

# John Grant School, Caister-on-Sea

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121265
<b>Local Authority</b>	NORFOLK
<b>Inspection number</b>	301323
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alan Lemon

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	106
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sue Humphrey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Gerald Hampson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	St George's Drive Caister-on-sea Great Yarmouth Norfolk NR30 5QW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01493720158
<b>Fax number</b>	01493 728616

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

In John Grant School the very large majority of pupils have statements of special educational need which fall into two main groups of severe learning difficulties (SLD) and autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). A small minority has profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). A few children in the Nursery are being assessed for statements. Small numbers of pupils have a range of other learning difficulties, communication difficulties, sensory impairments or physical disabilities, in particular. There is a further education department (FE) with 15 students on roll. The school draws its pupils from most of East Norfolk, which is predominantly White British.

The school employs a large multi-disciplinary staff to meet the wide range of pupils' learning difficulties and disabilities. A substantial number of classroom assistants, known in school as co-educators, work alongside teachers.

The School has gained the following awards: Investors in People; a School Curriculum Award and the Football Association Charter Award. It is working towards the Healthy School Award. The school has partnerships with three local comprehensive schools that have respectively specialist college status for technology and science, science and mathematics and art.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness and its value for money are satisfactory. This agrees with the school's own evaluation of itself. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Some good leadership by the headteacher, senior leaders and by other key staff gives the school a number of strengths. However, pupils' achievement remains satisfactory because leadership has not given a sharp enough focus to evaluating pupils' progress or to strengthening the school's resolve to raise achievement further.

More positively, as a result of the headteacher's and governors' determination and hard work, the school has been extended and completely refurbished. An excellent sports hall is almost built. The stand-alone FE department is an outstanding design with facilities creating a superb ethos for students' learning. The whole school is an exceptional learning environment with a comprehensive range of spaces and facilities for meeting the full range of pupils' needs. Effective leadership has also been responsible for a good curriculum with strengths in physical education, sports and after-school activities. These make a considerable contribution to pupils' good enjoyment of school and their outstanding development of a healthy lifestyle. Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good as a result of its good leadership. Effective leadership of the FE department means teaching and the curriculum are good. Students achieve well and their preparation for the future is good.

As a whole, teaching and learning are satisfactory. While the quality of lessons is monitored regularly, their impact on learning and pupils' progress is not evaluated effectively. As a result, there is not the depth of understanding needed to ensure the quality of teaching and learning across the school is tackled effectively so that more is consistently good. What often detracts from better learning by pupils is the limited contribution of pupils' performance data in identifying learning objectives for lessons and pupils' individual targets. While teachers and co-educators work hard, their teamwork is less effective because they have not established precisely enough what they should be teaching their pupils. As a result, though the curriculum is good, it loses some impact from the lack of a sharper focus on learning.

The school makes good provision for the care and support of pupils. Excellent facilities for managing pupils' personal care needs ensure they are always kept comfortable and safe. Positive relationships build pupils' confidence leading to good personal development and pupils actively contribute to school and beyond. The school has good links with its community, with parents in particular, and works effectively with a range of support agencies. However, the contribution of health specialists to supporting the many pupils with communication difficulties is too limited, with the result that only those with the most serious difficulties are given enough expert oversight.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Analyse rigorously and evaluate all available information on pupils' performance in order to sharpen teaching and the curriculum and, thereby, guide and improve pupils' progress more effectively.
- Increase the specialist oversight of provision dealing with pupils' communication difficulties.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The large majority achieve reasonably well as a result of the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning. The school's assessments of pupils' performance in 2006 show, overall, they made satisfactory progress. What is also shown is that different SLD, PMLD and ASD pupils make the same rate of progress. The conclusions drawn from pupils' performance data matches what was seen currently in pupils' work in lessons. However, children in the Foundation Stage and students in the further education department make good progress, because teaching and learning in both these parts of the school are consistently good. In the case of students, the good programme of work-related learning and their effective development of independence means they are prepared well for the future.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are relaxed, confident and feel safe. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As a result of the school's effective support for pupils, they take a good degree of personal responsibility and are as independent as possible. Pupils are well behaved and have a positive regard for each other and for staff. The ways in which pupils develop healthy lifestyles are outstanding as a result of the school's excellent provision for pupils' physical development in particular. Good assemblies and personal, social and health education encourage pupils effectively to express their feelings. They think of the welfare of others, which leads them to raise money for several good causes. Students in the further education department develop essential life skills and key experiences of adulthood in their work related activities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is satisfactory, overall, and has a sound impact on the quality of learning and pupils' progress. Lesson plans are often set out in detail and provide suitable work for pupils and approaches matched to the needs of those with SLD, PMLD and ASD. However, planning is not always translated into effective learning opportunities. When teachers are in charge of unfamiliar groups or teaching an unfamiliar subject, as a result of staff absence, pupils' work tends to be less engaging and of less interest to them. Most of the time co-educators contribute well to pupils' learning when teamwork with the teacher is effective. Occasionally, teams are not so sharply focused on helping pupils learn. They lose sight of learning objectives and slip into a role which provides support and encouragement but one that is not actively helping pupils make good progress. Staff have comprehensive knowledge of their pupils. However, pupils' prior achievement is not always used to good effect in pursuing a clear learning objective. Most lessons provide a good variety of activities and digital whiteboards are used effectively to attract pupils' attention and interest. In the Nursery, teaching is lively and enthusiastic. In the FE department teaching is well planned and sharply focused upon what is highly relevant for students to learn.

