

# Northbrook Primary School

Bannister Drive, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 2GB

**Inspection dates** 23–24 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
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.

- The inspirational headteacher provides a clear sense of direction for the school. All staff share his vision for pupils to reach their full potential in their academic achievement and personal development.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children develop a genuine eagerness to learn new things and are encouraged to be inquisitive. They achieve well.
- From their individual starting points, pupils make good progress throughout their time at school.
- Pupils who have additional needs are provided with a good level of support and usually make the same good progress as others in school.
- Teaching is typically good across the school. Teachers and teaching assistants plan well for the different abilities of individual pupils.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils settle extremely well to their work and collaboration with classmates is strong. They show high levels of respect for others during their playtimes.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school and learn how to keep safe in other environments. Staff work tirelessly with a wide range of external agencies to provide support for pupils and their families.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed. For example, all eagerly participated in the school sports days during the inspection. Many take part in a wide range of lunchtime clubs.
- The headteacher has effectively led several whole-school changes. In a relatively short space of time, there have been significant improvements. Staff's relationships with parents, grandparents and the local community are exceptionally positive.
- All staff and members of the governing body are dedicated to improving the lives of pupils and they work well as a team. Their successful actions have a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. The school continues to improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In the early years, the activities which children choose for themselves do not always build on previous learning.
- Across different subjects, the quality of pupils' handwriting, punctuation, spellings and grammar is variable.
- A small minority of pupils struggle to apply their numeracy skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Some pupils lack the confidence to check their work accurately before it is marked.
- Some middle leaders are at an early stage of developing skills to drive improvement in their areas of responsibility.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in lessons taught by teachers, two of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. Sessions led by teaching assistants were observed and the inspector listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with school staff, pupils, the headteacher, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding documents, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance, development plans, records of pupils' standards and progress, documents relating to attendance and behaviour, and pupils' work in their books.
- There were 11 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) which were taken into account along with the school's latest parent survey. The 20 responses to the staff questionnaire were also reviewed. In addition, the inspector spoke informally to many parents at the start and end of the school days and during the sports day afternoons. Many parents and grandparents went out of their way to have a conversation with the inspector during the course of the inspection.

## Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Northbrook is a smaller than average-sized primary school. However, since the previous inspection the number of pupils has grown by almost a third. A much higher than average proportion of pupils join the school other than at the usual point of admission.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium, is much higher than that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is much higher than the national average.
- Most pupils are White British.
- Provision in the early years is full time.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and new teachers have joined the school.
- Sharing the same site, but not inspected during this inspection, are pre-school and after-school clubs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Increase the proportion of pupils who make more than the expected progress and build on existing strengths in teaching by:
  - making high standards in handwriting, grammar, spelling and punctuation a routine expectation across the school
  - developing pupils' confidence and skills to check and edit their work before it is marked
  - building pupils' fluency in applying their numeracy skills when they are solving problems
  - ensuring that activities which children can choose for themselves in the early years provide challenge and build on previous learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management roles further by developing the skills of middle leaders in ensuring that initiatives to raise pupils' achievement are implemented consistently across the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher. He and the deputy headteacher have created a strong staff team who share their vision to bring out the very best in pupils' personal development and academic achievement through a wide range of experiences.
- Priorities are clearly stated in the school's improvement plan and the school's systems to judge its performance are both realistic and rigorous. Overall, leaders effectively check on the quality of learning and teaching in the school and have a clear view of how they can continue to raise standards. However, some middle leaders are at an early stage in learning the skills to check on their areas of responsibility and their influence on school improvement is not yet fully developed.
- Staff are given goals to ensure that pupils make good progress and these are directly linked to salary progression. The headteacher is highly effective in building a strong team of staff and he sets specific targets to raise pupils' achievement. He leads by example.
- Care is taken to promote good achievement for all, including pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium. The funding for these pupils is spent well to meet their needs. This confirms the school's commitment to making sure that there is no discrimination and that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed in this harmonious community where good relations flourish.
- Pupils experience a creative curriculum in which topics promote their developing individual interests. Trips and visitors to the school bring learning to life. For example, a whole-school trip to a nature reserve for all pupils, every single member of staff and two parent governors provided a 'grand day out'. These types of experiences help to broaden pupils' horizons and raise their aspirations. Pupils enjoy a raft of clubs and lunchtime activities, including sport and gardening. This reflects the willingness of all staff to give freely of their own time for the benefit of pupils.
- The school prepares pupils very well for life in modern British society. For example, pupils learn about democracy in Britain and practise their own democratic processes for electing the members of the school council. These members then bring the views and ideas of their classmates to meetings and organise fund-raising events.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding has been used well to increase opportunities for sport and physical development. Specialist coaches work with staff and older pupils who are now able to lead sporting activities at lunchtimes. New equipment has been acquired and pupils develop their skills in a wide range of sports, including tag rugby and tennis. Engagement in a range of sports provides pupils with opportunities to help them to lead healthy lifestyles. Their eagerness to take part in sports days reflects the success of the school in events.
- The local authority has provided support for the governing body during the appointment of the headteacher. There has been recent local authority moderation of early years assessments which endorses the accuracy of the deputy headteacher/early years manager in measuring the progress that children are making during their time in the Reception class.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. They are implemented effectively so that pupils and staff are safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors bring with them a wide range of skills. Those who spoke to the inspector have a good understanding of data showing pupils' achievement and how this compares with other schools. They are kept well informed by senior leaders. Governors have a very accurate overview of the quality of teaching and how it is directly linked to the salary structure of staff. They understand how any underperformance is tackled.
  - The staffing structure has changed due to the increasing number of pupils joining the school. The senior leadership team and governors have carefully managed the budget to enable pupils to be taught in separate year groups. The growing reputation of the school has led to a waiting list for the first time in the Reception class for September 2015.
  - Governors are conscientious in the way they undertake all their statutory duties. All required checks on adults are meticulously recorded and staff are extremely well trained in child protection.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.

