

Northaw Church of England Primary School

Vineyards Road, Northaw, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 4PB

Inspection dates 19–20 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievements have improved since the previous inspection and exceed the national average. High expectations of pupils' attainment and progress are evident throughout the school.
- The headteacher is highly effective in sharing a vision that supports good learning for all pupils. Governors, staff, pupils and the majority of parents now embrace this vision.
- English and mathematics are well taught. Teachers stretch pupils well and make lessons interesting.
- Pupils behave well and clearly enjoy their learning. They say they feel safe.
- Pupils' understanding of their role and responsibility in society is well developed. They reflect and respond with a maturity rarely seen in children of their age.
- Children in Early Years are happy, feel safe and make good progress.
- Governors provide appropriate support and challenge to the headteacher. This has helped to steer rapid and sustained school improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet consistently good because some teachers are still developing their skills, and the quality of teaching in foundation subjects, rather than English and mathematics, tends to be less sharply focused on developing pupils' skills.
- Reading opportunities that specifically inspire boys are sometimes limited and consequently some boys do not make good progress in English.
- New systems and procedures for checking the school's work are not yet fully embedded.
- Recent strategies to accelerate the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have not had time to make significant impact. Some pupils who struggle with learning do not make such rapid progress as their classmates.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of 10 lessons, including two jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books and children's learning logs, listened to pupils read, and talked to pupils about their work.
- Policies, procedures and school records were considered along with school documentation that covered curriculum, pupils' performance and the quality of teaching.
- The school's self-evaluation and school action plans were reviewed along with recent reports from the local authority and the Church of England inspection.
- The views of parents were taken into account, including 60 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's on-line questionnaire. An open meeting was held for all parents and the inspector received one letter from a parent.
- The views of staff were considered from discussions and 19 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the special needs coordinator, subject leaders, pupils, parents, the school business manager, governors, a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese of St Albans.

Inspection team

Deborah Pargeter, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those for whom the school receives pupil-premium funding is about one in seven, which is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided to schools for pupils in local authority care, those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed services.
- One third of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. This is a higher proportion than found in most schools. For pupils for whom English is an additional language, it is average compared to most schools nationally.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average and has gradually reduced over the last few years.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school club each day and a range of activities after school.
- Children of nursery age join the Early Years Foundation Stage class each morning.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information to plug gaps in pupils' learning
 - activities inspire pupils to become highly motivated
 - boys have highly stimulating and interesting books and activities to gain pleasure and develop good skills in reading and writing
 - teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Senior and middle leaders make sure that all subjects are taught to the same high standards as English and mathematics by:
 - improving teachers' skills in each national curriculum subject
 - reviewing the curriculum and resources for all subjects
 - monitoring more closely the quality of the core and foundation subjects with each teacher.
- Develop robust monitoring to check that all school systems and procedures are compliant with national and local expectations, for example the contents of the school website.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has successfully led rapid school improvement and established high expectations and outcomes for continued improvement.
- The vision and values introduced by the headteacher permeate through all facets of school life and provide pupils with life-long learning skills. The use of the 'Six Rs: resilience, reflection, respect, reasoning, responsibility and resourcefulness' is evident throughout the school and modelled by governors, staff, pupils and parents.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is led well by the special needs coordinator, and is beginning to accelerate their progress. She recently facilitated additional support for pupils and tracks impact closely. The special needs coordinator also evaluates the performance of other groups of pupils, including pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- Through a period of immense change, leaders and governors ensured a positive relationship with the majority of parents. Senior leaders include parents through information sessions, a parent forum, an open door policy, regular written correspondence and drop-in sessions. The inspector canvassed the opinion of parents in a face-to-face meeting and all views were positive.
- Middle leaders are starting to lead subjects effectively. They receive additional training that is shared with colleagues to support whole-school improvement. More-experienced colleagues support and mentor less-experienced teachers. This has resulted in improvements in English and mathematics and is starting to improve achievements in other subjects.
- The performance of teachers and teaching assistants is managed effectively, using a rigorous system that links to the school's values and clear performance targets. Underperformance is quickly addressed. All staff have a clear understanding of their professional development priorities and access training to effectively meet these.
- The exceptional progress made by pupils supported by the pupil premium is because the additional provision they receive is tracked and the impact closely monitored.
- Leaders ensure that the Christian ethos of the school includes the values of other religions and cultures. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is a significant strength. Pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on all aspects of school life. They celebrate their own successes and those of their peers. They articulate their feelings and the impact their behaviour has on others.
- The website did not meet statutory requirements and several school procedures are not compliant.
- Leaders use sports funding effectively. There is improved and extended climbing equipment on the playground, accessed by all pupils. Pupils are now more physically active and participation in sporting activities has increased.
- The local authority provides effective support and this has helped to accelerate school improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors have an accurate view of the school and use a variety of reliable sources to gather and evaluate information. They correctly recognise the strengths and areas for development linked to teaching and pupils' achievement.
 - Teaches' performance is reviewed at regular meetings, attended by all governors. There are established

