

# North Denes School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120973
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	339817
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin Corrigan

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sylvia Huxtable
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Nancy Heywood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Jellicoe Road Great Yarmouth Norfolk
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twelve lessons were observed, covering the eight teachers who deliver the majority of the teaching at the school. Inspectors held discussions with the principal, staff, governors and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at school data and documentation, including the school's safeguarding records. Questionnaires were analysed that were returned by 33 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail

- at the following:
- the achievement and progress of current pupils, particularly those in Year 6, focusing on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science
- the effectiveness of teaching in raising the standards achieved by pupils
- the impact of the skills based curriculum and other curriculum initiatives on the standards achieved by pupils
- the impact of the Creative Partnership initiative at the school, particularly in improving pupils' writing skills.

## Information about the school

North Denes School was reorganised as a junior school in September 2008 after previously being designated a middle school. It is of average size and draws pupils from the north of Great Yarmouth. It currently has two classes in each of Years 3 to 6. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils, mainly from Portuguese and Polish backgrounds, speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. A greater proportion of pupils than are found in most schools join or leave the school at different times during the school year. Almost half the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities: this is a very high percentage compared with the national average. Most of these pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, or moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The school has a learning support unit, known as 'The Haven', which helps pupils with behavioural difficulties. This is provided by the 'excellence cluster' of local schools, of which North Denes is a member. The school is now completing its second year as a participant in the 'Change School for Creative Partnerships' initiative. The school has been active in implementing the Sustainable Schools Framework and has been awarded overall winner in the Norfolk Sustainable Schools Awards and Green Flag Eco Schools status.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

North Denes is a satisfactory school that provides a safe and caring environment for its pupils. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the many opportunities provided for them to participate in activities and clubs outside lessons. Generally, pupils enter the school with levels of attainment below the national average and those who join during the year are usually performing well below average. Whilst levels of attainment in literacy, numeracy and science have been consistently low, progress has been mostly satisfactory in recent years, although there has been some underachievement particularly in English. Current school data shows that pupils' progress is improving rapidly and they are now making the progress expected of them, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is due in part to significant improvements in the way the school tracks pupils' progress, enabling leaders to identify where additional support and guidance are needed for individuals and where teachers need to focus their lessons on particular gaps in pupils' skills. The school's involvement in the Creative Partnerships initiative is also making a good contribution to improving pupils' literacy and study skills. The school is not always quick enough, however, in identifying and encouraging those pupils capable of achieving a National Curriculum Level 5 by the time they leave the school.

Generally, teachers plan their lessons well and they have begun to identify different learning objectives for the range of abilities, although this is not always extended to providing different activities or additional tasks for the most able. In addition, the school does not make the most of the skills evident in the best teaching to spread good practice. Teachers make good use of the technology available to enhance pupils' learning. In-class support for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective and, as a consequence, these pupils progress at least as well as their peers. Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The school is particularly effective in integrating pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties into its harmonious environment. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school and the older pupils are developing as good role models, particularly in the confident and informed way they demonstrate their environmental awareness.

The headteacher is committed to providing a rich and rewarding experience for all pupils, a vision which is communicated to and shared by staff. Recent improvements have focused strongly on the way assessment information is collected and analysed and on developing a good quality curriculum. The relatively new subject leaders have begun to provide a clear drive for improvement in their areas and are working effectively to develop a stimulating and skills based 'creative curriculum'. They are also developing the ways of ensuring that their subjects are taught effectively and all the required skills are covered, although their contribution to the formal monitoring of lessons and pupils'

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progress is not as robust as it should be. Overall, self-evaluation is satisfactory so that senior leaders identify the right priorities for development. The school has improved since the last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to develop further.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards further, particularly for the more able, by:
  - identifying at an early stage those pupils potentially capable of reaching National Curriculum Level 5 and providing stimulating and challenging opportunities in and out of lessons for them to achieve this.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning in all classes so that it matches existing best practice by:
  - developing robust systems and opportunities for the sharing of best practice
  - ensuring all lessons have a range of different tasks and activities which match the targets set for different ability groups, especially to extend the more able.
- Develop further the role of subject leaders by:
  - involving them in more formal procedures for monitoring and evaluating lessons in their subject areas
  - using the available assessment data to monitor and evaluate improvement and performance in their subjects.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Most pupils enter the school with poorly developed literacy and numeracy skills, and the school also admits a relatively high number of low attaining pupils each year. Partly as a consequence of these factors, results in national tests in recent years have been consistently below the national average. However, most pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress compared with their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have tended to make relatively better progress, as have those pupils who have been at the school from the beginning of Key Stage 2. In a Year 4 literacy lesson, pupils with moderate learning difficulties made good progress in developing their creative writing skills using similes as a result of effective, targeted support by the teacher and teaching assistants. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are very well supported in 'The Haven' and are making good progress. The school now uses highly effective tracking mechanisms to identify areas of weakness in subjects, years and among individual pupils. This has made a significant contribution to raising standards achieved by current pupils, including the few pupils from minority ethnic groups or those with English as an additional language. This was corroborated by inspectors' lesson observations and work scrutiny. The focus on improving literacy skills, particularly writing, through the 'Creative Partnership' initiative and an analysis of which

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skills need boosting have all contributed to ensuring that current pupils are now making the progress expected of them and are working closer to the national average than pupils in previous years.

