

# North Walsham Junior School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121009
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	327405
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Paull

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	264
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Phillip Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Ruth Brumby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 July 2006
<b>School address</b>	Manor Road North Walsham Norfolk NR28 9HG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01692 405697
<b>Fax number</b>	01692 501011

---

<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 June 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	327405

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 three additional inspectors

### Description of the school

Nearly all pupils at the school are from White British backgrounds. A few have a mixed heritage, others are from White European backgrounds, or from families with origins in the Asian sub-continent. None is at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. When they join the school, most pupils' attainment is broadly average, although the proportion that finds learning difficult or who have disabilities is well above average. Most of these pupils experience specific or moderate difficulties associated with language. A few others experience behavioural and/or emotional difficulties. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is a little above average. A few pupils join the school after Year 3 and, in some years, the proportion is significant.

A separately managed Children's Centre is on site. The school also works with the adjoining infant school to support a Kidzone after-school and holiday club, which is also on site.

The school holds current Healthy Schools, ActiveMark, Artsmark and International School awards. It is also in partnership with the University of East Anglia for providing teacher training for postgraduate students and is a member of the Creative Partnerships Change School scheme.

### Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

North Walsham Junior School provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. It is an improving school and some elements of its work are good. Partnerships with parents, whose questionnaires indicate that they are largely pleased with what the school offers, outside agencies and other schools are good, supporting pupils' progress effectively. The headteacher has succeeded well in making a number of key appointments to the staff, which have stabilised teaching and learning. This follows a somewhat turbulent period of frequent changes in staffing that occurred just after the last inspection. A variety of reasons were evident and these were beyond senior leaders' and governors' control. Nevertheless, this slowed the pace of improvement and standards that had been rising fell back again. This is no longer the case. Supported by the local authority, senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and the willingness of staff to act on points for improvement fed back to them have led to much improvement recently. As a result, the rate of pupils' progress is picking up in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and achievement is consequently satisfactory. Current standards in Year 6, as seen in pupils' books and confirmed in the school's data, are a little below average, rather than well below average as in the 2008 tests. In classes lower down the school, similar improvement is apparent. However, the quality of pupils' work is at times let down by weaknesses in handwriting and punctuation. Similarly, in mathematics books, pupils sometimes struggle to calculate accurately, because their work is not set out methodically enough, even when it is clear that they understand the sum.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall. This is because a good curriculum provides many opportunities for them to show initiative. It also promotes good creative learning, artistic skills, healthy living, safe practices and what it means to behave well towards others. This occurs in a variety of subjects and contexts. Pupils respond to all this with enjoyment and enthusiasm. They are prepared satisfactorily for the future. While they are very sociable and demonstrate good teamwork and good skills in information and communication technology (ICT), basic skills in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. All statutory requirements to safeguard pupils are in place and all staff are very willing and effective in supporting any pupil who might feel upset. This too makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and feelings of well-being. Systems for assessing pupils' work are thorough and producing useful information about how pupils are progressing. Leaders and managers at all levels are increasingly monitoring this information and using it to make decisions about challenging targets to improve the school's performance. However, some pupils' individual targets, including those with learning difficulties, are not sufficiently precise. As a result, their usefulness to pupils themselves in conveying information about how to speed up progress is limited.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but improving well. This reflects the results of monitoring, showing that many lessons are good. Inspection evidence also supports this view. Indeed, what was observed was consistently of good quality with a small proportion of teaching that was outstanding. However, this improvement is too recent to be fully effective and pupils' learning and progress over time remain of satisfactory quality. While nearly all teachers offer careful comments about how pupils might improve their work, these comments are not consistently followed up to ensure pupils act on them. This is particularly evident with pupils' presentation skills.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors support the headteacher and other leaders, promoting steady improvement, asking questions and contributing ideas. Subject leaders work well as a team. For example, developmental work to improve pupils' creative language has been successful. Writing, by the time they leave in Year 6, is full of examples of rich and flexible uses of vocabulary and powerful, expressive phraseology. This recent success means that the capacity to sustain improvement is satisfactory. Community cohesion is good because of the manner in which the school reaches out to parents and to the local community and gives pupils a good understanding of their place in a global society.

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

- In teaching, focus more rigorously on setting out written work in English, mathematics and science and on the basic skills of punctuation and handwriting in English.
- Ensure that all teachers, when marking pupils' work, give sharply focused written advice about how to improve basic skills, and then follow it up to ensure a strong impact on pupils' work.
- Ensure that pupils of all abilities receive short sharp targets, so they themselves are enabled to make a contribution to accelerating their own progress.

