

North Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114709
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338431
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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	331
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Blackwell
Headteacher	Mr Alan Garnett
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and individual parents. They observed the school's work, including a sample of pupils' books, teachers' planning documents, tracking and assessment data and analysed questionnaires from 100 parents, 100 pupils and 18 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly systems for assessing and tracking children's progress, and children's typical attainment on entry
- outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the opportunities for pupils to understand what life is like in different communities around the country and the world.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school serving the local town centre community. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school is higher than average. The great majority of pupils are White British with small numbers coming from several minority ethnic groups. There is an average but increasing proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are below average although the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above that usually found. The school has been awarded a National Healthy Schools Advanced Award and Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

North Primary and Nursery School is a satisfactory school with some good features. The satisfactory leadership and teamwork between the headteacher and senior staff have ensured that improvements have been made to teaching and learning since the last inspection. As a result, the quality of provision for the youngest pupils has improved significantly. However, the quality of teaching and learning in the rest of the school, although improved, continues to vary and remains satisfactory overall. Parents are extremely supportive of the school. They like the positive family atmosphere and one parent commented, 'The school gives a well-rounded education, concentrating on more than just academic achievement; the children learn empathy for others and tolerance for different races, religions and abilities'. Staff clearly want the best for each child and strive hard to achieve this goal through working closely with families and external agencies.

Throughout the school, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress. Children get off to a very good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. Standards in national tests have improved in recent years although results in 2009 were well below national averages at Year 2. This was due largely to the high levels of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the very high inward mobility into the year group. Standards in Year 6 were broadly in line with the national average in English and mathematics but well below average in science.

Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep safe and of the need for healthy lifestyles. Parents say their children enjoy coming to school and pupils agree enthusiastically. A strong moral code is implicit within the school's ethos and this is reflected in pupils' good behaviour and their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This in turn has a positive effect on the progress pupils make in most lessons. In most instances, they work hard and conscientiously, both independently and co-operatively, without the need for constant adult intervention. The curriculum ensures that pupils receive a good variety of exciting activities and experiences, through visits, residential stays and visitors to school. A satisfactory and well-attended range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum. Although provision for science is a relative weakness, provision for music is a real strength of the school. Care, guidance and support of pupils are effective. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Although pupils' progress is now tracked regularly, staff with responsibility for the analysis of data and/or with responsibilities for individual subjects are not analysing data sufficiently well in order to identify weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum and to ensure any pupil

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falling behind is identified quickly and support promptly provided. The school has good links with local organisations but realises it could do more to develop and strengthen ties with community groups in the country and overseas. The school has a satisfactory understanding of how well it is doing and what needs to be done next and has a satisfactory capacity to maintain and sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and improve the quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good by:
 - strengthening the rigour of systems for monitoring and supporting teaching so that any weaknesses are highlighted quickly and swift, effective action is taken to resolve them
 - reviewing and improving the curriculum for science
 - empowering subject and curriculum leaders to carry out their monitoring and evaluation roles effectively.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage, their knowledge and skills are below those typically found, particularly in communication skills. Children make good and, in some cases, very good progress as they move through the Nursery and Reception classes and overall standards when current pupils entered Year 1 were broadly average. This is an improvement on previous years and is due to the much improved provision. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6. Observations by inspectors during lessons and around the school confirm that pupils' behaviour is good and a credit to the school and reflects pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show considerable respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. In most cases, they have good attitudes to learning and develop considerate relationships with their peers and with adults. They feel safe and understand the need for healthy lifestyles and the need for exercise. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to contribute to school and local communities through the work of the school council and regular collections for a number of charities. They value their school community and participate constructively in school life. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school but, although the school has good systems to monitor and improve attendance, this has not yet resulted in improving levels of attendance beyond the national average. Pupils' satisfactory skills in literacy and numeracy and their good behaviour and good social skills prepare them soundly for the future world of work.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching varies significantly across the school. In the great majority of lessons, teaching is satisfactory or better. In one outstanding lesson in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the teacher created a real buzz of excitement as Reception children engaged in a 'Write/Dance' multi-sensory activity using music and other stimuli which culminated in children enthusiastically making marks with a pen on paper. Most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They ensure classroom routines are made clear and regularly reinforced so that learning takes place in a well-structured environment and all pupils can contribute to lessons. Learning intentions are made clear at the beginning of each lesson and, as a result, pupils know precisely what it is that they are expected to do. Most teachers monitor pupils' work well during lessons, pick up any general misconceptions and adjust their plans accordingly. However, in a small minority of lessons learning and progress are held back because teachers do not always plan work adequately for the range of abilities in the class, build sufficiently on pupils' prior knowledge or move the lesson along at an appropriate pace. Teachers are well supported by effective and skilled teaching assistants who are fully involved in lessons and ensure that pupils receive extra help when they need it. Marking in most instances is up to date and encouraging but does not consistently point out what steps pupils should take to improve their work. The curriculum provides an adequate range of experiences through visits, residential stays and visitors to school. Pupils attend the

