



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

**Inspection report**  
**North Walsham Junior School**

**Norfolk Education Authority**

Dates of inspection: 29-30 June 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

© Crown copyright 2004. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **Contents**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Basic information about the school</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Main findings</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Key issues</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Inspection findings</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Standards achieved by the pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The quality of education</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Implementation of the action plan</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Appendix – Information about the inspection</b>	<b>8</b>

## **Basic information about the school**

Name of school:	North Walsham Junior School
Type of school:	Junior
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Ms R Brumby
Address of school:	Manor Road North Walsham Norfolk NR28 9HG
Telephone:	01692 405697
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr P Smith
Local education authority area:	Norfolk
Unique reference number:	121009
Name of reporting inspector:	Mr J S Hardwick HMI
Dates of inspection:	29-30 June 2004

## Introduction

1. North Walsham Junior School serves North Walsham, a small town in a rural area between Norwich and the north Norfolk coast. Most of the pupils are from the immediate vicinity of the school, an area of mixed owner-occupied and rented housing, but a few travel from further afield. There are 333 pupils on roll, which is larger than average. Almost all the pupils are of white British heritage. Thirteen per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national figure. A quarter of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, including four who have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school shares a large site with North Walsham Infant School, from which most pupils transfer. The infant school's results in national tests over the last three years indicate that the pupils enter the junior school with levels of attainment that are broadly average for their age.

2. When North Walsham Junior School was inspected in September 2001, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to provide its pupils with an acceptable standard of education.

3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues in the report of September 2001. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on seven occasions to monitor the progress being made.

4. In June 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of 2001 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

## Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:

- the school's results in national tests have, overall, been well below the national figures and those of similar schools for the last three years. However, the standards of attainment in lessons have risen, especially over recent terms. In most classes the pupils are working at around the levels expected for their age and they are making at least satisfactory progress. This is reflected in the school's own assessments and in the early results from the 2004 national tests in English;
- the pupils' attitudes and behaviour vary. Overall, they are satisfactory: around the school and in a significant number of classes they are good. At best the pupils are keen, interested and have mature attitudes to work; there are also a few pupils, however, who are slow to settle, quickly lose concentration and sometimes talk out of turn;
- the school makes satisfactory and, in some respects, good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many pupils take part in the wide range of extracurricular activities that the school offers, visits

are organised to broaden the pupils' experiences and bring work to life, and there are opportunities, such as in the school council, for pupils to take on school-wide responsibilities;

- the pupils' attendance is satisfactory and has been consistently in line with the national average;
- the quality of teaching was very good in three lessons, good in eight and satisfactory in nine. Raising the quality of teaching has been at the heart of the school's improvement over the last three years. All the lessons were well planned, prepared and organised, based on appropriate learning objectives. The considerable number of classroom assistants made effective contributions to the learning. Where there were weaknesses in the teaching, these related principally to demanding too little in the central sections of the lesson and allowing some pupils to waste time;
- the curriculum is carefully planned according to national guidance, with proper emphasis given to literacy and numeracy. Provision for the pupils who have special educational needs conforms to the national Code of Practice;
- the school has introduced a thorough system for assessing the pupils' levels of attainment and tracking their progress. The resulting information has been well used to identify where extra provision is needed and, more recently, to give parents a precise picture of how well their child is faring and how they can help;
- the headteacher provides sound leadership and management and she has been well supported by other senior staff, particularly the deputy headteacher. There has been an increasing drive to raise standards, resulting in shared effort across the school, and careful checks have been made on key aspects of performance. The roles of the co-ordinators are mostly underdeveloped, although there are good models in the school for others to follow;
- the school's action plan has run its course, with most tasks fulfilled on schedule and proving effective. A new whole-school plan is being devised, based on agreed priorities, but moves forward are threatened by budgetary constraints;
- improving the work of the governors formed one of the key issues following the inspection in 2001. The governors have raised their profile in the school's affairs, fulfil their responsibilities and ask challenging questions to monitor the school's progress.

### **Key issues**

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- continue to raise standards, maintaining the focus on English, mathematics and science;
-

- 
- continue to raise the quality of teaching, increasing the proportion of lessons that are good;
  - improve and bring greater consistency to the pupils' attitudes and behaviour;
  - develop the roles of the subject co-ordinators;
  - fully devise and implement a new school improvement plan, incorporating the key issues from this report.

## Inspection findings

### Standards achieved by the pupils

7. The school's results in national tests at Key Stage 2 have, overall, been well below the national figures and those of similar schools for the last three years.
8. In the 2003 tests the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching Level 4, the standard expected for their age, was 59 per cent in English, compared with 64 per cent in 2002; the respective scores in mathematics were 62 and 58 per cent, and in science 82 and 74 per cent. The percentages of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 were also similar overall to the previous year: there were rises in English and science, to 16 and 20 per cent respectively; and there was a fall in mathematics to 15 per cent. Based on their scores in the Key Stage 1 tests in 1999, the pupils' progress was also well below average.
9. The pupils' standards of attainment in lessons, however, have risen, especially over recent terms. In most classes the pupils are working at around the levels expected for their age and they are making at least satisfactory progress. The school's own assessments confirm this upward trend, with more than three quarters of the pupils on course to reach Level 4 by the end of Year 6. The early results in English from the 2004 national tests point to the good progress made by the oldest pupils during the last year; 87 per cent have reached Level 4, a significant improvement over the scores for 2003.
10. Within English, standards of speaking and listening have risen considerably, as a consequence of the increased emphasis teachers give to this aspect of work in lessons. Previously, the pupils were barely audible when addressing the whole school in assembly, but they have grown in confidence and, from Year 3 onwards, learn the words and project their voices to the back of the large hall. In classes, they listen much more carefully and give sound explanations of their understanding, for example in solving problems in mathematics. By Year 6 the pupils undertake challenging tasks, such as devising questions to interrogate classmates who improvised being the characters from a story. The interviewees gave full answers, paying close attention to the text, and sometimes adopting the character's broken English.
11. The Year 6 pupils have learned to enjoy books, and they read fluently, using intonation to convey the meaning and to pick out the speech. They readily express preferences for different authors and types of books, and they know how to use the blurb and sample early passages to test their choice. The pupils understand the plot and the characters' points of view, and they use inference to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word, as well as the context for the story.
-

12. The oldest pupils' writing reflects the breadth of their reading. Most pupils reach nationally expected levels across a good range of work, such as playscripts, reports, letters and persuasive argument. They also utilise their skills in different subjects, such as science and history. The higher attainers are able to grab the reader's attention through an intriguing opening, and to use colloquial language to good effect, but all pupils sequence their ideas logically and, for example, use dialogue to enliven a story. The pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation are sound, but, otherwise good work is sometimes marred by careless errors such as missing the capital letter from a proper noun or putting an apostrophe in a word that is simply a plural. The pupils' handwriting is legible, but does not match the quality of the content of their work, with some pupils still printing rather than joining letters.

13. In mathematics, across the school the pupils show sound recall of number facts, such as multiplication tables, and they use these well to spot patterns. The pupils in Year 4, for example, made secure progress in understanding simple equivalent fractions and explained the consistent relationship between the numerators and denominators. By Year 6, the pupils cover a good range of work at a suitably challenging level. They are adept at mental work, enabling them to tackle problems without stumbling over basic calculations. These pupils set down the stages of their working accurately, for instance by using brackets to delineate operations, and they use precise mathematical terms.

14. In science lessons, the standards were in line with national expectations overall, and the progress made was good. The pupils organised themselves effectively when using experimental equipment and developed their understanding of scientific phenomena through practical activities. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the pupils used an indicator solution to test the acidity and alkalinity of soils, and some of the higher attainers formed a basic understanding of neutralisation. Most of the pupils presented their results in an appropriate tabular or graphical fashion. In a Year 5 lesson that built upon previous work on the effects of exercise on the human body, the pupils plotted their investigational results on a graph and identified patterns in their data. Some of the pupils used information and communication technology to convey their findings, and others explained why they had chosen a particular presentational method, demonstrating an early understanding of continuous and discontinuous variables. The pupils' writing in science is good overall: their investigational reports are appropriately structured and most of the pupils use scientific words well to explain their ideas. However, the pupils' spelling of subject-specific vocabulary is variable, in spite of the teachers' useful practice of making lists of relevant words available.

