

Northwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101441
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	376565
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Dean
Headteacher	Rosemary Medhurst / Catherine McNulty
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 November 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons, taught by eight teachers. They held meetings with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and documentation, safeguarding records, pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records, strategic planning and the governing body minutes. Questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 88 parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The impact of strategies to improve boys' achievement throughout the school, particularly for White British boys.
- How well teachers meet the needs of, and provide challenge for, all pupils.
- How well pupils learning English as an additional language are supported.
- The impact of strategies for monitoring and tracking on improving provision and outcomes.

Information about the school

Northwood Primary is an average-sized school serving a residential estate of mainly social housing in south-east London. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. About two thirds of pupils come from minority ethnic groups and nearly half speak English as an additional language. These figures are high compared with the national picture. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average, and so is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. These needs relate mainly to speech and language difficulties. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is offered in the school's Reception class. There is no childcare provision on site. The school has gained the Activemark and Healthy Schools status, and is part of the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools programme.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Northwood Primary is a good school which has improved since its previous inspection. Pupils achieve well and make good progress. They enjoy coming to school very much, and this is clear from their high attendance. Parents and carers are very pleased with what the school has to offer their children. One parent commented, 'I can only sum it up by saying Northwood is the best place for a child to start life.' Another said, 'The staff and headteachers are all easy to speak to and always happy to resolve any issue, no matter how small.'

Good pastoral care and partnerships with outside professionals mean that pupils feel safe at school and know that staff will help them if they have a problem. Pupils behave well throughout the school, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a strong sense of justice and respect for the rights of others. Relationships are good, and pupils are very supportive of one another. They have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy their lessons and the other opportunities the curriculum offers them. This was confirmed in discussions and in pupils' responses to the inspection questionnaire.

Since the previous inspection, the school has been successful in improving the rates of progress of pupils and raising attainment at all key stages, so that it is broadly average. This has been the result of improved systems for tracking pupils, better monitoring of teaching and a more targeted approach to teachers' professional development. Improved tracking systems have meant that the school has been able to identify that the attainment of White British boys has been lower than that of other groups, but that they nonetheless make good progress from lower starting points. As a result, there has been an increased focus on promoting basic skills in literacy and numeracy in the Reception class, and this is beginning to have an impact on achievement. The school recognises that this successful initiative needs to be continued into other year groups too.

Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress and are often among the higher attainers, because of the quality of support they receive. However, the limited language skills of a number of pupils of all backgrounds sometimes prevent them from attaining as well as they might. Some pupils' lack of experience in reading a wide range of English texts means that they do not always know what to aspire to in their writing. In mathematics, lack of linguistic understanding sometimes inhibits pupils from using their skills and knowledge to solve problems.

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Teaching is more consistently good since the previous inspection, because of better monitoring and support, and teachers plan well to provide the right amount of challenge to meet all needs effectively. However, the quality of marking and feedback to pupils is inconsistent across the school. There is some good practice, where teachers tell pupils what they have done well and what they need to do next to improve their work, but this is not the case in all classes.

The headteachers and senior leadership team have been successful moving the school forward with the full support of the staff and the school community. Thorough and effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school have been established, so that strengths and areas for development are clearly highlighted. School self-evaluation is realistic and accurate, and the school development plan covers the right areas for improvement. The governing body has a good understanding of its role and holds the school to account effectively. Senior leaders know what needs to be done next to raise attainment. As a result, the school has a good capacity for further continuous improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in literacy and numeracy throughout the school, particularly for White British boys, by:
 - improving the quality and consistency of marking and feedback across the school
 - increasing the range of opportunities for developing reading, writing and calculation skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - giving pupils more opportunities for problem solving in numeracy lessons
 - providing pupils with good examples of high quality writing as models for their own work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The work seen in lessons and in pupils' books confirms that attainment is broadly average at the end of Key Stage 2, and that pupils achieve well from low starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their various starting points, thanks to the good quality support that they receive. Pupils of all abilities are enthusiastic and motivated learners who concentrate well and persevere with their learning. In a Year 5 numeracy lesson on sequencing, for example, higher-attaining pupils worked hard on spotting patterns in a sequence of numbers and were delighted when they found the key to the problems. Meanwhile, the rest of the class worked independently and with great determination on a mathematical computer program, keen to complete as many problems as they could in the time available. Pupils are not afraid to volunteer their ideas, and are supportive of one another's efforts. In a Year 6 Spanish lesson, for example, pupils worked in pairs developing dialogues about their favourite school subjects and wanted to be the ones selected to demonstrate their work in front of the class, knowing their efforts would be sympathetically received.

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Pupils behave well in class, in the playground and around the school, though sometimes their exuberance makes them noisy and teachers have to remind them to be quiet. They have a good understanding of how to be safe, and show this through their considerate behaviour in the playground. Most pupils make sensible choices in their lunches, and enjoy being active at playtime, in their physical education lessons and in after-school clubs. This is reflected in the Activemark and the Healthy Schools status. Many pupils are ready to take on responsibility and feel they have a duty to help others, for example as school councillors, peer mentors or Rights Respecting Schools representatives. Their good multicultural awareness means that they know about the difficulties facing others elsewhere in the world, and they want to do what they can to help. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective, and show respect for the cultures and religions of others. They mix harmoniously and understand the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school and for later life, thanks to their good social skills, their high attendance, and their satisfactory attainment.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make good use of improved tracking and assessment systems to plan work which meets the needs of the different ability groups in their classes. They have good relationships with their classes, and control and channel pupils' enthusiasm well. Lessons have a lively pace and good use is made of modern technology, particularly interactive whiteboards and laptops, to add interest. There is a good level

¹ 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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of challenge, which motivates pupils and makes them want to learn. Pupils understand their target levels, but inconsistencies in the quality of marking mean that they do not always know what they need to do to reach them. Sometimes, marking focuses only on praising good work or highlighting errors, without indicating the next steps in pupils' learning.