## Curriculum and other activities

### Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned well, caters effectively for pupils' needs and is broad and interesting. The recent refurbishment and building extensions to the school provide outstanding accommodation, which improves significantly the capacity for effective learning opportunities and the enrichment of the whole learning environment. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good, particularly the strong provision for creative, physical, personal and social development. There are also strengths across the school in physical education and in personal, social and health education. This leads to good emphasis on pupils' awareness of personal safety, their social skills and a healthy lifestyle. Significant improvements have been made in the provision for information and communication technology, with the effective use of digital whiteboards in particular. There is a good range of additional activities taking place during lunchtimes and after school. The further education department provides its students with a well planned and relevant programme that prepares them well for leaving and coping with the challenges they will face as young adults.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The school's care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Staffs build trusting relationships and pupils show they feel safe and are self-confident. Close attention is given throughout the school to pupils finding for themselves as much as possible and this succeeds in improving their independence. Such support stands out in the Foundation Stage and in the FE department in particular. Good health and safety risk assessments are in place, ensuring that pupils work in a safe and secure environment. Appropriate precautions are in place for safeguarding pupils and good child protection procedures are embedded. Links with social services and most other support agencies are good. However, not all pupils with a recognised need for the professional support of SALT are given sufficient access to it, although the school does as much as it can to offset this. The school makes reasonable provision for supporting pupils' progress. The use of individual targets and teachers' regular assessments is satisfactory in keeping learning on track. However, the limited extent to which the school's data on pupils' performance is evaluated means it does not play an effective enough part in planning pupils' learning.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory in ensuring pupils make adequate progress. Effective leadership in the Foundation stage and in the FE department results in good teaching and means children and students progress well. Such strong leadership, clear direction and high expectations are not as evident elsewhere in the school in providing a sharp focus on raising achievement. In many respects governors are effective in supporting and helping with the school's improvement, but are not sufficiently informed about pupils' performance to challenge the school in this respect. Nevertheless, there are several other features of the school that are the result of effective leadership and management. The substantial redevelopment and extension of accommodation, giving the school outstanding facilities, fits well with future plans to achieve specialist college status. This aspiration builds on strengths in provision for pupils' physical development, especially in regard to sports and physical education. Furthermore, the school is

very conscious of its place in the community and has made good links with parents, schools and many professional agencies. Parents' views of the school are very positive.

The school carries out a good deal of checking of its work, including the gathering of data on pupils' performance. Altogether, this monitoring is not managed well enough to lead to effective evaluations of the school's work and its impact on pupils' progress. While it is sufficient to give the school a satisfactory capacity to improve, the school lacks the sharp evaluative focus to enable it to take positive steps to raise achievement beyond satisfactory.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of John Grant School, Caister-on-Sea, Norfolk, NR30 5QW

Many thanks for the warm welcome we received when we visited recently to inspect your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our two days in school not least because you were all so friendly and happy. We were really pleased to see how much you enjoy school and your lessons.

Everything about your attitude to school spoke clearly of your willingness to work hard and we often saw good progress being made, in the Nursery and further education departments in particular. However, we felt many of you could make even better progress and so we have asked your headteacher to give closer attention to this.

We were very impressed with all of the work done to improve your school building, which gives you excellent facilities for learning. The further education department is really impressive and when the sports hall is complete it is going to be just as outstanding.

We thought everything the school teaches you is well planned and we were especially impressed by all the extra activities for you at lunchtimes and after school. We were pleased the school takes good care of you and ensures you are being well supported. This is really helping you become as independent as possible and that was very pleasing to see.

It is a pity there is not more expert help for you to be better at communicating in whatever way is best. We have asked your headteacher to seek more of the expert help you need.

We wish you every success for the future.

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector