

# John Grant School, Caister-on-Sea

St George's Drive, Caister-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 5QW

## Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher and senior leaders constantly strive to improve outcomes for all pupils. As a result, almost all pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points because their needs are constantly being evaluated and creatively met.
- All staff work together to make sure that every pupil receives the best possible education. This inspirational teamwork is evident in every classroom.
- Governors know the school exceptionally well. They give stringent challenge to school leaders, checking carefully that additional government funding is used effectively.
- Teaching is outstanding because teachers and co-educators (teaching assistants) work with pupils exceptionally well. Lessons are interesting, and pupils want to learn.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They treat each other, staff and visitors with care and respect.
- Pupils feel safe in school. All staff manage some pupils' very challenging behaviour exceptionally well.
- Children in early years make outstanding progress due to the excellent curriculum and consistent support they receive.
- Students in the 16–19 provision are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education. Nearly all students go on to local colleges to continue their education.
- Parents speak very highly of the school. For example, one parent said, 'This school has the highest of all standards'.
- The school works exceptionally well with parents, especially when a pupil has difficulties. Leaders recognise that they could further support parents to help their children at home.
- Leaders have accurately identified next steps for improvement, but written plans do not give a clear picture of which priorities to work on first.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the school development plan clearly sets out the current priorities for improvement.
- Develop support for parents by exploring ways in which the wide range of expertise in the school can be shared even more effectively.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has built a stronger and even more effective senior leadership team. Recent staff changes have not affected pupils' education in any way. The recommendation from the previous inspection to improve teaching and thus raise achievement has been addressed fully.
- The recently appointed acting deputy headteachers work exceptionally well with the headteacher to support continuous school improvement. For example, a review of behaviour support planning has resulted in a much clearer understanding of how to evaluate, record and support improvement in pupils' behaviour. Pupil premium, Year 7 catch-up and special educational needs funding is used exceptionally well to support these improvements.
- Subject leaders rigorously check how well their subjects are taught through regular 'learning walks' and by looking through teachers' assessments on the school's new computer-based assessment system. As a result, they make better informed changes to improve teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Teachers say that termly pupil progress meetings help them to focus on the changing needs of the pupils in their classes. Senior leaders make sure that learning and behaviour targets are sufficiently challenging but also help teachers to come up with creative solutions when pupils are not doing as well as they could.
- Teachers and co-educators (co-eds) say that they receive regular and very useful professional development that helps them to teach and support pupils more effectively. There are further opportunities for professional development through the range of support given to other schools. For example, the teacher who leads on autistic spectrum disorder is working with a number of local primary schools.
- The curriculum is exceptionally well designed to be interesting and relevant to pupils. The school uses a variety of topic themes based on the national curriculum. Teachers and co-eds make sure that pupils' own interests are incorporated. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated to learn and concentrate well in lessons. Parents receive a termly newsletter explaining what pupils will be learning about. This also gives ideas for homework projects. Leaders have recognised that, given the high level of expertise in the school, they could give even more support to parents to help them work with their children at home.
- Physical education (PE) is a strength of the school. The PE leader ensures that all pupils are active during the school day. There are many opportunities to take part in sporting activities in school time, at after-school clubs and in local sporting events. Last year, 101 out of the 140 pupils took part in at least one local event. The PE and sport premium is used highly effectively to improve teachers' expertise and also to provide specialist equipment so that as many pupils as possible can take part and improve their physical health and well-being.
- There is a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs that enrich the curriculum, help pupils to learn to work together and contribute to their excellent cultural development. The school organises visits, such as the weekly visit to a local large supermarket where pupils with autistic spectrum disorder go shopping for ingredients

for cooking. Parents who accompany their children are amazed at how they are able to cope in this very busy and noisy environment. This is an example of how effectively the school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. There is also a good range of visitors to the school. During the inspection, a visiting dance group inspired pupils to express their feelings through movement.

- Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection were thrilled with the excellent education their children receive. Individual parents also commended the school's positive support. One carer said, 'This is a wonderful school. Communication is excellent – if I don't understand anything they explain it to me. I can't praise them highly enough. I've only had positive experiences.'
- The school works exceptionally well with external agencies. Very little learning time is lost in school because so many professionals, including medical professionals, enable parents and their children to have regular appointments at the school. An outstanding feature of this work is the partnership with the local authority's child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS). This team works highly effectively with the school and families to help manage difficult behaviour. The school also uses the services of a full-time nurse who supports high-level medical emergencies.
- The school development plan is not a precise document. There are lots of different ideas included and, although teachers know and understand the school's priorities, support staff are not so clear about this.

## **Governance**

- Governors know the school and its challenges exceptionally well. They use this knowledge to support leaders and also to question why particular actions are being taken.
- The chair of the governing body gives outstanding leadership. He works exceptionally well with the headteacher to ensure that nothing, such as the recent building project, distracts leaders from improving the quality of pupils' education.
- Governors keep a very careful eye on how additional government funding is used. They are aware that the website needs updating and are already sorting this out.
- Governors visit the school regularly, talking to staff and pupils in order to help them understand the impact of school improvement initiatives.
- Governors are constantly looking for ways to improve what the school can offer. For example, they were very helpful to school leaders in helping set up the new early years provision and alternative provision for older learners.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All required safeguarding processes and procedures are fully in place.
- All staff have had recent training on how to safeguard pupils. All are regularly updated on how to use physical restraint safely and effectively. They can explain how they use class logs to record behaviour incidents. They are confident to report any serious safeguarding concerns using the school's cause for concern forms. They say that the designated safeguarding leads respond rapidly and come back to them to explain the

outcome of actions taken.

- There are four designated safeguarding leads and they all receive regular training in how best to carry out their role. Consequently, the most vulnerable pupils are supported highly effectively.
- The school has an excellent relationship with the local authority's 'children with disabilities' team as well as with children's social care. This ensures that pupils get the right support from the right experts. Leaders act quickly if a child is in need of immediate help and support.
- The school works effectively with the local police. Leaders get regular updates on any issues relating to domestic violence where the police are involved so that staff can support pupils and their families more effectively.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Outstanding

- The outstanding teaching in every class is due to the exceptional understanding that teachers and co-eds have of the needs of every pupil in their classes. All staff have very high expectations for what pupils can achieve. They are constantly, quietly challenging pupils to do even better. Pupils rise to this challenge, however complex their individual needs, because of the excellent relationships they have with staff.
- Classrooms are set up to enable pupils to achieve. For example, the classroom for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder has a few tables and workstations but nothing that might disturb or distract pupils unnecessarily. Every classroom has a timetable that uses pictures and symbols to help pupils understand what activities and learning are happening that day. Consequently, pupils feel ready to learn because they are not anxious about what may happen later.
- Co-eds are very clear about their role in the classroom. They rarely support only one pupil because leaders are determined that pupils should not become overly dependent upon any one person. This strategy works exceptionally well. It enables pupils who find any form of change very challenging to move successfully from one class to another, and in the upper school, from one teacher to another.
- Leaders have worked hard to make sure that co-eds give the most appropriate support to pupils. Sometimes, they rightly stand back and wait for the pupil to have a go at a task first. The co-eds never do the work or the thinking for the pupil. Therefore, pupils are increasingly confident to ask questions, try things out for themselves, use their own creativity and share their ideas.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and this enables the most able pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a science lesson, pupils demonstrated their extensive knowledge of the heart and circulatory system.
- Teachers find the school's tracking system easy to use. They find that adding photographic evidence helps them to illustrate the small but significant steps of progress that pupils make over time.

