

# North Primary School and Nursery

John Harper Street, Colchester, CO1 1RP

**Inspection dates** 27–28 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The successful focus on improving teaching is accelerating progress and leading to rising attainment.
- Highly effective teaching is enabling children to make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The pupils' writing is increasingly imaginative because they discuss ideas with each other as they plan what they intend to write.
- The pupils' early reading skills develop quickly through pacy and well-focused sessions teaching letters and their sounds.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners who are keen to do well, meet their targets and gain their teachers' approval.
- Pupils are tremendous cheerleaders for the school. Their behaviour in and out of lessons is often exemplary.
- Pupils are kept safe and enjoy school as is reflected in their rising levels of attendance.
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities to take part in music.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching in mathematics is good but still not as effective as in English.
- Opportunities are not always taken to develop the pupils' writing across different subjects.
- Not all older pupils read a particularly wide range of books or show a great love of reading.
- Marking, particularly in mathematics, does not always tell pupils how to improve their work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, parents and members of the governing body including the Chair. A telephone discussion took place between the lead inspector and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 42 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and held informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's own data on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Mark Jones

Additional inspector

Evelyn Riley

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the majority of primary schools and pupil numbers are increasing as it expands to two forms of entry. In order to accommodate this, building work is currently taking place.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, but the proportion of pupils from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds is rising. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language has also risen to above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average and rising.
- Many more pupils than in other primary schools join or leave outside the usual times.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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

- In order to drive forward the pupils' achievement further, increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
  - putting in place a programme to develop further the skills and expertise of all staff in teaching mathematics
  - providing planned opportunities within topics and subjects for pupils to develop and extend their writing
  - developing a love of books amongst all pupils and giving greater purpose to sessions to guide and extend their reading
  - ensuring that marking gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work and take the steps needed to reach their targets.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards are broadly average and rising across the school. From skills below those expected on entry to the school, effective teaching is leading to good and quickening progress. Progress is more rapid in English than in mathematics because there is more good and outstanding teaching.
- Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes in all areas of their learning. They collaborate well and quickly become able to plan their own lines of enquiry within the activities provided in stimulating and well-resourced classrooms and outside areas. They make a good start in developing key skills of literacy and numeracy.
- Year 6 test results rose in 2012, having fallen the year before and were broadly average. This represented good progress from the pupils' earlier assessments at the end of Year 2. Attainment in mathematics has risen because pupils now have more, but still not sufficient, opportunities to apply their skills when solving problems.
- There are no patterns to any variation in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Those pupils supported through additional funding generally make similar progress as others in their classes. Specifically tailored programmes and skilled support help disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make good progress.
- Pupils speaking English as an additional language also make good progress. Their language needs are met well by the constant focus in classrooms on speaking and listening. Although newcomers to the school also make good progress, those who spend the whole primary period at North Primary tend to reach higher attainment levels.
- Pupils learn to read quickly. Even the less confident readily apply their understanding of the sounds made by letters to read unfamiliar words. However, older pupils do not read as widely as they might and do not always show a great love of books, partly because activities provided in reading sessions do not develop and guide their reading effectively.
- Pupils communicate well through talk and their increasingly creative writing. Their writing is stimulated by having the opportunity to discuss their pieces, seeing high quality examples to emulate and planning their work over a few days. However, staff miss opportunities to use other curriculum subjects for developing and extending their writing further.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved and has a positive impact on the pupils' learning. The school has appointed several skilled teachers in recent years, while developing the practice of others. As a consequence, there is a substantial amount of outstanding teaching, more so in English than in mathematics, although a small minority of lessons need improvement.
- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception is consistently good and outstanding at times. Teachers pitch a wide range of interesting activities at the right level for the children, then carefully guide them to those most suited to the next steps in their learning. They combine skilfully engaging in the activities with the children with standing back to let them think.
- The most effective teaching takes place in calm and well-managed classrooms, with support staff deployed well to guide the learning of individuals and groups. In these lessons, teachers use a wide range of interesting methods and set work at the right level for all

pupils. The teachers' high expectations are reflected in demanding work for the more able.

- Typical of the most effective teaching was a writing lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils creating a story along the lines of 'The Billy Goats Gruff'. A wide range of interesting activities were used with a strong emphasis on pupils telling their story to a partner. The lesson grabbed their imaginations and gave them great confidence to share ideas including to the whole class. This led to tangible and visible improvements to their story plans.
- A small number of lessons need improving, more so in mathematics than in English. In these lessons, teaching lacks pace because pupils, particularly the more able, spend too much time listening to teachers go through work they can do already. Exercises set are at times repetitive and do not deepen the pupils' mathematical understanding.
- Marking is inconsistent but more effective in writing than in mathematics and topic work. This is because marking of writing provides clearer guidance on the steps pupils can take to improve. Pupils' individual targets in English and mathematics are not always reviewed regularly in all classes and so lose their impact.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The pupils develop exceptionally positive attitudes to learning and often exemplary behaviour. These are nurtured in the Early Years Foundation Stage and built upon across the rest of the school. The youngest children learn to work together cooperatively by sharing tasks and resources, attributes which stay with them as they get older.
- Pupils work and play happily together and develop trusting and lasting friendships with each other. They are kind and considerate. Newcomers are able to settle in quickly because the school's values are lived out by pupils on a daily basis, and through support from others in their classes.
- Pupils trust staff and are confident that their concerns will be handled sensitively. Detailed records are analysed showing bullying and racist incidents are few and far between, and dealt with quickly and effectively. Teachers and support staff manage pupils with behavioural needs well so that their learning is not disrupted and does not disturb others.
- Pupils say how safe they feel in school, which is a view supported by their parents and carers. Pupils learn how to identify and deal with risky and potentially dangerous situations, by visiting work in progress on the new buildings. They are also very clear about road safety and how to keep themselves safe on the internet.
- Through the efforts of school leaders, attendance has steadily risen and reached an above average level during the last school year.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has instilled in staff a drive to improve the school and the pupils' achievement. The quality of teaching is carefully checked and adjustments made where needed, such as in mathematics. Strong teamwork and recent improvements in achievement and teaching give the school a strong platform for its future development.

- The progress of all pupils is monitored carefully against challenging targets. Regular discussions about the progress of each pupil enable teachers to pinpoint where they are not meeting their targets. However, this analysis has not always extended to considering if there might be aspects of an individual teacher's performance in need of attention.
  - The headteacher does the utmost to ensure that no groups of pupils are disadvantaged. Assessment data is analysed and action taken if any group seems to be falling behind. Additional funding is used effectively on specific activities to close any gaps in achievement and has enabled pupils known to be eligible for free school meals to make good and accelerating progress.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - is effective in holding the school to account and challenging it to do better
    - carefully monitors and evaluates performance so that governors are able to shape priorities for improvement and check on progress towards their achievement
    - also checks carefully that safeguarding practices meet requirements and are rigorously implemented.
  - Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well. Music plays a major role in the life of the school. Drumming sessions and links with an African school give pupils a sharp insight into cultures other than their own.
  - Pupils are taught a broad range of subjects. This includes a sharp focus on developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy. The pupils' learning and enjoyment of school are much enhanced through topic themes and the wide range of clubs and other activities.
  - The local authority knows the school well. Its consultants have helped the school to focus on improving teaching in mathematics over the last year. They have provided effective support and guidance to enable learning to improve and achievement to rise.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114709
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	401459

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	370
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jan Blackwell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Garnett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 November 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 574225
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