

Norton Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106685
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	309198
Inspection dates	29–30 January 2008
Reporting inspector	John Young HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jim Rafferty
Headteacher	Mr Michael Fellows
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2003
School address	Campsall Balk Norton Doncaster South Yorkshire DN6 9DG
Telephone number	01302 700303
Fax number	01302 709108

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	29–30 January 2008
Inspection number	309198

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Norton Junior is located in a semi-rural community and is similar in size to most junior schools nationally. The vast majority of pupils are White British and live locally, with few originating from black and/or minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Most pupils come from backgrounds that are neither advantaged nor deprived. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is half the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average. Pupil numbers have fallen in each of the past three years, and consequently three of the seven classes are mixed-aged. On entry into school, pupils' attainment is above average. The school has gained National Healthy Schools status and offers extended provision including adult learning classes, study support and a range of enrichment opportunities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection, Norton Junior has developed into a good school with some outstanding features. This has been achieved through the astute and committed leadership of the headteacher, his deputy and the senior management team. The key issues from the last inspection acted as a catalyst. Over the intervening four and a half years, the headteacher has set about systematically implementing a multi-faceted and coherent improvement strategy. This was based on improving pupils' involvement in their own learning and raising the quality of teaching, improving the suitability of the curriculum and making better use of assessment to raise achievement. This has proved extremely effective. As a result, the school has improved every aspect of its work. Leaders and managers have taken innovative steps to add value to pupils' learning experience. The recruitment and training of high quality teaching assistants to lead and support pupils' learning and the expanded remit of the office manager have proved highly successful. The school's extended services provision has helped some parents to better support their children's learning. Equally, introducing key skills through the 'building learning power' initiative and developing pupils' emotional intelligence through the 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme (SEAL) has had a significant impact.

Generally, good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching is enabling pupils to learn effectively. Pupils now play a much bigger role in their own learning and are less passive. However, there is still some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in lower school. During their time in the school, pupils make good progress and reach standards that are significantly above national averages. Closer attention to the setting of targets, monitoring, and evaluating pupils' progress has paid dividends. However, despite the schools best efforts, boys still lag behind the girls in the progress they make overall, particularly in English, and especially in writing. Pupils' personal development is exceptional. They demonstrate maturity, excellent attitudes to learning, a desire to participate actively in the wider life of the school and exemplary behaviour. Their attendance is good. The school has a very caring and supportive atmosphere and ethos, and makes a tremendous effort to care, guide and support pupils. The curriculum is good overall, although there are missed opportunities to fully engage boys with writing. Outstanding leadership and management and the dedication of staff have underpinned the success of the school and its improvement. Managers are reflective and aware of the areas still requiring further development. As a result the school has excellent capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise boys' achievement in writing and the achievement of the most able boys.
- Further refine the curriculum to create greater engagement of boys with writing.
- Remove the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils benefit from the best learning strategies already employed in many classes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Their attainment when they enter the school is generally above average. The standards they reach by the end of Year 6 are significantly above average and, in science and mathematics, the proportion of pupils reaching the highest standards possible is very high. In 2007, results in national tests continued a three-year trend of rising

standards and value added measures place pupils' overall performance in the core subjects in the top 22% of schools nationally. Progress in science was particularly impressive and placed the school among the top 10% of schools nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress and reach much higher standards than their counterparts reach nationally. Although pupils' progress in English continues to lag behind that in science and mathematics, over the past three years it has improved significantly and is now broadly average. Nevertheless, boys' achievement, including the most able boys, needs to improve further, particularly in their writing. Effective assessment, careful tracking of their performance and well-targeted intervention are helping pupils' make generally good progress, although inspectors found, and the schools' data confirmed, some inconsistencies within classes. The school sets and habitually exceeds challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have an excellent understanding about how to be healthy and are rightly proud of achieving Healthy School status. They feel safe in school and know to whom they can turn for help if they are hurt or in difficulties. They usually behave very well in all situations. Their good and improving attendance record reflects their enjoyment of a school where, as one pupil put it, 'You can rely on everyone.' This ethos of teamwork, coupled with the degree of personal responsibility expected of the pupils, underpins the way the school operates as a unit. Very good opportunities to develop their social and emotional well-being are built into the school week through the SEAL programme. Children are aware of how to reflect on their behaviour and resolve any conflicts that may arise. Opportunities for older pupils to act as 'reading buddies' and work with younger children, encourages them to support each other in their learning. Their social, moral and cultural development is, therefore, good. However, during assemblies, staff missed opportunities for reflection, which would have contributed to pupils' spiritual development. Older pupils have opportunities to develop their business and enterprise skills through involvement in the healthy tuck shop. The school and class councils play a significant role in enabling all pupils to contribute to the development of the school and they contribute to the wider community through recycling projects and charity work. Pupils benefit from the range of clubs and activities provided after school and at lunch-time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching is leading to good learning. The strong relationships developed between staff and pupils support the positive learning ethos that exists. Pupils benefit from the generally consistent approach to teaching that is now in place in most classes and the focus on oracy has contributed to the pupils becoming confident thinkers as well as speakers. The development of key learning skills through the 'building learning power' initiative has actively encouraged pupils to develop independent enquiry skills and take a more prominent role in their own learning. Good use of pupil data is helping teachers to plan appropriately challenging activities. Teaching and learning are becoming more personalised through the effective use of teaching teams within classes which are enriching pupils' learning experience. Regular positive feedback and the opportunity to claim rewards for good progress give pupils a sense of achievement, when they do well. Teaching assistants are particularly well deployed and highly effective. Teachers are increasingly enabling pupils to make the connections between different areas of

