

# North Walsham Infant School and Nursery

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120837
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	313759
<b>Inspection date</b>	1 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nick Butt

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	225
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul East
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Clare Fletcher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Manor Road North Walsham Norfolk NR28 9HG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01692 403013
<b>Fax number</b>	01692 409024

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<b>Age group</b>	3-7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, and investigated the following issues: the impact of the practical nature of the curriculum on pupils' learning; what the school is doing to improve attendance and reduce absence; the effectiveness of the monitoring of teaching and learning. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and parents' questionnaires. Discussions with staff, governors and pupils also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This average-sized school serves an area of mixed housing. Most pupils are of White British origin. A small but growing proportion of pupils comes from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly East European. Most of these pupils speak a first language other than English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is close to the national average. Most of these pupils have speech and language or moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is below average. The school has the Healthy Schools Award and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England Award for Environmental Improvements. It shares a site with the junior school.

On the day of the inspection the normal timetable was suspended and pupils and their parents were taking part in an art open day in fourteen mixed-age workshops run by staff, students and visitors.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

North Walsham Infant School and Nursery is an outstanding school that provides an excellent education for all its pupils. Standards have been rising at a much faster rate than nationally and are now exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make outstanding progress from starting points that are below what is normally expected. The headteacher provides visionary leadership that inspires the admiration and loyalty of the entire school community. Parents are very enthusiastic about the school and cannot praise it enough. One said, 'I am wholeheartedly impressed with the way this school is run and am glad that my child goes there.'

The secret to the school's success is the outstanding teaching that focuses on seizing every opportunity to boost pupils' learning, and the stimulating and exciting curriculum that fires their imaginations. The art open day was the epitome of all that is excellent about the school, involving parents, pupils, governors and staff in a lavish indulgence of learning. There was a huge variety of workshops that captivated pupils and produced work of high quality. These ranged from making mobiles of natural materials in the woodland area, through exploring 'messy' substances such as shaving foam and gloop, to creating computer portraits of members of staff. Other workshops included cave painting with natural pigments, puppetry and pastel poppies in the style of Georgia O'Keefe. Staff plan activities that they know will grab pupils' attention and use them to teach a wide range of skills. They have very high expectations and motivate pupils to do their best, enabling them to achieve exceptionally well.

There has been particular progress in writing because the school has introduced a systematic way of teaching the skills, based on pupils' individual levels of ability. Teachers provide many opportunities for them to apply their skills in extended pieces of writing in different subjects, and use drama especially well to generate excitement and ideas. Year 1 pupils were invited to take on the role of Jack (of beanstalk fame), look through the keyhole of the Giant's Castle, and write about what they could see. The visit of an Apache Native North American inspired several weeks' work on all aspects of that culture, with a shared area transformed by tepees and totem poles.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent, and they love learning, approaching each new task with great enthusiasm. They have a particularly good understanding of what it takes to live healthily, including to 'get lots of rest'. Pupils say they feel safe at school and free from bullying. They know to say, 'Stop it! I don't like that!' if anyone troubles them. The school council has led the way in gathering pupils' ideas for improving the school grounds by designing fencing and playground markings. Pupils support the local community through their award-winning carnival floats and singing to the elderly at Christmas and Harvest. Attendance is good, boosted by the unfailing work of school staff and the parent support adviser in alerting parents to the importance of education. Pupils leave the school with outstanding basic skills and the confidence and independence to become lifelong learners.

The curriculum is much more practical than it was at the time of the last inspection and involves pupils in developing their own learning. Because they 'can see themselves as readers and writers', they are confident about making choices and enjoy philosophical discussions around a variety of topics, such as 'What if it was Christmas every day?' The excellent enrichment includes many clubs, including Spanish, maypole dancing and chess (pupils from the school are

county champions). There are numerous visitors and visits to places of interest, such as Cromer Lifeboat Station and Holt Country Park. Work is presented neatly in topic books that go back and forth from home, as pupils undertake their own research.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding, as pupils are known and valued as individuals. Staff set up support groups to meet specific needs, such as the 'strong fingers club' for boys who need help with their fine motor skills. The school's caring ethos makes every one feel special. A parent said, 'Staff are kind, committed and inspired.' Pupils who need extra help with their learning make outstanding progress because the provision for their needs is excellent, and teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to their development. Pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve because they receive high quality verbal feedback from staff, and marking is consistently good. Displays such as the 'target tree' and 'road to success' show pupils in highly visual ways how well they are doing and what they need to concentrate on next. A pupil said, 'In Year 2 they push you to the next level.' Pupils also write their own reports, stating what they are good at, what they need to get better at and what they have enjoyed.

The impact of leadership and management is outstanding. There are robust systems in place to track pupils' progress and identify any at risk of falling behind. Termly meetings between the headteacher and class teachers ensure that all pupils are doing as well as they can. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning thoroughly through lesson observations, looking at work and talking to pupils. This is particularly effective in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Audits of other subjects do not focus sufficiently on standards and achievement and are too descriptive. The school's self-evaluation is rather modest, but picks out the key strengths and areas to improve further. The school does not currently have a deputy head, and one of the senior leaders works part-time, so that leaders carry a heavy weight of responsibility. Governors have appropriate plans to delegate more responsibility to other members of staff. The governing body is very supportive of the school and its role as a critical friend is being well developed by the new chair and vice chair. The school has made very rapid progress since its last inspection and has an outstanding capacity to go from strength to strength.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Staff make excellent use of a very wide range of resources to plan exciting activities that give children a real thirst for knowledge. Every opportunity is taken to develop their speech and language through sensitive questioning and through adults acting as good role-models. Assessment is outstanding and builds up a very clear picture of each child's progress, presented as an attractive 'learning story' that includes numerous photographs of the child in action.

The Foundation Stage is led and managed very well, as all staff have a deep understanding of how young children learn, and work together extremely effectively to ensure children make outstanding progress.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure the monitoring of subjects other than English and mathematics evaluates clearly pupils' progress and the standards they reach.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

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

<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>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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



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

2 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Walsham Infant School and Nursery, North Walsham, Norfolk, NR28 9HG.

Thank you for making me so welcome at your school. I did enjoy my visit. It was good to see so many artistic things happening and to watch you having so much fun. Your school is outstanding and there are so many excellent things about it I do not have space to list them all. Here are the most important:

- Standards are exceptionally high.
- You make outstanding progress in your learning.
- The lessons are exciting and get you thinking hard.
- There are plenty of interesting clubs and activities for you to enjoy.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you look after one another very well.
- You have an especially good understanding of what it takes to live healthily.
- The school cares for you extremely well and makes sure you do the best you can.
- Mrs Fletcher is an outstanding headteacher and has an excellent staff team who are working very hard to make the school even better.

Your teachers keep a careful eye on how well you are doing, especially in English and mathematics. I have asked them also to look at your standards and progress in the other subjects so that they have a full picture of what is going on. I am sure they would be pleased to hear what you particularly enjoy about your lessons.

Thank you once again for your help. My very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr. N. Butt

Lead inspector