

Northfield Primary School: With Communication Resource

Northfield Lane, South Kirkby, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF9 3LY

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 achieve well because they make good progress as they move up through the school.
- Different groups of pupils, such as those in the communication resource, make equally good progress. The school works very hard to give all pupils the help and support that they need.
- Teaching is good. Activities are interesting and pupils remark that 'even the hardest lessons are fun'.
- Teachers build up a great deal of information about each pupil and their learning. They take all this carefully into account when they plan lessons.
- The skills of teaching assistants make an important contribution to lessons and learning.
- Pupils speak with enormous warmth and affection about their school. One commented, 'It's a good feeling to wake up and look forward to coming to school.'
- Behaviour is good. It is outstanding in assemblies and in many lessons.
- Pupils feel entirely safe in school. They know just what to do if they have any concerns.
- The headteacher's impressive leadership ensures that other leaders, staff and governors work together to keep the school, including the quality of teaching, improving.
- As a result, pupils' attainment is rising year on year. Writing used to be a weak area of learning but pupils now write with enthusiasm and confidence.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although nearly all teaching is good or better, not enough is outstanding and a very small amount requires improvement.
- At certain points in some lessons not all pupils are learning quickly enough.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to learn on their own and work things out for themselves.
- In a number of cases teachers' marking does not help pupils to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- It was not possible to inform the school beforehand that it was to be inspected and therefore the inspection was unannounced.
- The inspectors visited 18 lessons. One observation was conducted jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents including: records of pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance; the school's plans for its future development; safeguarding information; a summary of the school's self-evaluation; and samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics.
- The 16 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were examined in addition to the outcomes of a recent survey by the school of parents' views.
- Forty-eight members of staff returned inspection questionnaires and their views were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Rosemary Eaton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Gaunt

Additional Inspector

Lynne Davies

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school houses a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. The resource caters for pupils with communication needs. Most of the 10 pupils currently attending the communication resource have a diagnosis of autism.
- Since the previous inspection, and following the closure of a nearby school, Northfield absorbed around 100 new pupils of all ages. This led to the appointment of additional staff and more classrooms had to be built.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, so that much of it is outstanding and it is never less than good, by ensuring that:
 - pupils learn rapidly throughout all parts of each lesson
 - teachers provide pupils with more opportunities to work things out for themselves and learn on their own
 - marking always leads pupils to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When they start in the Nursery most children's skills are below or very much below those typically expected for their age.
- Children's communication and social skills are often especially weak. Staff seize every opportunity to help children develop in these areas. As a result, children make particularly strong progress in speaking and listening and learning to share, take turns and make friends.
- From these early years onwards pupils make good progress overall as they move up through the school. Progress is fastest where teaching is of the highest quality.
- Attainment has risen steadily since the previous inspection. There is clear evidence that the levels current Year 6 pupils are reaching are closer to national averages than in previous years. Performance in Year 6 is still being affected by pupils who joined the school during Key Stage 2 with large gaps in their learning.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress. Nevertheless, in 2012 the attainment of Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was, on average, one year behind the others in their year, both in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well. Programmes to help them to improve their skills are chosen carefully and a range of professionals and agencies also contribute to pupils' good progress.
- Pupils in the communication resource also make good progress, particularly in speaking and listening skills and in their social development. They benefit from opportunities to work and play with pupils in the mainstream of the school. Occasionally they make such good progress that they move on to full-time mainstream education after they leave Northfield.
- The school works hard to give all pupils equal opportunities to be successful. For example, because many pupils have communication difficulties, leaders employ a speech and language therapist to provide the help pupils need.
- Reading, including phonics (the sounds made by letters), is taught well. In 2012 far more pupils than average reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. Less-able pupils in Year 6 still rely on phonics to help them tackle words that are new to them. The more able read fluently and with enjoyment.
- Since the previous inspection steps taken by leaders have led to marked improvements in writing. For example, teachers make a point of introducing new words to extend pupils' vocabulary. They provide plenty of interesting writing activities, linked to work in other subjects and to experiences such as visits. As a result, pupils are ready, willing and able to put their ideas down on paper.
- Knowing that pupils find mental mathematics and using their mathematical skills to solve problems particularly difficult, teachers provide many opportunities for them to practise. For example, 'Find it out Friday' activities make sure that all pupils learn a range of approaches to reaching correct answers.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers and teaching assistants develop very good working relationships with pupils. The adults make it entirely clear that they respect and care about each pupil, doing their utmost to boost pupils' self-esteem. All this helps pupils to learn because they are confident to tackle hard work or to ask for help, certain that staff appreciate their efforts and understand their difficulties.
- Lessons are planned and prepared carefully. Teachers have an up-to-date knowledge of what each pupil knows, understands and can do and the next steps they need to take. They usually

make good use of all this information, so different groups of pupils make equal progress.

