

# Aslacton Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	120779
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	380101
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	George Logan

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	51
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cynthia Finlayson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alex Lightbown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 June 2010
<b>School address</b>	Church Road Aslacton Norwich NR15 2JH
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	5–6 July 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380101



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## Introduction

Inspection team

George Logan

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent approximately four and a half hours observing teaching and learning in nine lessons taught by three different members of staff. He held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and with staff and two groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, including records of the monitoring of teaching, the main school improvement plan, records relating to safeguarding and extracts from the school's tracking of pupils' progress. A scrutiny of pupils' written work was also undertaken and the inspector listened to pupils reading. The inspector analysed 27 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, together with 13 questionnaires from staff and 48 from pupils.

## Information about the school

Aslacton Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number come from the Gypsy/Roma community. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those supported by school action plus and with statements of special educational needs, is average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The school does not meet the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has gained a number of awards, including International School Foundation Level status and the Eco-School Green Flag award. Pupils are taught in three mixed-year classes in the morning and two classes in the afternoons.

In April 2010, Aslacton entered a partnership agreement with Manor Field Infant and Nursery School in Long Stratton. This formalised arrangements, in place from September 2009, whereby one headteacher assumed responsibility for the two schools. The two partnership schools retain separate governing bodies.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is now a good school. While overall attainment remains broadly average, recent progress is good and attainment is rising rapidly. The school is not yet outstanding because the legacy of some historic issues of weak teaching and leadership are still working through the school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is mostly good and attainment at the end of Year 2 is slightly above average, particularly in reading. Progress in Years 3 to 6, variable in recent years, is now good, although better overall in English than mathematics. Attainment in mathematics is not as high as in English. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Teaching is good overall. Teachers know their pupils and their academic needs well and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' written work is higher overall in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. Thorough assessment has had a positive impact on pupils' progress. This good practice is less evident in other subjects so that pupils do not always receive guidance as to their next steps in learning.
- Behaviour, safety and pupils' personal development are good. Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. Provision for pupils' welfare is good and they feel very safe. Poor behaviour is rare. Attendance is above average.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has implemented systems, including a robust system for evaluating pupils' progress and outcomes, which enable the school to manage their performance increasingly well. The leadership and monitoring of teaching is now effective and opportunities for staff to access professional development have increased. School development planning identifies appropriate key priorities. Governance is good; governors increasingly hold school leaders to account for the quality of pupils' outcomes.

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

- Ensure that the rate of progress in mathematics is as rapid as in reading and writing, and the standards pupils reach are high, by establishing an appropriate balance between the time given to practical mathematical activities and to practising basic mathematical procedures.
- Increase further the effectiveness and impact of teaching upon pupils' learning by:
  - ensuring that teachers have higher expectations of the quality of pupils' written work in Years 1 and 2, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics
  - extending the good practice evident in the marking of pupils' writing, to ensure that all subjects are marked thoroughly and that pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Achievement is good. Parents and carers are mostly happy with the progress their children make. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is broadly as expected in most areas, but slightly lower in reading, writing and calculation. Overall, Reception children benefit from a high level of engagement with adults and make good progress.

While low pupil numbers can produce wide variations in attainment, progress now shows a consistent upward trend. Pupils make generally good progress in Years 1 and 2, so that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 is slightly above average, particularly in reading. Historic weaknesses in Years 3 to 6 have worked through the school and overall progress is now good. Standards at the end of Year 6 are now above average in reading and, particularly, writing, although still closer to average in mathematics. This is because the innovative and practical approach to teaching mathematics is not quite in balance with the need for regular reinforcement of mathematical procedures. Progress in English is more rapid than in mathematics because of the recent intensive focus on the development of pupils' writing skills. Pupils' knowledge of phonics (linking sounds and letters) has improved as a result of intensive daily sessions for younger pupils, supplemented by regular guided reading lessons for older pupils.

Teachers' expertise in matching work to individual needs ensures that, despite wide variations in age in each class, most pupils make good progress. In a mathematics lesson for Years 2 to 5, pupils selected stamps to match a range of values. Although the overall pace was a little slow, the precise aligning of work to pupils' capabilities

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enabled them to make good progress. Pupils' written work indicates that considerable effort goes in to providing customised imaginative tasks which capture pupils' interest. Achievement in writing is particularly good because older pupils can accurately evaluate their own work and understand exactly what they need to do to achieve the next level. Where teachers have good subject expertise, and define very specific points for learning, as in an art lesson for Years 3 to 6 pupils, progress is particularly brisk. Good awareness of the needs of Gypsy/Roma pupils and of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and the deployment of skilled teaching assistants, ensure that these pupils also make good progress.

### Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good. This view is shared by parents, carer and pupils. Although progress and outcomes had been inconsistent in past years, effective leadership, greater rigour in monitoring of teaching and learning and better opportunities for professional development have ensured that the quality of teaching has improved. Good teaching and higher expectations, particularly in Years 3 to 6, underpin pupils' current good progress and rising standards.