### **The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

15. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour vary. Overall, they are satisfactory: around the school and in a significant number of classes they are good. At best the pupils are keen and interested and have learned good work habits. They settle readily to tasks, organise their equipment and show maturity in the way they respond to humour. There are also a few pupils, however, who are slow to begin work, quickly lose concentration and sometimes talk out of turn.

16. The school has worked hard to improve behaviour through, for example, ensuring a consistent approach to sanctions from class to class and providing games on the playground at lunchtime. These measures have proved generally successful, as reflected in the greatly reduced need to exclude pupils from the school on a temporary basis.

---



17. The pupils' attendance is satisfactory. It was 94.8 per cent for the last school year and has been consistently in line with the national average, as has the level of unauthorised absence.

18. The school makes satisfactory and, in some respects, good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The daily assemblies are very well organised and prepared, allowing pupils to set their experiences against those of others and consider right and wrong. The pupils make thoughtful contributions to these communal occasions and sing with enthusiasm. The work in class each term often encompasses a visit, for example to Norwich Castle, and the older pupils make residential stays in Derbyshire and more locally. Special events have been organised to promote the arts, including multicultural themes such as Bangra dancing; and visitors, such as a book illustrator, have contributed their skills to enliven the work.

19. Many pupils take part in the wide range of extracurricular activities that the school offers. There are clubs, for example, in Latin, computers, and sports. The pupils were particularly successful in a recent cross-country event hosted by the school. There is a band, a choir that performs in different venues, and around 15 per cent of pupils are learning to play a musical instrument. Out-of-hours sessions are also organised to help with literacy, numeracy and revision.

20. Part of the programme to improve behaviour has involved increasing the pupils' opportunities to exercise responsibility. Representatives from each class attend regular meetings of the school council, which is run and minuted by Year 6 pupils. Older pupils also organise the equipment available on the playground at lunchtime, supervise movement along the corridors and prepare the hall for daily assemblies. These various duties form a valuable part of the pupils' social education.

21. In the last term, the governors have completed a thorough and well-analysed survey of the pupils' views about the school, requiring everyone to complete a computer-based questionnaire. The results, which point up the successes over the last three years as well as areas where pupils still have concerns, are being considered by both school and class councils.

### **The quality of education**

22. When the school became subject to special measures in 2001, the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. Some changes of staff and much hard work have brought about considerable improvement to this key aspect of the school's work, enabling the pupils to make better progress and achieve higher standards. The quality of teaching was very good in three lessons, good in eight and satisfactory in nine.

23. All the lessons were well planned, prepared and organised, based on appropriate learning objectives that were shared with the pupils. The teachers took care to ensure that all the pupils contributed to whole-class work, classroom assistants were effective in supporting different groups of pupils, and the sections of lessons were well timed.

24. The distinguishing features of the better lessons were: setting the pupils criteria at the outset so they would know when they had succeeded; checking how well the pupils had remembered previous work before moving on; lively presentations and material that captured

---

---

the pupils' interest; and demanding routines, such as expecting pupils to start work instantly when they entered the classroom.

25. Where there were weaknesses in teaching, these related principally to demanding too little in the central section of the lesson and allowing some pupils to waste time chattering.

26. The school has introduced a thorough system for assessing the pupils' levels of attainment and tracking their progress. The pupils complete regular tests and assessments and the results are collated to find which pupils are succeeding and those that are not making the necessary gains. The resulting information has been well used to identify where extra provision is needed. It is also used to group the pupils in class and to set them individual targets and, more recently, to give parents a precise picture of how well their child is faring and how they can help.

27. The curriculum is carefully planned according to national guidance, with proper emphasis given to literacy and numeracy, aspects of work that were criticised in 2001. The provision for the pupils who have special educational needs conforms to the national Code of Practice. Where necessary, these pupils follow individual education plans that contain practical targets and the pupils' progress is reviewed regularly.