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**

Standards are currently a little below average, although rising throughout the school, owing to improvements in teaching and learning. That said, in the past two years, results in tests in English, mathematics and science have been well below average and some underachievement has been evident, based on pupils' starting points. Achievement is also improving. It is now largely satisfactory, because progress is picking up. This is confirmed in the school's own records and in what was seen in pupils' books. It is especially so in Years 4 and 5. In Year 5, current progress is especially good in mathematics. The progress of pupils who find learning difficult is also speeding up as they too are benefiting from the improvements in teaching and effective support from teaching assistants. What holds standards back in all subjects is a legacy of poor presentation, which in English includes weaknesses in the basic skills of handwriting, punctuation and, to some extent, spelling.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils cooperate effectively with each other and with adults, which contributes much to their improving achievement. They are sociable and very willing to offer help with a ready smile and polite word. They often demonstrate genuine excitement about the creative opportunities that are offered in and out of lessons. They are keen to learn about other countries. Many of them took the trouble to seek information for themselves about France on the internet. This was so that they could make pupils from a French school feel more at ease when they visited on exchange. Pupils know the importance of a healthy diet and taking exercise. They are very willing to acknowledge that their school is a safe place to be. They are sensible in moving around the building and patient in taking turns. Their good attendance is a sign of their strong enjoyment of school. Contributions to the school

community, through acceptance of responsibilities in carrying out routine jobs, are good. Pupils also contribute to the running of the school in more formal ways, such as through class and school councils and in helping to lead play, as playleaders. They also take part in a local festival and the choir sings in various locations in the community. They are prepared satisfactorily for the future world of work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving rapidly. This was clearly evident in lessons visited during the inspection. These were of good quality and included examples of outstanding teaching. However, this improvement has occurred only recently, so its impact is not fully apparent in learning and progress. In the last inspection, some inadequate lessons were observed, whereas current teaching is creative, uses resources well and includes effective questioning of pupils. Teaching assistants complement the lessons, effectively supporting and guiding pupils who find learning harder than others. However, it is also clear that over time, in many classes, there has been too little insistence on good presentation, accurate punctuation and well-formed and fluent handwriting. Although almost all teachers give pupils detailed advice in their marking about how to improve the content of work, this is not sufficiently followed up.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Since September 2008, involvement in the Creative Partnerships initiative has successfully galvanised the school's already developing ideas for a more imaginative and engaging curriculum. This has a strong impact on raising interest and enjoyment for boys and girls. Practical, creative challenges have brought about a positive impact on the development of independent learning. Planning is thorough and regularly evaluated for success. What is taught is then changed where necessary, although this focuses less effectively on presentation skills. What is taught in personal, social and health education makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development, especially of healthy living. Work in the arts is frequently good. Pupils themselves staff a well-organised and equipped library. A suite of laptops with up-to-date software contributes well to learning across the curriculum. An extensive range of well-attended clubs from Latin to rugby enriches the curriculum so well that pupils are motivated to organise their own clubs at break times. An impressive range of residential and day visits also enhances learning well.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school provides good pastoral care. Measures to improve behaviour have had a significant impact and behaviour is good throughout the school. Procedures comply with the latest government requirements for safeguarding pupils. Risk assessment and fire drills are carried out regularly. Pupils with medical problems or who have accidents in school are cared for well. Good advice on relationships, empathy and understanding of different cultures is promoted well and contributes to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, academic guidance is not as strong. In addition to some weaknesses in the marking of pupils' work, there are times when pupils' individual targets, including those with learning difficulties,

are not written sharply enough or updated frequently enough. As a result, pupils do not always understand how to take responsibility for increasing progress themselves.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors, with support from the local authority, are monitoring the work of the school satisfactorily. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher, are doing so with increasing rigour. Governors are involved satisfactorily in this process and are both supportive and willing to hold senior staff to account. This is leading to accurate self-evaluations of how to increase pupils' rates of progress. For example, identified weaknesses in handwriting have triggered the seeking of a suitable scheme that will support the development of this skill throughout the school. Delegation of responsibility to subject leaders for assessing standards in each subject is resulting in better uses of staff expertise. For example, work is underway to raise performance in problem solving and investigative work in mathematics and science. Much improvement has taken place in resources for information and communication technology and many pupils already possess good skills in this subject. This increasing delegation is producing better understanding, at all levels of staff, of what needs to be done to meet the school's challenging statutory targets. Community cohesion is good. The headteacher's audit of provision shows how the school is involved with initiatives that promote improved cultural understanding at home, in Europe and further afield. A good example is involvement in providing 'seeds for Africa' as part of Harvest Festival celebrations. Pupils learn about differences between styles of farming at home and in the countries where their seeds will be sent.

**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](http://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?	3
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	3

**Achievement and standards**

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

---

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
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?	3

## 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

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

18 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of North Walsham Junior School, North Walsham, NR28 9HG

Thank you for being so helpful when Mrs Dawson, Mr Perkins and I inspected your school. We were impressed by your friendliness and enjoyed speaking to you, hearing your views and seeing your work. This tells us that your school provides a satisfactory standard of education, although the results of its Year 6 tests have not been as good as in most other schools. Your school is improving and some things are already good. What we saw in your books, however, is getting better and shows that you have made satisfactory progress.

Here are some important things that are good in your school.

- The rate of progress is speeding up in all the main subjects
- Your behaviour is good and you have many other good personal qualities
- Your lessons are interesting, creative and lively, and the quality of teaching and learning is getting stronger
- The staff care for you and look after you well

Here are some things that I have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do.

- Help you to concentrate more on your presentation and setting out of work, and to focus on skills in handwriting and punctuation.
- Make sure that they follow up on any advice that they give you about how to improve your skills.
- Make sure that you always receive short clear targets, so you will know what to do to make fast progress.

You can help by making a point of always asking your teachers about the comments that they write in your books and trying very hard to act on them. Also, carry on talking to your teachers a lot about your targets and behaving in lessons as well as you do now. I hope you will continue to enjoy your education in the future.

Yours faithfully

John W. Paull

Lead inspector