### Personal development, behaviour and welfare

### Outstanding

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils love their school because it provides a carefully structured environment in which they feel safe and secure and can therefore learn and work together better. For example, a key stage 4 pupil showed great consideration and care for a Year 2 pupil after a school council meeting, offering to take him to the dining hall.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain due to the strong focus on enabling them to be as independent as possible, given their special educational needs and/or disabilities. One pupil said, 'I like it here because I'm able to interact with other pupils. I couldn't do that before'.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. This is covered well through their vocational curriculum.
- There are high and appropriate levels of supervision at breaktimes. This ensures that every break is a happy and relaxing time. The school's detailed incident records indicate, and pupils say, that there is no bullying of any kind in the school.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in every classroom, which is often remarked upon by visitors to the school. Most pupils are able to move successfully around the school either on their own or, where appropriate, supported by an adult.
- All adults know how to manage pupils' sometimes very challenging behaviour effectively because there are carefully constructed behaviour plans for pupils who have significantly challenging behaviour. Risks are identified carefully and strategies to reduce and manage these risks are outlined clearly. For example, where possible, staff identify what triggers difficult behaviour. This clear and supportive structure supports pupils' outstanding social and moral development.
- Staff use their physical intervention training very effectively if this is needed. However, all adults are working to reduce the need for physical intervention. Leaders can show through their careful tracking of behaviour incidents that these interventions have decreased over time.
- Attendance has improved over the last year and is currently just below average for similar schools. This is the result of a number of pupils who have serious medical conditions having to attend regular hospital appointments. There have been no exclusions this school year due to the excellent strategies and provision leaders and governors have put in place for those pupils with the most challenging behaviour.
- The school uses one alternative community provision to support pupils who cannot cope in the main school. This has been highly effective in calming very challenging behaviour and enabling pupils to refocus their mind on learning.

**Outcomes for pupils**

**Outstanding**

- The school has very rigorous systems to check what pupils can already do when they join the school. Leaders and teachers use this information exceptionally well to write personal education and behaviour plans that enable pupils to make outstanding progress in both areas.
- None of the pupils at the school is working at age-related expectations, so comparisons cannot be made with all pupils nationally. However, the school's own, highly effective tracking system indicates that all groups of pupils make outstanding progress from when they start at the school. All groups of pupils do equally well. For example, there is no difference between the progress of boys and girls, or between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school.
- Teachers make sure that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are able to gain a wide knowledge and understanding in the subjects they are studying. For example, in a science class for the most able key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils, pupils answered the teacher's questions confidently and with great enthusiasm, showing their considerable knowledge and understanding of the circulatory system.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of life and education due to the outstanding provision they receive during their time at the school. Pupils receive excellent independent careers advice and guidance from Year 10 onwards. Consequently, all pupils are able to complete and achieve at least one accredited course before they leave the school.
- Nearly all pupils are able to move on to further education due to the excellent links between the school and local colleges.

### Early years provision

### Outstanding

- All the children who attend the off-site Reception class have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities similar to those provided for at the main school. Consequently, they start in the provision with skills, knowledge and understanding that are well below those of other children of their age. Children make outstanding progress due to the outstanding teaching, assessment and curriculum and are well prepared to move to the main school.
- As soon as children arrive, the early years leader makes a detailed assessment of each child's learning and behaviour needs, which informs their individual education plan. This information is used exceptionally well by the teacher and co-eds to make sure that every child can achieve as well as possible every day.
- The curriculum is based on interesting and familiar stories. These are read daily so that children get to know the characters. Children are taught to sign along to the story and, because this is fun and exciting, they quickly learn simple signs. For example, during the inspection, the story was about a very hungry caterpillar and most of the children were able to attempt the 'hungry' and 'caterpillar' signs.
- Daily routines enable children to settle into the provision very quickly when they arrive in the morning. They are shown, in pictures, what activities they will take part in and, as a result, show no signs of anxiety. The sensory gym trail comes next and children show great commitment and determination to complete this, despite their significant special needs. The co-eds give outstanding support because they know precisely when to encourage each child to have a go without their help. The calm-down activity that

closes the trail enables the children to be ready to listen to their story.