### **Leadership and management**

28. The headteacher provides sound leadership and management and she has been well supported by the senior staff, who present good role models in their teaching. The deputy headteacher in particular has carried a heavy load, but has played a key part in the school's improvement. Along with another senior teacher, his management time has been reduced over the last year since the priority was rightly judged to be providing consistently good teaching to classes whose education had been disrupted.

29. Over the last two years, there has been an increasing drive to raise standards, resulting in shared effort across the school. This has been facilitated by the management structure whereby the teachers in each year group work together, especially on planning, to achieve consistency in each class. This approach has been most successful in the year groups that have been led by one of the senior staff.

30. The effectiveness of the subject co-ordinators has varied considerably, according to the extent of the responsibilities they have been expected to fulfil. Their roles are mostly underdeveloped, although there are good models for others to follow; the leader for literacy, for example, has run staff meetings, checked planning and observed lessons.

31. Improving the work of the governors formed one of the key issues following the inspection in 2001. The governors have raised their profile in the school's affairs; they fulfil their responsibilities and ask challenging questions at meetings. In the last two terms, they have begun to check the school's performance at first hand through visiting classes and conducting a survey to report on the pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

32. The school's action plan has run its course, with most tasks completed on schedule and proving effective. Part of this work has involved improving monitoring to gauge the effect of action, and this is now satisfactory. There are regular observations of teaching, for example, and the senior managers and governors meet to discuss the outcomes and decide on courses of action.

33. A new school improvement plan is being devised based on agreed priorities and taking account of the state of development of each subject area. Moves forward are threatened by budgetary constraints, but the school anticipates that its current financial surplus should meet deficits over the next two years, when expenditure is expected to be greater than income.

34. The local education authority (LEA) has provided effective support to the school through advice, training and the work of consultants. Regular meetings between governors, senior staff and LEA personnel have been particularly helpful in determining the weaknesses that remained and a programme of support to tackle them.

### **Implementation of the action plan**

35. The inspection report of September 2001 required the school to address five key issues. These related to: raising standards in English, mathematics and science; improving the quality of teaching; improving behaviour; improving the leadership; and developing the role of the governing body. The school has made reasonable progress overall, although there had been limited progress on raising standards until recently.

36. Much effort has been directed towards raising standards, although progress in science has been hampered by the lack of a permanent co-ordinator. Actions have included sampling pupils' work, tracking their progress, setting up different groups to boost the pupils' performance and involving parents more closely in their child's work. Standards have been slow to rise, but the pupils' progress in lessons has improved considerably over the past year.

37. Work to raise standards has gone hand in hand with that to improve the quality of teaching. Support from the LEA's consultants has been of particular benefit, and there has been a well-directed programme of training, care over recruitment and regular observations of lessons and feedback to the teachers. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in all the lessons, whereas it was unsatisfactory overall in 2001. The improvements to teaching have been a major factor in tackling the poor behaviour of some pupils. The policy for managing behaviour has also been revised, as has the use of rewards and sanctions. Provision has also been improved at lunchtime through the use of play equipment, since this was a time of day when particular problems arose.

38. Following the unexpected departure of the deputy headteacher through illness, a new appointment was made and the leadership team and management structure have been settled. The headteacher has provided effective leadership, with a clear determination to raise standards, and she has been well supported by senior staff.

39. The governors have received training from the LEA and reorganised some of their work to establish a group specifically to check on the school's progress. Individual governors have monitored the school's performance through meetings with staff, but the body as a whole has been slow to establish a formal programme for this work. Nonetheless, this has been achieved in the last two terms. The governors fulfil their responsibilities and are much better placed to take an independent view on how well the school serves its pupils.

## **Appendix – Information about the inspection**

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in September 2001. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in March, June and November 2002, in March, June and November 2003, and in March 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the report of the section 10 inspection.

In June 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days to check the progress being made. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

During the visit 20 parts of lessons and two assemblies were inspected. The pupils' conduct was observed at break and lunchtime. A small sample of pupils in Year 6 were heard reading and their work over the year was examined. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Discussions were held with the headteacher and with the co-ordinators for literacy and physical education. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.