

North Walsham Junior School

Manor Road, North Walsham, NR28 9HG

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The highly effective leadership of the executive headteacher and the executive deputy headteacher has brought about rapid improvement to teaching and achievement this year. As a result, pupils are making good progress.
- The new leadership team, together with governors, has been successful in driving improvement to make up for a legacy of underachievement.
- All inadequate teaching has been eliminated and teaching is now consistently good.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils; this is evident in the large volume of good quality work they produce.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are extremely courteous and considerate. They have excellent attitudes to learning.
- Pupils have every confidence in school staff to keep them safe. The school meets the pastoral needs of its most vulnerable pupils extremely well.
- Governors bring a wealth of expertise to the school. They challenge leaders effectively and keep abreast of how well pupils are doing.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The work in pupils' religious education books does not always reflect the full range of activities they have undertaken.
- Some members of staff are not fully secure in making the best use of assessment and tracking information about pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in 12 lessons or parts of lessons, most jointly with senior leaders. They also observed a wide range of activities undertaken as part of the school's 'Sports and Hobbies' week. The inspectors attended two assemblies.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and, with the executive headteacher and executive deputy headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports and safeguarding records. They considered evidence of the school's partnership work and the information provided for families.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, phase leaders, teachers and other staff. The lead inspector talked to the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 13 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also scrutinised the school's own survey of parents' views and spoke informally to parents in the playground.
- The inspectors considered the 23 staff questionnaires that were completed.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector
Debra McCarthy	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are three classes for each year group.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6.
- The executive headteacher was headteacher of the infant school when the two schools federated in September 2012 and became executive headteacher over both schools.
- The executive deputy headteacher was deputy headteacher of the infant school until the deputy headteacher of the junior school left in 2014. She then became executive deputy headteacher over both schools.
- There have been changes to the leadership team this year with the appointment of an inclusion leader, a Years 5 and 6 phase leader and the appointment of year group leaders.
- The school has been receiving support from a local leader of education at Buxton Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to move the school's effectiveness to outstanding:
 - ensure that the work in religious education books reflects the full range of activities pupils have undertaken in this subject
 - make sure that all staff are fully secure in making the best use of assessment and tracking information about pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school's new senior leadership team has been successful this year in creating a culture that drives improvement. As a result, teaching is now consistently good and behaviour is outstanding. Leaders, managers and governors have set high expectations for all staff and have not shied away from taking difficult decisions in order to tackle underperformance.
- The executive headteacher and new executive deputy headteacher have drawn upon their highly effective track record at the infant school to speed up the momentum of improvement. This has been particularly fruitful this year, as they have been ably supported by their new leadership team.
- There is strong leadership of teaching. Leaders have put in place clear systems and procedures that hold staff fully accountable for their performance. Regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress ensure that no pupil slips through the net. Leaders carry out rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and follow up points for improvement promptly. They provide good support for all teaching staff and encourage them to share best practice, including through the use of video.
- Leaders are skilled at recognising and developing talent among staff and give them opportunities to take a lead in all aspects of the school's work. As a result, middle leaders, including subject leaders and those responsible for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are effective in contributing to school improvement.
- Leaders have learnt the lessons from last year's disappointing Year 6 test results in reading and mathematics. They have set up systems to ensure that assessments are accurate and quality assurance is secure. The tracking system has not been as effective as it could have been in giving a clear view of how well pupils are performing. The school has taken recent steps to remedy this. As a result, teachers are increasingly confident in assessing and analysing pupils' progress, although they are not yet all fully secure, especially in using the new assessment information.
- Pupils benefit from a lively and rich curriculum. During the inspection they were enjoying a 'Sports and Hobbies' week that included a wealth of invigorating activities such as karate, cheer leading and origami. The curriculum covers the full range of requirements and is enriched in many ways. For example, during the inspection, pupils were preparing to attempt the world record for the most pom-poms on a string. This project involved the whole community and 12,000 pom-poms.
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in practical ways. For example, Year 5 pupils had a 'fiver challenge' to invest £5 in their own business to make a profit over a month. Their virtuosity knew no bounds.
- While pupils produce plenty of good quality work in most subjects, their religious education books do not always reflect the full range of topics they have studied or contain work born of the same high expectations.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through assemblies and aspects of the curriculum, including through visits and visitors. The school has clear values that are embraced by all pupils and staff. Stories in assemblies deal with themes such as the acceptance of difference and tolerance of others. They align well with core British values of fair play and natural justice. Pupils learn about democracy through the school council elections and visit the Houses of Parliament. They consider big questions in philosophy lessons. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The pupil premium is spent effectively on narrowing gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and that of others in the school and nationally. Small-group teaching gives additional support to these pupils. The funding is also used to enable disadvantaged pupils to go on trips and access all elements of the curriculum. In this way the school ensures equality of opportunity for all and its lack of tolerance for discrimination of any kind.