The school's good curriculum gives pupils a secure grounding in literacy and numeracy, and thorough coverage of other subjects. Information and communication technology is a particular strength, with excellent resources supporting other subjects across the curriculum. Links between subjects give pupils good opportunities to practise their literacy skills in different contexts. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs, supported by outside partnerships, especially in sport and music.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good, particularly for pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language spoke warmly of the support they received, especially if they had arrived part way through the school. However, restrictions in funding have had an impact on future provision for these pupils. Induction and transition procedures are well structured at all stages of the school, and pupils say they are helped to settle quickly. One pupil commented, 'Staff are always kind and helpful and open to ideas.' The school has been very successful in improving and maintaining high levels of attendance, through vigilance in chasing up absence, and support from parents and carers in ensuring that children come to school regularly and on time.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteachers and senior leadership team are committed to giving pupils a good start to their education, and have been successful in improving provision and outcomes for pupils since the previous inspection. Morale is high, and staff have welcomed the opportunity for increased professional development and support. This was confirmed in the response of staff to the inspection questionnaire. Subject leaders have identified priorities for development in their areas, and the whole school is focused on the constant drive to raise attainment. The governing body has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and is confident about challenging the school and holding it to account. Procedures for safeguarding are robust and staff training is up-to-date. Required checks on adults who come into contact with

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pupils are carried out promptly and risk assessments are thorough. The school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination well. Tracking systems are used effectively to follow the performance of both groups and individuals, and give them the support they need to remove their barriers to learning.

The school has forged good relationships with parents and carers, and encourages them to be involved with their children's learning. Regular pupil review meetings help them to be aware of their children's progress towards their targets. Outside partnerships are used well to give pupils access to expertise and opportunities they might not otherwise have had. The school has made the most of its involvement in the local Education Improvement Partnership to access facilities in other schools and organisations. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. There are close links with the local community, particularly other schools, and the different cultures within the school are celebrated and respected. The school has strong links with a school in the Middle East, which has helped pupils learn more about human rights, and is developing links with other schools nationally to help pupils understand what life is like for children elsewhere in this country.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from generally low starting points. Relationships between adults and children are very supportive, so that children feel safe and secure. They enjoy exploring the good range of activities available to them indoors and outside. The school has identified that many children, particularly boys, arrive in Reception with especially low levels of skills in reading, writing and calculation, and has begun to increase the range and appeal of activities in these areas to boost children's achievement and give them a better level of skills

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by the time they move to Year 1. The school recognises that this work needs to be strengthened. The construction role-play area is a good example of this. Boys in particular are keen to put on hard hats and fluorescent jackets, write lists of tasks on clipboards, and measure up pieces of wood.

There is a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activity in the Reception class, and adults work well with children to promote their speaking and listening skills and develop their vocabulary. Sometimes, though, adults do not demonstrate new activities which have been set out, and as a result, children are slow to try them, thus missing out on opportunities for new learning. The provision is well led. The Early Years Leader plays an important role in developing continuity from Reception to Years 1 and 2, ensuring a smooth transition for the children. Parents and carers are very positive about their children's experiences in the Reception class, and they are involved well in their children's learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was in line with the national average. Those who responded were very pleased with the school and what it offers their children. All felt that the school keeps their child safe and helps their child to have a healthy lifestyle, and almost all felt that the school kept them well informed about their child's progress, and that their child enjoys school. Few expressed negative views about any aspect of the school's work but all the issues raised were discussed thoroughly with the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Northwood Primary 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 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 204 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	80	16	18	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	74	23	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	59	67	27	31	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	54	61	29	33	3	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	53	60	32	36	2	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	61	41	35	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	50	43	49	0	0	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)	44	50	34	39	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	49	40	45	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	52	36	41	2	2	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	48	39	44	3	3	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	58	66	25	28	2	2	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	65	26	30	3	3	2	2

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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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:	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. ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



10 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northwood Primary School, Erith DA18 4HN

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently, and for helping us with the inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and sharing your lessons.

We found that Northwood Primary is a good school and is giving you a good start to your education. These are just some of the things we liked about your school.

- You enjoy coming to school and your attendance is high.
- You feel safe at school because you are well cared for, and those of you with particular needs are well supported.
- You are making good progress in your lessons, because you are well taught.
- You behave well in lessons, in the playground and around the school, and you have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle.
- You have good relationships with one another and your teachers, and you show a great deal of respect for the different backgrounds of others.
- The senior staff are doing a good job, and know how to make the school even better.

To help the school improve further, this is what we have asked the staff to do.

- Help you to do as well as you can in literacy and numeracy.

You can help by telling your teachers if there is anything you do not understand in your lessons, and by letting them know if your work is too hard or too easy.

Yours sincerely

Jane Chesterfield
Lead inspector

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