

Northborough Primary School

Church Street, Northborough, Peterborough, PE6 9BN

Inspection dates 13–14 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and many reach standards of attainment that are above national averages. Progress and attainment have risen steadily in recent years.
- Teaching is typically good, and some is outstanding, which helps all pupils, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds, to make good progress over time in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do well because their needs are understood and the right support helps them to succeed.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe, their attitudes to learning are positive. Attendance has improved and is above average.
- There is a positive atmosphere in the school as a result of strong relationships between pupils and teachers and the community the school serves.
- The curriculum is well organised to provide high quality and interesting learning opportunities. The broad range of experiences offered contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership and management are strong. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for improvement. The very effective headteacher and governing body make sure that all leaders and managers make a strong contribution to improving teaching and raising achievement.
- The information gained from self-evaluation is used effectively in the school development plan. As a result, sustained improvement has taken place and is continuing as the school focuses on the next priorities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics is not as consistently good across the school as it is in reading and writing.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their skills by responding to teachers' comments in their books.
- In a small number of lessons teachers do not challenge the more-able pupils to raise their attainment higher.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves and practise their skills in different subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s data on pupils’ current progress, leaders’ reports on lesson observations, the school’s improvement plan, planning and monitoring documents, documents relating to safeguarding, and records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors observed 13 lessons and saw all classes in operation. Two of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. They also observed playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with pupils, governors, senior and subject managers, and parents and carers, and pupils were heard reading.
- Inspectors carried out discussions with the staff and pupils at the Year 6 educational visit centre.
- Inspectors received the views of staff through 10 responses to the inspection questionnaire and took account of the 51 responses on the parents’ on-line survey (Parent View).

Inspection team

Terry Mortimer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Vreta Bagilhole

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The vast majority of the pupils are White British and with a small minority from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Very few of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is extra government funding for particular groups, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those from service families, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special needs supported through school action is well below average and the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- During the inspection the Year 6 pupils were at the educational visit centre in the Forest of Dean.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school activities for pupils on the school site but they are independently managed and are inspected separately by Ofsted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics so it is as good as it is in English by:
 - consistently marking pupils' work in detail so that they know even more how to improve and what they need to learn next
 - increasing opportunities to use mathematical skills across other curriculum subjects.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - giving pupils more chances to develop their independent learning so that they use learned skills in different subjects
 - making sure that more-able pupils are challenged sufficiently to raise their standards.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Reception with skills and understanding that are generally in line with levels expected for their age, especially in communication and personal, social and emotional development. Learning and progress are good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The children are offered and engaged in a wide range of activities that flow freely between indoors and outdoors.
- They develop good knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) through considerable opportunities that are provided which promote speaking and listening as well as reading. The children's skills in recognising numbers and patterns are developed well. They also make good progress in their physical and personal and emotional development due to the chances for them to make decisions and to be adventurous.
- Pupils in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 learn phonics systematically and effectively. In the national Year 1 phonics check last year pupils achieved more marks than pupils of a similar age nationally.
- Good progress continues throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, progress in reading and writing is slightly faster than in mathematics. This is mainly due to the sharp school focus on improving pupils' writing over the last few years.
- Pupils' work shows a good range of writing skills across the curriculum which allows them to practise and extend their skills. The use and application of mathematical skills is not as well developed and so pupils' progress in mathematics is not accelerated to the same extent.
- Pupils use their reading, writing and computer skills to support their learning well in other subjects. In history for example, pupils found information on the internet to help them write about what life must have been like in the Second World War.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because adults successfully help them with their learning in lessons and in small groups outside lessons.
- Pupils supported by pupil-premium funding make similar progress to others as a result of the support they receive in lessons and small-group teaching. In 2012, they attained as well as their peers and better than similar pupils nationally. The gap in attainment from 2011 has closed and they make better progress than similar pupils nationally and other pupils in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and as a result most pupils achieve well over time. This is the result of the work done by the school. There is some outstanding teaching and learning, more typically in reading and writing than mathematics. The large majority of parents and carers agree that teaching is good.
- Lessons are planned so that teachers make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn. They have high expectations and set work that generally matches the needs of the pupils, so that they

know what they must and should achieve in the lesson.