systems in place to respond to underperformance and performance reviews. The headteacher is held to account for all aspects of school life and the governing body provide adequate support and challenge. The governing body has undergone a period of change and been subject external review by the local authority, the diocese and Ofsted. Although no evidence of poor practice was uncovered, governors have adopted a reflective approach to support overall improvement. This has resulted in a very proactive governing body with the capacity to continue to support on-going school improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in class and around the school. The school's behaviour systems are used routinely in all classes and pupils respond quickly to initial warnings from teachers. Pupils are clear about the behaviour expectations and consequences.
- Older pupils have a very positive attitude to their work. They are eager to meet their targets and regularly reflect on how to improve their achievements. The majority of pupils are self-motivated, resilient and resourceful learners.
- All pupils are friendly and welcoming. Older pupils use the school's values intuitively while younger pupils are developing their use. For example Key Stage 1 pupils are reminded to respect their peers by remaining quiet while someone is talking and they do this immediately.
- Pupils are proud of their school and can describe aspects of their school they think are special and important.
- Younger pupils become easily distracted by their peers when teaching is not interesting or instructions are unclear. In these instances a simple reminder was all that was needed to refocus pupils on their work.
- Attendance remains below the national average as a result of a small number of pupils with high levels of absences. The headteacher actively pursues persistent absentees and this leads to improvements. The school follows local guidance on authorising holidays. As a result, unauthorised absence has reduced significantly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All school systems conform to statutory requirements. Safeguarding training for all staff is up-to-date and first aid qualifications are in place, including for the before- and after-school staff.
- Pupils are able to describe a variety of different types of bullying. They acknowledge that pupils can be unkind to each other, but say that this is rare. Pupils are confident that staff adequately address any concerns they express.
- Pupils are able to describe how to keep themselves safe on-line and when using a mobile phone.
- The school grounds are secure and pupils feel safe throughout the school site.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers know their pupils well and they have a positive relationship with their class which promotes high expectations and an inquisitive ethos. Pupils are comfortable to ask for further explanations or clarification and regularly share links they have made in their learning.
- The majority of lessons meet pupils' learning needs and result in good progress for all groups. Where this does not happen consistently, senior leaders provide support to teachers to better match the work to pupils of all abilities in their class.

- Much of the teaching is motivating and inspiring. A punctuation lesson in Key Stage 2 was delivered as a suite of lessons solving a murder mystery in the 'Spag Bol' restaurant. Pupils cheered when they were told that they were learning about punctuation.
- Teachers' use marking and feedback effectively and pupils know what to do to improve. They respond to teachers' comments and corrections are re-visited to make sure pupils understand. This approach is outlined in the marking policy and is demonstrated best in English and mathematics.
- Teachers create warm and welcoming environments to promote effective learning. They are organised, well resourced, provide good prompts for supporting learners and celebrate pupils' achievements. Each classroom has an area for reflection, which is used for religious purposes and more broadly for reflection on the school's values, pupils' personal achievements and progress.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to teach well in English and mathematics, and ensure that they meet the demands of the new National Curriculum. Where individual teachers' subject expertise is less well developed, such as in computing, teaching is less strong.
- Teaching assistants are effective at supporting pupils during learning tasks. At other times, such as when the teacher is explaining things to the whole class, teaching assistants do not always help pupils enough.
- Presentation of pupils' work is good. Their writing is generally joined correctly in Key Stage 2 and there is an agreed presentation style throughout the school.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a substantial improvement in pupils' achievement throughout the school. In 2014, pupils in Key Stage 1 exceeded the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the same year, Key Stage 2 pupils exceeded the national average in reading and mathematics and were only slightly below in writing. Given that children join the Nursery and Reception classes with starting points that are broadly typical for their age, these results constitute a good level of achievement. Pupils from different heritage achieve equally well. These good results are being sustained. Current school data for Key Stages 1 and 2 indicates that results will be above national in 2015, in all areas.
- Although the majority of children enter the Early Years with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age, those children who start at a lower level catch up quickly. Children leave the Early Years Foundation Stage achieving a good level of development.
- Some pupils who enter each key stage as low attainers, with a disability or a special educational need, do not always make the same progress as others. These pupils have recently been provided with targeted interventions that support their specific learning needs. Robust tracking indicates accelerated progress, but the interventions have not been in place long enough for there to be sufficient impact on their progress.
- Pupils supported through pupil premium make exceptional progress. In 2014 they exceeded the attainment of their peers in the school and all pupils nationally by over a year in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are developing a pleasure in reading and have access to a broad variety of exciting texts in the classroom and school library. In 2014, reading attainment and progress was above national average. However boys' reading and writing attainment at Key Stage 1 was lower than their peers nationally. Some Key Stage 1 boys cannot use strategies for reading and spelling efficiently, and do not always understand what they are reading.
- Mathematics attainment and progress is good. This is a result of an increased focus on teaching mathematics skills throughout the school.

- The most able pupils make good or exceptional progress. They are eager to acquire new skills and knowledge and are keen to independently challenge themselves, whilst being supported by their teachers.

The early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Reception Year with skills, knowledge and understanding similar to other children of their age. They make good progress over the year in all areas of learning and are well prepared for starting Year 1.
- Staff organise the provision so children are able to independently and safely access resources that support activities both inside and outside the classroom. Particular attention is given to planning stimulating and exciting activities. A visit from a fire engine was followed by a variety of writing, reading, construction and mathematics tasks that stimulated and inspired the children. These activities were directly linked to children’s targets.
- Behaviour is generally good. However, children become more boisterous and fidgety when lessons are slow and uninteresting. All children respond quickly to use of the classroom behaviour system and enjoy earning the rewards, so quickly respond to the teacher’s instructions
- Leadership of early years is good because senior staff have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Leaders have commissioned external support to ensure they identify areas for improvement. As a result, the learning environment has been enhanced and assessment of children’s learning has become more effective.
- Teaching in the Early Years is now good. Following a change in staffing arrangements, teaching is being strengthened to ensure consistently good planning, delivery and tracking of children’s progress. Additional skilled staff ensure that all of the children’s needs are met and progress is regularly reviewed with senior leaders.

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	117569
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	463250

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adam Wilson
Headteacher	Alis Rocca
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2013
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