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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satisfactory range of after-school clubs, including sports clubs, enthusiastically. Provision for music is a real strength of the curriculum and all pupils have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. The school has well-organised arrangements for the care of all pupils which contributes to their well-being and supports their learning effectively. When needed, a wide range of specialists and support agencies is called upon to support those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Clearly targeted support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities results in these pupils making progress similar to their peers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Satisfactory leadership has established a clear sense of direction and this has seen the school's outcomes begin to improve. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved significantly and steps to improve standards in English and mathematics have begun to show some success. However, science has not had the same high profile or injection of energy seen in the other two subjects and standards in science remain well below average. Much has been done to improve the quality of teaching within the school although there still remains some weaker teaching. This is because senior leaders and subject co-ordinators are not monitoring and supporting teaching regularly or rigorously enough to raise the overall standard in all classes to good. The school now has secure systems for tracking and assessing pupils' progress, although subject leaders are not yet making full use of analysis of the data to improve provision in their subjects across the school. Governors fulfil their statutory duties, are supportive and challenge the school to do well. The school has very positive relationships with most groups of parents and carers. It promotes equal opportunity satisfactorily in all its work. It has good links with a wide range of outside agencies and partners which help to extend the opportunities for pupils, both academically and in their personal development. Systems to ensure that pupils and staff are safe and discharge their duties effectively are secure. The school adopts recommended good practice for safeguarding pupils across all areas of its work and quality assurance and risk assessment systems take due account of pupils' and parents' views. The school identifies dangers, fosters a realistic understanding of risk and helps pupils to keep themselves safe. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Although it has good links with its local community, it is aware that it needs to develop national and global links.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the Nursery, they lack the social and communication skills that are usually expected of children of their age. Due to significant improvements in provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are now making good progress and standards are in line with those typically found when they enter Year 1. This is a significant improvement on previous years when children's skills on entry to Year 1 were well below average. Adults have a good knowledge of the learning and development of young children and of the welfare requirements and guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Marking, and the assessment of children's learning, are very good, and their progress is tracked very well. This results in a detailed picture of each child by the end of their time in Reception, and eases the move into Year 1. Happy and caring relationships are established and as a result children behave well and are enthusiastic in all that they do. They clearly enjoy school, and Nursery children, after being there for only a few weeks, have settled into the routines well and play happily together and individually. They delight in learning and seeing new things. Adults provide a wide range of interesting learning activities, both inside and outside the classrooms. These activities are carefully organised, allowing children to work on things that they choose themselves as well as taking part in more formal group-work activities with adults. There is a very good focus on helping children with their speaking skills and ensuring that they develop an ability to work with others in a friendly and purposeful way. Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are good and help the children to be safe, well cared for and aware of how to be healthy. There are good relationships with parents and carers through daily

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contact at the start and end of each day. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly, are well-supported and are integrated well into all activities.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good

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 great majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire are very satisfied with the school. Almost all parents felt that their child enjoys school, that the school keeps the children safe, that teaching is good and that the school is led and managed effectively. In most other areas, 90% or more of parents were positive. However, a small minority felt that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and a few felt that the school does not take sufficient account of their concerns. The inspection team investigated these issues and does not feel these views are justified.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North Primary and Nursery 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 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 331 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	59	38	38	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	63	63	34	34	3	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	47	44	44	7	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	42	49	50	4	4	4	4
The teaching is good at this school	41	41	55	56	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	42	49	49	8	8	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	39	58	59	2	2	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)	37	39	54	57	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	40	50	51	7	7	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	31	45	48	16	17	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	33	49	51	10	10	5	5
The school is led and managed effectively	36	38	53	55	3	3	4	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	58	33	33	7	7	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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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:	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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 pupil's 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.



1 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Primary and Nursery School, Colchester CO1 1RP

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleagues and I very much enjoyed our visit. We enjoyed watching lessons and talking to some of you. You attend a satisfactory school and are making satisfactory progress. Your headteacher and staff care for you well and give you good support to enable you to learn and enjoy your lessons. They make sure that you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe. You told us that you really like your school and there are lots of things to do and enjoy. We agree with you. Your behaviour is good. You work hard and try to succeed in all that you do but we think that some of you could help the school to improve by attending more regularly.

We have asked your school to do three things we think will help you make better progress and make it a better school:

- provide your teachers, where needed, with support and training so they make all your lessons as exciting and interesting as they can in order that you make good progress in every lesson
- improve the science curriculum and planning for lessons so that you all do much better in science
- make sure teachers in charge of subjects observe lessons so that they have a better view of how well teachers teach and how well you do in each subject.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis

Lead Inspector

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