- When marking books teachers praise pupils' efforts. They generally point out how the piece of work could be improved but these comments are sometimes too vague - for example, asking the pupil to write more. The best marking informs pupils exactly what they need to do in order to move their learning forward. In some instances there is no sign that marking has led to improvement.
- Teachers choose topics and activities that appeal to pupils' interests. For example, pupils in Year 6 were keen to start writing during a lesson that built on their knowledge of history and included a clip from a feature film about pirates.
- Teaching assistants play a full part in enabling pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, to make progress. They often lead groups, either in the classroom or when pupils are following particular programmes, sharing teachers' high expectations and encouraging pupils successfully to try hard.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are encouraged to choose their own activities and take responsibility for their learning. In later years pupils are not always expected to think enough for themselves and make decisions about how they learn. This means that they sometimes rely more than necessary on adults and this holds back their learning.
- Teachers give clear explanations and helpful demonstrations to pupils because they are knowledgeable about the subjects of the curriculum.
- Staff in the communication resource are very flexible and adapt their approaches to suit individual pupils. They judge accurately when to reward pupils with an activity of their choice.
- From time to time pupils do not learn fast enough throughout a lesson. Sometimes this is because the teacher does not move them on to a new challenge quickly enough. On other occasions staff fail to notice individuals coasting along, achieving too little.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most pupils are keen to learn and want to do well. They often take great care over their handwriting and are proud when they graduate from using a pencil to writing with a pen. Just occasionally, when the lesson does not grab their attention, some pupils fail to volunteer answers and are content to sit back while others do most of the work.
- Behaviour in lessons is invariably good and it is often outstanding. This means that pupils are able to concentrate on their work.
- During assemblies behaviour is excellent. Pupils move around school in an orderly manner and are considerate in the dining room.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy their playtimes but explain that there are incidents of pushing, for example. Records confirm that such events are unusual.
- A few pupils need significant help in order to manage their own behaviour. Staff, particularly the learning mentor, and several agencies work together to support these pupils, who typically make great strides in learning to cope with their emotions. Acts of aggression are treated very seriously, with exclusion used when necessary to safeguard other pupils and staff.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. Parents confirm this. Pupils feel 'looked after' when they are here. Those new to the school praise the warm welcome they received.
- Older pupils understand what is meant by 'bullying' and say that 'we don't have it here'. Younger ones are less clear about the difference between bullying and arguing or getting cross. Pupils of all ages know that they should report any concerns and are confident that staff would act quickly and effectively.
- Pupils learn how to stay safe, for example when using social media or when out and about.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now average.

The leadership and management are good

- Corridors and classrooms are lined with vibrant and enticing displays. The stunning environment created for pupils exemplifies the headteacher's belief that only the best is good enough for them. Other leaders and staff share these high expectations and are equally determined to continue to move the school forward. Most staff returned the inspection questionnaire and their views were entirely positive.
- Since the previous inspection leadership responsibilities have been shared more widely. Although leaders' experience varies, priority is given to enabling them all to develop the necessary skills. As a result, those with leadership responsibilities are involved in checking on the school's performance, particularly the quality of teaching. These rigorous arrangements lead to an accurate view of the school's strengths and where more improvement is needed.
- Training for staff is well organised and wide-ranging. It includes opportunities for staff to learn from the most skilled teaching both in Northfield and in other schools. As a result, teaching, for instance of writing, has improved since the previous inspection. All involved are determined to move the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding.
- Another improvement since the previous inspection is in the effectiveness with which the headteacher and deputy headteacher use the information collected about pupils' achievement. This work has enabled leaders to take decisive steps designed to speed up pupils' progress and raise their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics even further. There has not been time to see the full impact of these actions but there are already signs of their success.
- The curriculum takes careful account of pupils' interests, ages and stages of development. After-school clubs, the 'forest school' in the grounds, residential visits and frequent visitors to school contribute strongly to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in addition to learning.
- Leaders use a variety of imaginative approaches to encourage parents to get involved in their children's education. These begin even before children join the Nursery, with the 'Early Birds' group for parents and toddlers.
- The arrangements to safeguard pupils meet current requirements. Extensive training ensures that staff are well aware of their responsibilities and pay close attention to keeping pupils safe.
- Because the local authority has no concerns about the school, the support provided is negotiated with the headteacher. The authority keeps an eye on the school's performance to make sure that this 'light touch' support remains suitable.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a broad awareness of pupils' progress that enables them to question leaders about the steps being taken to bring about improvements. Together with governing bodies of other local schools they have secured local authority training to give governors a greater insight into published performance information. Governors are well aware of how the performance of staff is managed. They appreciate the links between the quality of teachers' work, their pay and their responsibilities and know that support and training are provided when leaders note aspects of teaching needing improvement. Governors receive information about the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium. They have not yet considered formally whether or not the extra funding is narrowing the gap between these pupils and others in the school.

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	130859
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	411772

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rex Owen
Headteacher	Liz Bradley
Date of previous school inspection	26 May 2010
Telephone number	01977 723820
Fax number	01977 723821
Email address	headteacher@northfield.wakefield.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