- The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are extremely effective. All checks are carried out on new staff and they have regular training in keeping pupils safe. Careful records log any concerns. The leaders with designated responsibility for safeguarding maintain very close links with outside agencies and regularly keep themselves updated on all developments.
- The local authority supports the school well through its 'Norfolk Good and Great' programme, which has linked the school with a local leader of education. The local authority has also brokered other support for the school which has proven effective in supporting leadership.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is spent effectively on sports coaches and the Norwich City partnership. Staff have received training in running sports and pupils have benefited from different sports such as golf and taking part in tournaments with other schools. Pupils always run a mile around the school's extensive field before every games lesson. This helps to keep them fit.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors have improved since the previous inspection and now ask searching questions of leaders, for example about the lower-than-expected test results in 2014 for some Year 6 pupils. Governors know about data and how well pupils are performing compared with similar schools and all schools nationally. They understand about the quality of teaching. Through their regular visits to the school they inform themselves about the effectiveness of its work. Governors each link to an improvement point on the school's development plan, so keep track of the rate of progress towards meeting the school's objectives.
 - Governors know how leaders manage the performance of teachers and how good teaching is rewarded and underperformance is tackled. They have a good blend of skills and access training on a regular basis to ensure that they carry out their duties well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils have exceptional attitudes to learning. They are very positive about their studies. They take a real pride in their work, both in terms of the volume they produce and in terms of its neat presentation.
- Pupils are unfailingly polite and courteous. They are friendly and hold doors open for adults. Pupils readily take advice from teachers because they are keen to improve their work. They talk enthusiastically about their learning.
- Pupils respond very well to the school's behaviour policy and look forward to receiving rewards for their efforts. They are hungry for responsibility, for example as members of the school council, play leaders and 'friendly faces' who help pupils find a friend.
- Pupils help by working in the school garden and raise money for charity. They organise and lead clubs for other pupils.
- Attendance has risen and is now average. Pupils are punctual to school and wear their uniform with pride.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep safe, including on the internet. 'Young leaders' ensure that all pupils are safe in the corridors and at play times.
- Pupils learn from the emergency services about staying safe in potentially dangerous situations. All pupils learn first aid. They say that bullying is not an issue. They feel completely safe in school. Pupils say that they have every confidence in staff to sort out any worries they may have. The school is particularly effective at supporting its most vulnerable pupils and their families, so enabling them to make the most of schooling.