Pupils have a good attitude to learning, enjoy their lessons and behave well. They say that they feel safe at school, mainly because adults are ready to listen to them. Pupils are confident that bullying is not a problem at the school. They are polite and friendly and keen to help. On the few occasions when some pupils misbehave or go off task in lessons, this is managed well by teachers. Pupils understand the importance of healthy foods and participate enthusiastically in sports activities. The school council is active in suggesting improvements and has contributed, for example, to the appointment of new staff. Pupils show willingness to take on responsibilities, for instance, as 'playground buddies'. Pupils' workplace skills are developing effectively and they work well in groups and with partners. Attendance is broadly average and the school's monitoring and robust procedures for dealing with absence are gradually improving overall attendance levels. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their awareness of environmental issues, for example, through the work of the Year 6 'world warriors', is outstanding.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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## How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and have begun to use the rich source of assessment data available for them to identify the needs of different groups. However, this does not always extend to providing a range of different activities and tasks based on pupils' prior attainment, particularly in challenging and stimulating the most able. Teachers make good use of teaching assistants to provide individualised support and guidance during lessons. Teachers check on pupils' work in their books and tell them what to do to improve although this does not always lead to identifying specific targets matched to potential attainment levels. In the most effective lessons, teachers use targeted questions well and encourage pupils' contributions. This was evident in a Year 3 lesson, when pupils commented impressively on the difference between an archaeologist and a palaeontologist.

The school has a broad, balanced and outward-looking curriculum which motivates pupils and is helping to drive improvements in their progress. The afternoon creative curriculum draws on skills across the subject areas through themes which appeal to pupils, such as pirates and living in historical times. Gifted and talented pupils are accommodated satisfactorily through subjects such as Latin and philosophy, although this is not available in all years. Specialist teaching provides at least two hours of good quality physical education each week. The Creative Partnerships initiative, culminating in an impressive whole-school production, provides a range of additional enrichment activities through work with performing artists, writers and musicians. The excellent range of extra-curricular activities, including residential trips, sports clubs, gardening, film club, drama and dance, are enthusiastically taken up by both boys and girls.

The school provides a welcoming and safe environment for pupils. It has a deserved reputation for integrating pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties into the life of the school. It works effectively with outside agencies, for example, in ensuring that the personal needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are met. Relationships are good and the majority of parents and carers appreciate the individual attention given to the care of their children. 'The Haven' is well staffed by specialist teachers trained in dealing with pupils with behavioural difficulties. Transition arrangements with the feeder school and schools to which pupils transfer are good.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher successfully led the school out of special measures at the last inspection and since then has continued to make improvements in order to tackle underachievement. This has included working with the relatively newly appointed deputy headteacher to develop an effective system for tracking and monitoring the progress of pupils who are in danger of underachieving and sharing this information with teachers and subject leaders. This is enabling teachers to identify gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding and providing a means of beginning to set targets for individuals. The new systems for tracking and analysing pupils' progress are already having a clear and significant impact on improving pupils' progress. Subject leaders are providing effective curriculum guidance, particularly in developing and embedding the skills based curriculum, although they are not yet fully involved in the systematic monitoring of teaching.

The governing body discharges its statutory responsibilities satisfactorily. The Chair of the Governing Body has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how to challenge senior leaders in key areas. There are a number of new governors, however, who are developing their skills. The school's engagement with parents and carers and partnerships with other schools and organisations is good: the latter makes a particularly strong contribution to the development of pupils' personal and social skills.

The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the impressive range of activities on offer but there are still some differences in the progress of pupils of different abilities. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Staff have been appropriately trained and pupils demonstrate a good awareness of what it means to be safe. The school understands its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context and has developed an awareness of this in its pupils. The school is a harmonious community and is well known in the local community for the work the pupils do in promoting environmental awareness, although the contribution to the wider community is more limited.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>



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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

In responding to the questionnaire, most parents and carers express satisfaction with their children's experience at the school and this was born out by discussions with some of the parents and carers who were interviewed during the inspection. They say their children enjoy school and all agree that teaching is good, although the inspection team found that some teaching could be improved to match the most effective. They feel that they are kept well informed about their children's progress although a minority believe the school does not always take account of their suggestions. A few individual parents and carers raised concerns over the handling of specific behavioural issues but the inspection team judged procedures for dealing with these to be effective. A few parents and carers do not think that the school is led and managed well; the inspection team found leadership to be satisfactory.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North Denes School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 200 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	42	17	52	2	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	48	16	48	0	0	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	36	20	61	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	39	19	58	0	0	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	10	30	23	70	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	24	24	73	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	39	18	55	2	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	8	24	22	67	1	3	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	33	19	58	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	24	18	55	2	6	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	24	16	48	2	6	3	9
The school is led and managed effectively	10	30	16	48	3	9	3	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	36	18	55	2	6	1	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Denes School, Great Yarmouth, NR30 4HF

I am writing to you to tell you about the findings of your school's recent inspection. I would like to thank you for the help you gave me and my colleagues during the inspection. We talked to many of you during lessons and outside of class and looked at your books. You told us that you enjoy school and the many clubs and activities you take part in. We were particularly impressed with your awareness of environmental issues and what you do to help the school and local community to be 'eco-friendly'.

North Denes is a satisfactory school. It helps you to develop your social and personal skills well. The school is improving the way it checks how well you are doing with your skills in reading, writing, mathematics and science. As a result of this, it can identify those of you who are not doing as well as you ought to and give you support and guidance on how to improve. Because of this, you are now making better progress in these important subjects than you have done previously.

There were three important areas where the school could improve and we have asked your headteacher and the other teachers to:

- raise further the standards you are achieving in reading, writing, mathematics and science
- make teaching more consistent at the school so that it always matches the best
- to develop the role of the school's subject leaders, including checking more closely your learning in lessons.

You can help to make these improvements by working hard at school and continuing to behave well.

Thank you again. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Corrigan

Lead inspector

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