- Behaviour in the early years class is outstanding because the teacher and co-eds have very high expectations of what children can achieve from the moment they step through the door. Any child who arrives a little late settles down rapidly because the familiar routines help them to feel comfortable and ready to learn.
- Leadership of early years is excellent. The early years leader in the off-site provision works very closely with the early years and key stage 1 teacher in the main school. Together they plan the curriculum and work out the best possible learning opportunities for each child.
- Safeguarding is paramount and this is evident in the strong attachments that children quickly form with the teacher and the co-eds. The environment is safe and secure and it is clear from the children's smiles when they come in that they feel safe and enjoy learning.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

## Outstanding

- Students who attend the 16–19 provision have a wide range of SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders carefully place students in the most appropriate class grouping to best support their needs. This works exceptionally well and, as a result, students settle very quickly into their new classes and continue to make outstanding progress.
- Most-able students are confident to talk with adults and can start and sustain a conversation about their favourite activities and interests. For example, one group was keen to discuss which team might win the World Cup and who their favourite players are and why.
- All students are working towards a recognised qualification and a few are able to attempt pre-entry level in mathematics in key stage 4. This is a huge achievement and is due to the excellent teaching they receive and leaders' determination to enable students to be as independent as possible so that they are ready to move on to the next stage of their education. For example, three of the oldest students wrote instructions for how to get from their classroom to the hall. The teacher encouraged them to make their own way from one part of the school to another without any assistance.
- The curriculum is outstanding because it is carefully tailored to meet the individual needs of the students. The curriculum is mainly based on life skills and enables students to be as well prepared as possible for life beyond the school in modern Britain. Teachers and co-eds ensure that students' own ideas are included and this inspires students' interest and determination to complete tasks.
- Students' behaviour in the 16–19 provision is outstanding due to the excellent and individualised support they receive from teachers and co-eds. For example, in one class, a student was having difficulty joining the class group but, due to the quiet, consistent approach of the co-ed, was soon back at work with the others. Older students particularly like their common room and the outside area where they can 'chill out'. One student said about the 16–19 provision that, 'It's very relaxing in FE [further education]'.
- Leadership of the 16–19 provision is outstanding. The leader is determined that every learner will achieve their best and leave the provision with a suitable and recognised



qualification. This year, she is working on finding more appropriate work-placement opportunities for those students who are able to cope with this, including volunteering with local charities and gardening in the local community. The transition leader makes sure that the excellent careers advice and guidance pupils receive from Year 10 continue throughout the 16–19 provision.

## School details

Unique reference number	121265
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10031640

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	Special school
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Lane
Headteacher	Pam Ashworth
Telephone number	01493 720158
Website	<a href="http://www.johngrant.norfolk.sch.uk">www.johngrant.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@johngrant.norfolk.sch.uk">head@johngrant.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	15–16 July 2014

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about the impact of pupil premium spending and how parents can complain about provision for their child's SEN and/or disabilities.
- John Grant School caters for pupils who have complex disabilities and special educational needs relating to severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible to receive the pupil premium grant is above average.

- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- Most Reception children attend an off-site provision hosted by a local charity and staffed by a teacher and co-eds who are employed by the school.
- The school has developed alternative provision for two learners. Both of these provisions were visited during the inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, the deputy headteacher has taken a secondment with the local authority and two new acting deputy headteachers have been appointed.
- The school is part of Trust Norfolk SEN in partnership with other Norfolk special schools.
- The school works in partnership with local primary schools, giving advice and support for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder and other learning difficulties.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school and in the off-site nursery and alternative provision. All visits to classrooms were made jointly with senior leaders. Visits to the off-site Reception class and alternative provision were made with the chair of the governing body.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, all teaching and support staff, a group of governors, groups of pupils, parents and representatives of external agencies.
- Inspectors scrutinised the nine responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, or to the pupil questionnaire.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including safeguarding procedures, attendance records, the school's own assessment information, the school's self-evaluation and the most recent development plan overview.

## Inspection team

Julie Winyard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Robert Greatrex

Ofsted Inspector

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