- There is an extremely high level of mutual respect between all adults and pupils. Pupils have an extremely positive attitude toward learning; they say that they really enjoy their school work because teachers make learning exciting.
- Pupils are polite and very considerate toward each other, both in class and around the school. Older pupils really appreciate the opportunities they get to help younger friends. For example, they diligently distribute snacks during morning break.
- Pupils are confident that their opinions count. At the start of each academic year, each class discusses and collates its own list of class rules, having decided what are, and are not, acceptable behaviours.
- A significant number of pupils experience social and emotional issues and the school helps them to choose appropriate behaviour in lessons and around the school. When there are occasional behavioural concerns, these are dealt with in a fair manner and meticulously recorded. There was overwhelming praise from parents and grandparents for the dedicated headteacher and his team of staff who have had a significant impact on improving the lives of pupils and their families.
- All parents who responded to Parent View believe that their children are happy at school. The vast majority believe that pupils behave well. This came across strongly in conversations with parents and grandparents. Several referred to Northbrook being like 'one big happy family' and staff similarly commented on 'belonging to a happy, caring family'. Those parents whose children joined the school during Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 described the school as a 'hidden gem'.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school. Almost all parents that responded to the online questionnaire, and all those who spoke to the inspector agreed that their children are safe and extremely well cared for.
- There are exceptionally strong links with external agencies. These provide support for pupils and their families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Northbrook is highly successful in supporting pupils who have experienced difficulties in other schools. This is because of the exceptionally high levels of support and care from all staff.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They are very clear that everyone is unique and deserves respect. Pupils who spoke with the inspector claimed that there was no bullying at Northbrook; school records confirm this.
- Attendance has improved and is in line with the national average. This reflects how much the pupils enjoy being at school and the excellent way in which the school works together with parents. Since the previous inspection, exclusions have been eliminated.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils make good progress because of the effective quality of teaching and assessment in a wide range of subjects. This is further confirmed by work in pupils' books and the school's records of pupils' progress.
- Staff respect and celebrate the fact that every pupil is unique and they take great care to make sure that individual learning and specific pastoral needs are well met. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together, which results in an excellent level of support, especially for the least-able pupils and those who are new to the school.
- Teachers use questions skilfully to assess pupils' learning throughout lessons. Pupils discuss their ideas and learn from each other. Classrooms are organised well and the content and timing of activities are planned effectively.
- Pupils refer to learning as being 'fun' and this was seen when those in Key Stage 1 were finding time-related words in a story. In pairs, they were then given a 'time' word which they had to put into a sentence and then share with the rest of the class. As they developed their speaking and listening skills, they gained the confidence to then write their own story in order of events. This work captured pupils' imaginations and led to pupils being creative with their writing.
- Reading has a high priority in school. Phonics (matching letters to the sounds that they make) is well taught and this was seen in the early years and Key Stage 1. Those who read to the inspector demonstrated how well they could blend the different sounds of letters to work out unfamiliar words. They could also recount what they had read in their own words. Older pupils talked excitedly about different authors and why they like their particular style of writing. Some pupils who have joined the school in Key Stage 2 are not at the level of those pupils who have had the benefit of stronger teaching of reading when younger. For those who do not read often enough at home, the school uses a range of strategies to help

to compensate for this.

