

Inspection of a good school: Northborough Primary School

Church Street, Northborough, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE6 9BN

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

Outcome

Northborough Primary School continues to be a good school.

The interim headteacher of this school is Lindsey Boucher. This school is part of the Soke Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Cathy Carlisle, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Claire Spooner.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this friendly and well-run school. Northborough's vision to create a nurturing, family-centred community that empowers pupils is successfully met. Pupils are happy and enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They know who to go to if they have any worries and feel that they are well cared for. One child, reflecting the views of many, said 'You can talk to anyone if you have a concern. It doesn't matter if it's a teacher or one of the support staff, they all care.'

The school has high expectations for what pupils will learn from the curriculum. Pupils rise to the challenges that staff set. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who achieve well. Pupils take pride in their work and their involvement in the local community. They partake in sporting competitions, regularly perform as a choir, and raise money for charity.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are polite and courteous. They listen attentively to their teachers. Older pupils take time to look after the younger ones. Parents value the school and the welcoming nature of staff, who are approachable and listen to any issue they may have.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school's curriculum is ambitious. Teachers deliver most subjects well. They plan effectively to support what pupils need to learn next. For example, in mathematics teachers explain concepts clearly, referring back to what pupils already know. Across the curriculum, teachers ask pupils considered questions which help them to think more deeply about what they know and understand.

In a few subjects, some teachers are still getting to grips with delivering new curriculum plans. Where this is the case, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to embed key ideas. This means that these pupils do not deepen their knowledge as much as they could, and their learning slows.

Reading is a high priority in school. The phonics curriculum starts quickly in Reception and is carefully sequenced. Staff are knowledgeable and deliver phonics expertly. Staff check carefully what pupils know, so they can see quickly if pupils need extra help. They make sure pupils who find reading difficult get the help they need to catch up. Older pupils develop their reading fluency and understanding of texts through a carefully sequenced curriculum.

Staff look closely at what helps pupils with SEND learn best. They adapt their lessons, so that pupils with SEND learn well. Most pupils keep up through carefully adapted lessons and, where necessary, receive helpful additional support. Pupils are identified quickly and given appropriate support based on their individual's needs. The school makes full use of available help, using external professionals as and when they need to.

The early years curriculum is well planned across all areas of learning. Children receive high levels of care and support. Learning goals are met through a carefully planned curriculum providing many purposeful activities. Children enjoy hearing a range of stories, poems and rhymes. They become confident and considerate members of the school family.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. In Reception, children show good levels of concentration, an enthusiasm to learn and high levels of resilience when dealing with challenging activities. This continues right throughout the school, where older pupils engage well in discussion. They are confident to express their opinions to the class, knowing that pupils will listen carefully to what they have to say. Pupils play well together at social times and enjoy spending time in the extensive school grounds.

An effective personal, social and health education curriculum helps pupils know how to keep safe online, stay healthy and understand democracy. Pupils undertake a wide range of responsibilities, including being a 'planet protector'. This is where pupils focus on helping the school save energy and reduce food waste. Other environmental initiatives encourage pupils to grow their own vegetables and eat them. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities each week.

The trust provides effective support and challenge to school leaders. Governors regularly visit the school to check on the progress of improvements. Staff are positive about the support they receive and the wide range of professional development opportunities that are available. Staff appreciate the careful consideration of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some foundation subjects are at an earlier stage of implementation than others. In these instances, pupils are sometimes not given sufficient opportunities to revisit and embed important concepts. This means these pupils do not deepen their knowledge as successfully as they might. The school should ensure that the curriculum is fully embedded across all subjects and that pupils are given sufficient opportunity to deepen their thinking.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school Northborough Primary school to be good in December 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147382
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10295113
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Claire Spooner
CEO of the trust	Cathy Carlisle
Headteacher	Lindsey Boucher
Website	www.northboroughschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Northborough Primary School is part of the Soke Education Trust.
- Northborough Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2019. When its predecessor school, Northborough Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The majority of class teachers are new to the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with school leaders, the chief executive officer, the trust director of education and members of the trust board and local governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also spoke to pupils and looked at pupils' work in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector considered 74 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, including 67 free-text responses. The lead inspector also considered 13 responses to Ofsted's survey for school staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils. The inspector gathered the views of pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Duncan Ramsey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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