence in their speaking skills improves quickly as a result.
- In the best lessons pupils are happy and busy because they are interested and sufficiently challenged. Often they work well independently, or in small groups where they help each other. In these situations confidence and communication skills improve quickly. Questioning by the teacher is skilful, prompting pupils to solve problems.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is low. Attendance is broadly average with an improving trend since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy their time at school and want to attend. Punctuality is good and very few pupils are late for class.
- Pupils are well focused on learning, not afraid to ask questions or to say when they do not understand. They are capable and confident learners with skills of independence that develop quickly and surely. Around the school they are well behaved, curious, polite and helpful. Disruption in class is rare.
- Instances of bullying, mostly name-calling, are very rare. Pupils say that they are clear about what to do if it does happen, and this is reinforced by clear anti-bullying posters and policy. Parents and carers express their confidence that pupils are safe, and pupils say that they feel safe. During break times pupils play contentedly and happily in the very well-equipped and pleasant school grounds.
- Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. This is because examples of this are often discussed in class. In addition many displays, rules, and codes of classroom behaviour make clear what the school's expectations are. The school has a clear and well-understood behaviour policy which is applied consistently.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Following the last inspection that placed the school into special measures, the headteacher of the adjoining 'outstanding' infant school took responsibility for both schools. She is a local leader of education with a track record of rapid school improvement. The schools now form a federation with a single governing body.
- The headteacher and senior leaders from both schools have quickly established a strong momentum of improvement. Central to this has been the accurate assessment of pupils' progress so that improvements can be monitored. This has been done well at whole-school level but individual subject leaders have taken only limited ownership and responsibility for this process. For example, they do not always check that the planning and teaching of lessons challenges all pupils and that teachers' expectations are high enough.
- The school has set itself ambitious targets for pupils' progress, and has met them. The headteacher and other leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of

the school. Inspectors were in complete agreement with their view. Appropriate action has been taken to tackle the significant issues identified at the last inspection. These include training on assessment and the accurate determination of the levels that pupils have reached

- Teachers have undertaken much relevant professional development. This has been successful because teaching has improved, but not to the point where it is consistently good. When observing lessons, leaders pay good attention to how well pupils learn. They correctly identify the best practice and enable it to be shared. However they do not always identify when activities do not allow all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability.
- Teachers' performance is closely monitored, for example by leaders observing their teaching. Targets for the achievement of their pupils are set and progress towards them closely monitored. Good use is made of the government's teachers' standards for this purpose. However, teachers' movement up the pay scale is not yet closely linked to the success of their pupils.
- The school's own surveys, together with conversations with parents and carers, indicate that they have confidence in the school and its leadership. Communications with parents and carers have improved. Regular meetings, open events, and very effective use of social media have contributed to this. Pupils and many parents and carers take a pride in their school. Parents, carers and pupils comment that the regularity of homework and the promptness of its marking have improved.
- The school's use of pupil premium funding is effective, and has led to an improvement in the achievement of those pupils for whom it is awarded. For example it has been used to fund staffing for intervention support, and to help with the purchase of appropriate learning materials that have benefited these pupils.
- The school's curriculum is extensive and caters well for the needs of all pupils. Personal, social and health education is strong, both through assemblies and through lessons. Extra-curricular and enrichment events are plentiful, for example visits to wildlife parks and local attractions.
- The local authority has supported the school through the federation with its partner infant school, with the formation of a joint governing body. This change has provided improved leadership from an experienced and successful headteacher.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governance of the school is strong. Governors bring many strengths to their role. They have given the school good support during the time that the school has been in special measures. The governing body has not been slow to challenge where the school's performance has not been good enough. It has supported the headteacher well to bring about staffing changes. Governors understand school performance data sufficiently well to be able to challenge the headteacher and to ask searching questions when appropriate. Progress towards challenging targets is monitored effectively. Governors have an understanding of pupil premium funding, and have approved its current effective use. They understand where the best quality of teaching is, and have supported the headteacher well to improve teaching where it is less strong.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121009
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	420540

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul East
Headteacher	Clare Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2012
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