- In many lessons effective use is made of searching questions and activities to challenge pupils to stimulate their thinking. For example, the use of 'magic' that captivated the pupils at the start of the lesson and challenged them to use their mathematical knowledge and then later they developed their own 'magic'. The teaching of phonics is effective throughout the school. In a history lesson pupils were reminded of persuasive language and the words that can be used while writing about the Celts and the Romans.
- A common feature of most teaching is the way lessons are organised to make sure all groups of pupils make good progress. For example, in a science lesson the teacher chose to challenge a group of pupils by setting them a task without introducing it, as the class were to be carrying out different activities based on their ability. This meant that this group worked by themselves to solve problems consolidating what they had learned in earlier lessons. Meanwhile, the teacher introduced the rest of the class to something new that they had to learn about.
- Teaching strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a wide range of activities notably in topics such as 'Flour babies week' and Indian drumming. Relationships with pupils are good and this helps encourage pupils' positive attitudes to learning.
- Where teaching is occasionally not so effective, the tasks given to the more-able pupils are not sufficiently demanding and this holds back their progress towards reaching even higher levels in their work and developing their independent learning skills. This is most obvious in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Marking is up-to-date with frequent use of praise fostering good attitudes and motivation. While the marking and feedback is thorough in English, where pupils respond to comments, it is not as effective in mathematics. This is because pupils are not given the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments, showing that they have understood what to do next or how to improve.
- Teaching assistants and other adults play an important role in supporting pupils' learning and personal development, especially for those who find some tasks difficult.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons, and when they are walking about the school or playing outside. All pupils are supported well, so those who need extra help and guidance from time to time overcome any concerns quickly. Pupils are courteous, confident and polite and show respect for others.
- Teachers and pupils take the school motto 'Inspiring leaders, inspiring learners- very seriously. Every opportunity is taken to raise pupils' aspirations and build their sense of self-worth. The school strongly promotes pupils' personal development and as a result they show a great deal of respect for each other and staff.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive, and they are eager to do their best. Relationships are good because of sensitive and clear classroom management. Pupils settle to the tasks they are set quickly, concentrate fully on their work, and show good levels of determination. This is evident in lessons and also in the projects they complete for homework, which are evaluated by themselves, their parents and the teacher.
- Occasionally pupils are too directed rather than letting them build their independent learning

skills which they developed in the Reception class and early in their school life.

- Discussions with Year 6 pupils illustrate how much they are helped to do well in school and appreciate the wide range of activities they experience. One pupil at the Forest of Dean demonstrated the effect of the school values when he said 'The Forest of Dean has many ups and downs but this week there have been no downs'.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. Their parents and carers say they are confident that pupils are safe in school and free from harassment. Bullying and safety issues are covered well in lessons and assemblies, and pupils show a good awareness of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They are confident that the school will handle any rare instances effectively should they arise.
- The school provides pupils with very attractive conditions for learning both indoors and outdoors. Displays that value the pupils' work and demonstrate high expectations of what can be achieved are all around. The school uses its good outdoor environment well. Pupils take responsibility for the care of the area. They have been involved in redesigning the adventure playground and the old swimming pool area which is now a quiet seating area.
- Attendance is above average and pupils are punctual to school and to lessons.

The leadership and management are good

- All leaders, staff and governors share an ambitious vision of how the school can improve to become outstanding and a strong drive to bring this about. The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the school survey agree that the school is led and managed well.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher complement each other and ensure that robust procedures are in place for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Senior leaders evaluate the impact of the quality of teaching by focusing sharply on how well individual pupils learn in lessons. These pupils are identified through regular meetings with teachers to check how well groups and individuals are making progress.
- Subject leaders provide good guidance to teachers on how to plan and deliver more effective lessons. Senior leaders ensure that professional development is linked closely to performance management.
- A good well planned curriculum ensures that strong links are made between subjects and a great focus is placed upon learning key skills. The good Early Years provision enables a very good start to school.
- Strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be seen clearly in pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Topic themes and the school's good links to the community ensure pupils have good opportunities to reflect upon moral and social issues, show curiosity and creativity and develop their imagination.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support for this good school.
- Procedures for safeguarding are secure and meet requirements. Training in safeguarding and child protection is up to date for staff and governors.

- The school takes great care and commitment to ensure equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination. The progress and attainment of all individuals are monitored very rigorously by senior leaders to ensure that all pupils, and especially those supported by the pupil premium, are making at least good progress. The information gained is used effectively to target extra support when necessary. This has been particularly effective in ensuring the good achievement of those pupils supported by the pupil premium.
- The significant improvement of the last few years is being sustained. Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have accurate information on the school's performance. The cycle of self-evaluation and improvement planning provides clear direction on bringing about sustained improvements in teaching and achievement. This indicates a secure capacity to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors consult regularly with parents and carers, staff and pupils and listen to what they have to say to guide school improvement. Effective and rigorous systems for monitoring the work of the school enable the governors to understand where improvement is required. They use data effectively to evaluate how well the school is performing in relation to other schools.
 - Governors have a strong understanding of the quality of teaching and check thoroughly that the headteacher is using performance management to tackle any underperformance and to improve further the quality of teaching. This is linked well to the performance management of the headteacher.
 - The governing body checks rigorously upon the impact of spending decisions especially those relating to monies allocated through the pupil premium and those relating to how teachers are rewarded for good performance. All statutory requirements are met

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	110700
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	401145

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gilmour McLaren
Headteacher	Christine Moss
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2009
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