

# Irthlingborough Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121831
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	340019
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Pat Walsh HMI

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>	Junior
<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>	385
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stephen Ward
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Drake
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	College Street Irthlingborough Wellingborough
<b>Telephone number</b>	01933 654921
<b>Fax number</b>	01933 654923
<b>Email address</b>	head@irthlingborough-jun.northants-ecl.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with key staff, governors, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation documents, evidence of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, 161 parental questionnaires and questionnaires from staff and pupils.

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

- pupils' achievement in writing
- progress made by pupils who find learning difficult
- the effectiveness of teaching in meeting the needs of all pupils.

## Information about the school

Irthlingborough Junior is larger than most primary schools. The number on roll has increased since the last inspection. It serves an area of mixed housing and the majority of pupils come from the surrounding area. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Few pupils speak English as an additional language or are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is below average. Broadly a third of pupils have been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities; which is well above average. The before- and after-school extended provision is managed by the governing body. The school has several awards; the National Healthy School Status, Active Mark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investor in People and local authority School Council Gold Award.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

This is an improving school which provides a satisfactory quality of education for all its pupils. They behave well and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is a happy and inclusive place to be because a good level of care, guidance and support is given by all staff. As one pupil reported, 'The whole school is like a big family and everyone cares about each other.' There has been a rising trend in pupils' attainment and the progress they make over the last three years. Pupils, including those who find learning difficult, make satisfactory progress from average levels of attainment on entry. However, standards in English, particularly in writing, are not as high as those in mathematics and science. The school has recently introduced the 'Big Write' initiative, however it is too early to see the impact of this on pupils' achievement in writing.

The school provides a good curriculum with sensible links between subjects and a wide range of enriching and extra-curricular activities. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and are keen to come to school. Their attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now broadly average.

Many of the outcomes for pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils have a well developed understanding and consideration for others, demonstrated by their reflection in assembly about Remembrance Day and their plans to lay wreaths at the local cenotaph. Pupils' responsibility for their own safety and their adoption of a healthy lifestyle is good, for example younger pupils spoke knowledgeably about road safety.

Although teaching is satisfactory overall, examples of good and outstanding lessons were seen during the inspection. Almost all lessons feature good relationships between staff and pupils and high expectations of work and behaviour. As a result, classes are generally orderly and provide a positive working environment. All teachers plan different levels of work for pupils of different abilities. Where this is done well, the pace of learning is fast and pupils make good progress. However, in too many lessons, teachers do not make enough use of assessment data to provide just the right level of challenge to different groups. Furthermore, marking, target-setting and feedback to pupils do not always clearly help pupils to know the next steps in their learning so that they can improve their work. Too little attention is paid to developing pupils' handwriting skills as they move through the school.

This school has good capacity for continuous improvement because it has a secure view of its own strengths and weaknesses based on sound self-evaluation. Staff and governors share the headteacher's drive for improvement and are united in their

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commitment to raise achievement and standards. This is demonstrated in recent improvements to the curriculum and pupils' improved achievement in mathematics and science. However, measures to address the underachievement in pupils' writing have had limited impact and the monitoring of teaching has not focused sharply on pupils' learning. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Raise standards and achievement in writing by:
  - checking that recently introduced strategies are having an impact on improving pupils' writing skills
  - setting precise targets so that pupils know how to improve their writing
  - placing greater emphasis on improving handwriting
  - sharing the good practice in developing pupils' writing across all year groups.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good by:
  - making better use of assessment information gathered in lessons to pitch work more accurately to meet the needs of all groups of pupils
  - ensuring that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work
  - monitoring and evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- About 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**

Pupils are increasingly enjoying their learning in all areas of the curriculum and are making satisfactory progress overall. The progress made by pupils at the start of Year 3 dips as they get used to their new environment. Progress increases in Year 4 so that it is satisfactory overall. In Years 5 and 6 progress accelerates enabling pupils to achieve average standards overall by the time they leave school. Attainment in English is average because standards in reading are significantly higher than those in writing, which are below average. Work carried out by the school has improved achievement in mathematics and science successfully over the last three years, resulting in rising standards in these subjects. The large group of pupils who find learning difficult make satisfactory progress towards their targets because the support is well focused on their specific needs.

Relationships between pupils are good. The vast majority of pupils demonstrate a good attitude to their learning. For example, in a drama lesson girls and boys worked very sensibly in groups to practise their play scripts and made good progress in their learning. The pupils' good development in adopting a healthy lifestyle is demonstrated by the large proportion of pupils who choose to take part in physical activity and their

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good understanding of healthy eating. Almost all pupils report that they feel safe in school. They maintain that bullying rarely occurs and are able to explain confidently the actions they would take if they needed help. One pupil commented, 'This is almost an anti-bullying school, lots of people care about you.' Attendance is now average because of the rigorous action taken by the school to ensure that parents do not take holidays in term time. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They demonstrate a high degree of responsibility when carrying out class or school jobs. The members of the school council are confident in their role and keen to make decisions, for example in providing equipment to improve playtimes. Team captains take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils' contribution to the local community is effective through links with the churches and organisations, for example, school council meetings at the town council chamber. Pupils apply their basic skills in a range of contexts and this, together with positive attitudes and effective team-working, means that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for secondary school and future employment.

*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>	3
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>

## How effective is the provision?

<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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In all lessons conscientious planning generally enables all pupils to make satisfactory progress. In the good and excellent lessons teachers expertly pitch work at the correct level for all groups of pupils so that the quality of their learning is consistently good. In these lessons pupils are given extensive opportunities to be actively involved and to share their ideas with each other, consequently they enjoy the challenge presented to them. These lessons have a brisk pace, and pupils concentrate well. In other lessons however, some pupils spend part of the time waiting for the next task, or have to sit and listen passively for too long. At such times, their concentration lags and the pace of their learning slows. Teachers generally make good use of support staff to help pupils to make progress. This is a significant factor in helping those pupils who find learning and behaving well difficult, to cope both academically and socially.

The curriculum has been strengthened considerably since the previous inspection by developing interesting links between subjects through the 'connected curriculum'. The use of themed fortnights is leading to high levels of interest for pupils and excitement about their learning. There is a good range of enrichment activities and extra-curricular clubs that strongly supports pupils' personal development and learning. Pupils particularly enjoy residential visits, and the school makes good use of the local environment to extend pupils' enjoyment and learning. Information and communication technology is used effectively in lessons, for example the use of the interactive white board when introducing Macbeth to Year 6 pupils. There are effective links to develop pupils' multicultural understanding, and plans are in place for this work to be extended significantly through learning about a variety of communities in the UK and further afield. Good use is made of specialist expertise, particularly in music and French, for example.

Links with parents and carers are good and most appreciate the good level of care and support that their children receive. The school supports vulnerable children and families very well through the parent support adviser. The staff have developed strong partnerships with outside agencies to support pupils who have learning, social and emotional difficulties. The before- and after-school clubs provide well for children from the school and the nearby infant school.

*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>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

School leaders work hard to implement the school improvement plan and have been

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successful in a number of areas, for example, by raising standards in mathematics and science and improving the curriculum. The headteacher regularly checks lessons, however too little attention has been paid to improving the satisfactory lessons by focusing on how well pupils are learning. The result is that good practice is not shared effectively and weaker teaching is not systematically improved. In addition, although subject leaders carry out monitoring tasks, such as looking at pupils' work, they have not had sufficient opportunities to observe the progress of pupils in lessons. An effective tracking system to monitor pupils' progress is in place and the school is diligent in promoting equality and eradicating discrimination. The school pays good attention to safeguarding. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses. They have ensured that pupils are safe, that finances are secure and that all statutory requirements are in place. The plan to develop community cohesion is in the early stages and governors' work in this area is satisfactory.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</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>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</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

The majority of the parents' questionnaires received expressed positive views. Inspectors examined the concerns of a very few parents about site security. The school demonstrates that all necessary procedures to safeguard pupils on the school site are in place. A very small minority of parents were concerned about pupils' behaviour. Inspectors investigated this and found that there were no apparent weaknesses in the



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school's behaviour management and no unacceptable behaviour was witnessed by inspectors.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Irthlingborough Junior 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 161 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 385 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	35	95	59	9	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	35	97	60	8	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	21	110	68	12	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	26	95	59	16	10	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	39	24	107	66	8	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	14	108	67	18	11	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	24	109	67	9	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)	32	20	102	63	10	6	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	20	106	65	13	8	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	14	92	57	28	17	9	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	11	110	68	17	10	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	38	23	95	59	10	6	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	64	40	64	40	7	4	7	4

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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 pupils' 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.**



9 November 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Irthlingborough Junior School, Wellingborough NN9 5TX

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you and thought you were very friendly and polite.

We were impressed by your good behaviour and the way that you care for each other. We agree with you that bullying is rare. Most of you try to do your best in lessons. You take part in many interesting activities and clubs which you told us you thoroughly enjoy. We particularly enjoyed hearing your enthusiastic singing. We think that you take your responsibilities seriously and it was good to hear about the good work of the team captains. You make satisfactory progress with most of your learning, particularly in science and mathematics

These are some of the good things about your school:

- you enjoy school because the work and activities are interesting
- the school keeps you safe and secure
- you know a great deal about keeping healthy
- the staff care for you very well.

I have asked Mrs Drake and the teachers to:

- help you improve your writing
- check how well you are doing in lessons so that you get the right sort of work
- make sure that your targets and the teachers' marking help you to improve.

You can help by continuing to work hard and always doing your best. I wish you well

- for the future.

Yours sincerely

Pat Walsh

Her Majesty's Inspector

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