- Pupils know all about different types of bullying including physical bullying and prejudice-based bullying. They put up posters around the school promoting a message of anti-bullying and support one another in staying safe. Most parents are also happy that their children are safe at school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has greatly improved since the previous inspection and is now consistently good. Leaders, managers and governors have done much to eliminate inadequate teaching and to raise the overall standard of teaching. They have set high expectations for all staff and these are reflected in pupils' good progress.
- Teachers ensure that pupils produce plenty of good quality work, not only in their English and mathematics books, but also in most other subjects. However, there is not enough work in their religious education books. Pupils present their work very neatly; their handwriting is fluent.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress in their learning because teachers usually plan work that is set at the right level of challenge for them. This especially helps the less-able pupils to keep up with their classmates. Occasionally, when teachers are not so confident about using assessment information, the progress of pupils is not as strong.
- Teachers keep a close eye on how well pupils are doing in class and are quick to pick up and deal with any misconceptions they may have. They also provide helpful on-the-spot advice in lessons so that pupils can get the most out of their learning.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to probe pupils' understanding and extend their thinking. For example, Year 6 pupils were planning to write a play script about 'the elephant in the room' and the teacher's skilful questioning helped them to consider how different characters would respond in particular situations.
- Teaching assistants play a valuable role in supporting pupils. They show good initiative in the ways that they respond to pupils' needs and this helps pupils to make good progress. All teachers give much time and thought to marking pupils' work. They consistently follow the school's marking policy. This means that pupils know exactly how well they have done and what they need to do to improve their work further. Pupils invariably act upon their teachers' advice and this sets in motion a useful dialogue between them.
- The school's homework policy gives pupils opportunities to use their imagination and to explore topics they are learning in school in more depth, for example through working on dedicated projects.
- Reading is taught well. The introduction of an online reading programme has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. This has given pupils a strong desire to read widely and often. For example, the programme recorded that Year 4 pupils in one class had read almost 500,000 words during the week of the inspection.
- The school's work to improve writing has been successful. Pupils write at length on a wide range of subjects in different styles. For example, Year 5 pupils were writing biographies of well known seafarers, such as local hero Horatio Nelson and Robinson Crusoe's precursor, Alexander Selkirk.
- The impact of teaching upon learning and achievement in mathematics is good. The school's structured approach to teaching mathematics ensures that all pupils receive a solid grounding in mathematical concepts. This includes an innovative and rapid method of recalling times tables against a backdrop of rock rhythms.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Books show that Year 3 pupils make good progress from their different starting points. In all year groups pupils achieve well because teachers have high expectations and marking is of a consistently good quality. This has not always been the case. The school has suffered in the past from inadequate teaching which has left a legacy of underachievement.
- Despite rapid improvement under the new leadership team, the 2014 Year 6 pupils were unable to catch up sufficiently in reading and mathematics. The school focused particularly on improving writing and this group of pupils did achieve well in this subject and standards were above average.
- Improvements in teaching meant that the progress of other year groups began to accelerate last year. This momentum of good progress has continued apace this year. As a result, the proportions of pupils working at or above the expected levels of attainment for their age group are greater than what is typical in all year groups.
- It is especially encouraging that the proportions of pupils who are working above what is expected for their age have risen rapidly in each year group. The present Year 6 pupils are on course to reach higher standards in reading and mathematics than was the case in 2014. While standards were below average at that time, this year they are on track to be broadly average. In addition, the progress of Year 6 pupils from their different starting points at the end of Key Stage 1 compares much more favourably this year than last with the 2014 national averages. In particular, the proportions of Year 6 pupils on course to make more than expected progress are higher than was the case nationally last year.
- In 2014, as a result of previous underachievement, there were considerable gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of others nationally in mathematics and reading. Pupils were around a year behind in both subjects. Pupils performed better in writing in 2014 and there was no gap with other pupils nationally.
- Compared with other pupils in the school, gaps in attainment with disadvantaged pupils were half a term behind in mathematics, one-and-a-half terms behind in reading and just over a term behind in writing.
- This year, in Year 6, all pupils have made good progress but disadvantaged pupils have made even better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The impact of this has been to close gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in Year 6.
- The school's own data show that this year gaps in attainment across all year groups have narrowed between disadvantaged pupils and the others. This is because the school uses the pupil premium effectively to meet their particular needs. Leaders also ensure that higher-attaining disadvantaged pupils have opportunities to extend their thinking, for example through the courses of the 'Children's University', an organisation that challenges pupils to make productive use of their leisure time.
- The quality of education for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has improved considerably this year. The new inclusion leader oversees no fewer than 27 different programmes of support that are carefully tailored to the needs of individual pupils. As a result, they now make good progress.
- The school ensures that its most-able pupils are suitably challenged. Pupils told the inspectors that they found the work interesting and demanding. The most-able pupils have opportunities to do additional research on a subject that interests them and to take part in a variety of activities with pupils in other schools. An increasing proportion of the most-able pupils are reaching the higher levels of attainment in each year group as a result of teaching that stretches them. They achieve well.

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	462052

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	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul East
Headteacher	Clare Fletcher (executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	16 July 2013
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