- In Key Stage 2, pupils became fascinated with their work on factorising numbers using 'factor trees'. There were squeals of excitement at the realisation of links between different numbers. The work was well planned to meet the wide range of abilities in the class and, by the end of the session, the work in pupils' books showed how well they had understood their work.
- The varied topic work ensures that pupils have many and varied opportunities to develop their numeracy and literacy skills. However, across subjects, not all teachers have routinely high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting, punctuation, grammar and spellings. This leads to too many errors.
- Teachers mark work regularly. They praise pupils for work which is well done and provide good advice on how it could be improved still further. Teachers check that pupils do their corrections or follow advice when it is given so that they can always learn from their mistakes. However, teaching does not always encourage pupils to develop confidence in their ability to edit and check their work before it is marked.
- Effective teamwork by teachers and highly skilled teaching assistants ensures a high level of support for all groups of pupils.

### **The achievement of pupils is good**

- Pupils make good progress during their time at Northbrook and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check was lower than the national average. Some pupils did not attend a nursery prior to starting school and, typically, communication and language skills have been weak when children start school. The nurture group effectively helps pupils to reduce any barriers to learning. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in the teaching of phonics. The pupils who struggle to read are given effective support and this leads to improvements.
- Standards are rising across the school as a direct result of improvements to the quality of teaching. Published data can be deceiving because of the high proportion of pupils in each year group who have joined the school during Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. These pupils have not all had the benefit of the good start that the Reception class in this school provides.
- In 2014, the proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching the expected level in mathematics was similar to the national average and demonstrated outstanding progress, given their starting points. The proportions reaching the expected levels in reading and writing were lower than the national average but nevertheless indicated good progress in Key Stage 1.
- In 2014, almost all pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, a higher proportion than the national average, reached the expected level in mathematics. However, some pupils across year groups lack fluency in using mental mathematics and this slows the pace and accuracy with which they can solve number problems. In 2014, the proportion reaching the expected level in writing was the same as the national average but achievement in reading was slightly lower. More than three quarters of this year group joined the school during Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and usually at a lower level than their classmates. Most pupils made at least good progress during their time in Key Stage 2.
- Test results in 2014 in spelling, punctuation and grammar were disappointing. Improving this area has been a whole-school focus, as demonstrated by the increased opportunities for this aspect of writing now included in the Key Stage 2 timetable. Compared to last year, there are significantly more Year 6 pupils working at the expected level and higher.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because their additional needs are identified early and are fully met through one-to-one and small-group sessions, delivered by highly skilled teaching assistants. Exceptionally strong links with a raft of external agencies also support both academic and personal needs of individual pupils. The school goes to great lengths to support the wider family and circumstances beyond school.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively and is directed towards supporting the disadvantaged pupils. This ensures that these pupils make progress which is as good as, and sometimes better than, their classmates. In 2014, disadvantaged Year 6 pupils were two terms ahead of others in school in mathematics and one term behind all pupils nationally. In reading, disadvantaged pupils were one term behind their peers in school and two terms behind all pupils nationally. For writing, disadvantaged pupils were one term behind their classmates and almost a year behind all pupils nationally. The tracking of current pupils and the quality of their work in books demonstrate that, as they move through the school, most disadvantaged pupils make better progress than other pupils.
- In the 2014 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5

in reading and in mathematics was well below national figures and it was below in writing. Currently, the most-able pupils in school are making good progress. Teachers consistently provide challenging activities for the most-able during lessons.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children settle extremely well in the early years because of excellent links between school, home and nurseries. All families receive a home visit and this helps to build a picture of children's likes and dislikes before they visit the school.
- Communication with parents is very important to staff. Parents are able to speak with staff at the start and end of each day so that everyone can share any relevant information. Staff provide advice to parents on how to continue to teach their children at home in order to support learning.
- Children learn to adopt very good manners towards each other and the adults around them. They take turns to play with different equipment and spontaneously say 'please' and 'thank you' when sharing. They enjoy choosing activities for themselves although, occasionally, these activities do not offer enough challenge to build on previous learning. Children behave very well when they are working in lessons and during breaks.
- The provision is well led and managed. Children's well-being and safety are given high priority; they are cared for very well. This was seen as the older pupils, supervised by adults, led play groups at lunchtime. Excellent behaviour is encouraged at all times.
- Learning journeys give a detailed account of children's good progress. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey and so be fully involved in their learning.
- Children achieve well in the early years because of the good quality teaching from the dedicated staff team. Children are inquisitive about their surroundings and engage wholeheartedly in their learning because of the encouragement and nurture they receive. Children who were reading a book demonstrated how well they can use their understanding of letters and the sounds they make to work out unfamiliar words. Questioning by the teacher encouraged them to think about the feelings of different characters in their story. This encouraged them to use their imaginations and consider the impact of actions on the feelings of others.
- Whatever their starting points, children achieve well. By the end of the Reception Year in 2014, the proportion reaching a good level of development was lower than the national average. However, given their circumstances and starting points the majority made good progress. In the current year group, the majority of children are reaching a good level of development and are well prepared for the work that they will meet in Year 1.

## 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>	131674
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	461923

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	143
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mick Titherington
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 421599
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<b>Email address</b>	head@northbrook-pri.lancs.sch.uk

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