the curriculum. For example, pupils produced some high quality poems on the experiences of soldiers in the trenches during the First World War. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge and a good range of learning approaches and strategies to successfully engage pupils in learning. For example, the opportunities pupils had to question, and to explore ideas, had a very positive impact on their understanding of science. Clear marking supports pupils learning, as does the opportunities given to reflect on their own learning or that of their 'buddy'. There is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning within some classes in the lower school. Pupils would benefit tremendously if the school were able to ensure that the best learning strategies present in the school were consistently applied in all lessons. Learning was least effective where work is not clearly modelled and the pace of the lesson was insufficiently demanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Following substantial reorganisation, pupils now benefit from a balanced curriculum, which is better suited to their needs and interests. Alongside the traditional subjects and a focus on literacy and numeracy, the school has begun to introduce new experiences such as French and Spanish. The introduction of key learning skills has been an important addition to curriculum provision and has improved pupils' ability to learn. A curriculum review has taken place to accommodate the necessity for mixed- age classes in Years 3 and 4 and this is ensuring that all pupils have access to their entitlement in an exciting way. There are also a number of opportunities beyond the main curriculum for pupils to extend their experience and education. Pupils benefit from involvement in the school sport partnership programme offering a range of sport and leisure based activities. Study clubs, residential trips and business and enterprise opportunities, as well as a wide range of visits and visitors to the school, provide further enrichment. Nevertheless, the school acknowledge that there is further work to do to fully engage boys with the writing curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance, and support provided to pupils is very impressive and there is a real sense of community in this school. Excellent procedures ensure high quality pastoral and academic guidance. As a result pupils flourish academically, socially and emotionally. Close attention is paid to ensuring pupils know how to stay safe and act responsibly. The school enlists the help of a number of outside agencies to reinforce its highly effective personal, social, health and citizenship education programme. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are robust. A feature of the school's work is the way in which it acts proactively to support the development of all the pupils. The emphasis is on early identification of need and appropriate intervention by a range of people, including teaching assistants, the educational welfare officer and class teachers. Academic guidance has improved significantly and pupils know their individual targets, how well they are doing in achieving them and what they need to do to improve further. Careful tracking and mentoring ensures they remain on track. Transition arrangements as pupils enter and progress through the school and beyond are first rate. The school works closely with parents to maximise the impact of these strategies.

Parents are very appreciative of how well the school cares for their children. Comments such as, 'My child loves coming to school.' and, 'My son has special needs and I am very happy with

the support he has had.' are typical of the responses made in the parent questionnaires that formed part of this inspection.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding at all levels, but underpinned by superb support, guidance and strategic thinking from the headteacher. Together with his deputy and very able senior team, he is providing clear educational direction, which has won the support and commitment of staff. The collaborative style of leadership adopted by the school ensures that all staff feel valued and an integral part of the school's mission to provide the best possible educational experience for pupils. Staff benefit from continuing professional development and are held to account for the effectiveness of their work through rigorous performance management. Self-evaluation is accurate and informed by parental and pupil questionnaires. However, some parents expressed concern at the potential impact of mixed-age teaching on the progress of their children in the lower school.

The school has made good progress in tackling the areas for improvement highlighted by the last inspection. A sharper focus on monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions taken is enabling the school to refine and further improve its effectiveness. Management promote inclusion and equality of opportunity very well. For example, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities reach much higher standards than their counterpart's do nationally.

Governors fulfil their duties very well. They are supportive, but also provide a good deal of challenge to senior managers. They have a clear view of how effectively the school is operating. When called upon, the local authority has provided good support to the school. The school has now built outstanding capacity to continue its improvement. Managers have developed some good partnerships with a number of external agencies, which enrich pupils' education. Shrewd financial management has enabled the school to continue to build for the future despite a declining budget and it provides good value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being so friendly and polite to Mrs Jackson and me when we visited your school recently. It was fascinating watching you learn and finding out about the work you do. A special thanks to those who talked with us.

You told us that you really enjoy coming to school and rarely fall out with each other. You said that teachers make learning fun and that you are making good progress as a result. You also said that the praise and rewards you receive give you a sense of achievement. You particularly like the fact that you are acquiring key skills that make learning easier. You feel that your school council is effective because it has helped to introduce the changes you wanted, including a healthy tuck shop and the purchase of some playground equipment. You talked excitedly about the range of activities available to you, such as the sports clubs and camping trips. You feel safe and well cared for and that staff will help you should you need it.

We agree with much of what you said. We think that Norton Junior is a good school with some outstanding features. We believe it has successfully tackled the issues we asked it to at our previous inspection and that it can get even better. We found that good teaching is helping most of you make good progress and reach very high standards during your time in the school. We think your behaviour is excellent and that there are outstanding arrangements in place to support your personal development and well-being. We also believe the quality of care, guidance and support you receive is first rate. The curriculum is also good and we consider the leadership and management of the school to be outstanding as well.

Although the school has improved greatly since we last inspected it, we have asked staff to improve the quality of boys' writing and the progress some of the more able of you make. We also asked staff to ensure you all receive the best quality teaching available and that the curriculum encourages boys to improve their writing.

You are rightly proud of your school and I am confident that you will continue to support staff in their efforts to make further improvements.