Teachers effectively focus on meeting the needs of different years and ability groups and most activities are appropriately pitched to extend pupils' learning. Supported by rigorous assessment, pupils are now making more sustained progress. Teachers plan thoroughly and bring individuality to their work. The school's approach to the teaching of mathematics, for example, is rooted in practical application of mathematical skills, using materials specifically prepared for each class. This creative method motivates pupils successfully. Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They encourage cooperative working, while providing good opportunities for independent learning. The teaching of phonics is supported by a good range of activities accurately matched to individual needs.

Occasionally, lessons are inspirational, as in an art lesson for older pupils. Here, the teacher was using the work of conceptual artist Robert Smithson, and in particular his piece 'Spiral Jetty', as a stimulus for a piece of land art based on the Olympic rings. This was a highly motivating experience for pupils who subsequently produced a series of rings, using a range of natural materials. They then photographed each ring from different perspectives.

Pupils' written work is carefully produced in Years 3 to 6, but teachers' expectations of work quality and presentation are not always high enough in Years 1 and 2 – particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics. The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants are well prepared and proactive. Most have a positive impact upon pupils' learning.

The school has introduced an effective tracking system and this, as well as pupil progress meetings, has ensured that staff now have a close knowledge of the progress pupils are making. Older pupils also know the precise level at which they are working. Assessment strategies, including self-assessment by pupils and the use

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of individual targets, particularly in writing, are securely embedded. This is not evident in the marking of other subjects and pupils are not always made aware of their next steps in learning.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. This view is shared by virtually all parents, carers and pupils. Pupils are consistently polite and mature. Relationships are excellent. There is a very positive and supportive community spirit. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are well-motivated learners, keen to do their best. Their positive attitudes are evident in lessons where time is used efficiently. They are attentive and are keen to contribute their ideas. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, with few recorded incidents. Issues, when they occur, are managed effectively. The small number of pupils contributes strongly to the very cohesive nature of the community. Incidents of racist behaviour, or exclusions, are rare.

Virtually all pupils say that they feel safe. There are no recent reports of bullying of any type. Pupils are well aware that bullying may take different forms. They understand the inappropriateness of name-calling and prejudice-based bullying. They have a good understanding of risk, including internet safety, road and personal safety. Attendance is above average. Almost all pupils arrive at school punctually.

### **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are good. Prior to entering its current partnership, the school had experienced several years without a headteacher. As a result, many educational developments were not embraced and pupils' progress slowed considerably. Since then, the headteacher and staff have worked tirelessly to make up lost ground and to re-establish the momentum of learning. This has been supported well through the positive links between the schools and a readiness to share resources and expertise.

Rigorous self-evaluation ensures that all school leaders have an accurate view of the school's key priorities. The headteacher has tackled several key weaknesses, including the past underperformance of older pupils; she has increased the range of professional development opportunities for staff and introduced rigorous monitoring and assessment systems. The impact of these improvements is now evident, so that pupils' progress has accelerated and standards have risen. The issues from the last inspection have been successfully tackled and the school demonstrates good capacity for further improvement. The headteacher is ably supported by committed staff who readily take on additional responsibilities in order to improve provision. The proportion of good or better teaching continues to increase with the improved monitoring of teaching and learning. The management of performance is good. Joint professional development is having a positive impact, for example, in raising attainment in writing.

Parents and carers feel that school leaders and staff effectively promote pupils'

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personal development and well-being, and inspection findings support this view. School leaders and the governing body ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements. The school actively tackles discrimination and is committed to promoting equality. Arrangements for the support of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are effective and are monitored closely, as is the provision for pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage.

The curriculum offers relevant and engaging activities which enhance pupils' basic skills and provides a good framework within which to drive up standards. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. There is good support for cultural development through e-mail links with Uganda and New Zealand, together with events such as Aspirations Day, promoted by a university. Responses to the on-line blog of the school hamster are creating links at home and overseas.

The governing body is very effective in the day-to-day management of school affairs. It has a realistic view of the school's context and actively supports its work. Members of the governing body have become increasingly effective at challenging school leaders to address areas of underperformance.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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 July 2012

Dear Pupils



### **Inspection of Aslacton Primary School, Norwich, NR15 2JH**

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you, spending time in lessons and hearing your views. Thank you to those who completed the questionnaire. I found that Aslacton is a good and rapidly improving school.

- Overall, you make good progress. You are learning rapidly and making up lost ground. Attainment is broadly average overall.
- The school provides well for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- Progress in Reception is good and almost all children have the expected skills in reading, writing and mathematics when they enter Year 1.
- Teaching is good, particularly in supporting reading and writing.
- You have positive views about school, good attitudes to learning and behave well. Attendance is above average.
- The headteacher has worked hard to ensure that the school is providing a challenging curriculum and lively teaching, so that you enjoy learning and are able to make rapid progress.

To help you to do better, we have asked the school to:

- ensure that your progress in mathematics is as rapid as in reading and writing so that standards by the end of Year 6 are even higher
- make sure that the marking of all your work is thorough and gives you clear points for improvement and that teachers have higher expectations of the quality of your written work in Years 1 and 2.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and doing your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan  
Lead inspector

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