

# Northfield Primary School: With Communication Resource

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 130859         |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Wakefield      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 341044         |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 26–27 May 2010 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Joan McKenna   |

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

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| <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> | 241  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                       |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Dr Chris Oates   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Mrs Liz Bradley  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 2 October 2006   |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Northfield Lane<br>South Kirkby<br>Pontefract<br>WF9 3LY |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01977 723820   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01977 723821   |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | headteacher@northfield.wakefield.sch.uk                  |

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|--------------------------|----------------|
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by nine teachers, shorter parts of lessons in most classrooms and sessions where individuals or groups of pupils were receiving support. Pupils' work was looked at. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including data about pupils' progress, records of monitoring, policies, action plans, the 78 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those completed by staff and pupils.

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

- the achievement of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- whether the school is catering equally well for all groups of pupils, including those in the communication resource
- whether any aspects of provision are outstanding, as demonstrated by their impact on pupils' outcomes
- whether leaders at all levels are playing a full part in improving the school.

## Information about the school

The school is an average-sized primary school and almost all of its pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is considerably higher than typical. This is because the school houses a communication resource for pupils on the autistic spectrum and with speech and language difficulties. The resource draws pupils from beyond the school's immediate area, and currently has seven pupils on roll. The school has gained the following awards: Investors in Pupils, Healthy Schools, Activemark, Artsmark, Eco-Schools Bronze, Cleaner Greener Schools Gold, Basic Skills and one relating to financial management. Following a period of unstable staffing at the school, there has been a mainly permanent complement of staff in place since September 2009.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. It has particular strengths in pastoral areas. The care and support provided for pupils, including those who have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities, is outstanding and results in their personal needs being exceptionally well catered for. As a result, pupils, including those in the communication resource, feel safe and special in the very inclusive and harmonious atmosphere created for them. A varied and vibrant range of experiences provided for pupils contributes to their strong personal development and enjoyment of school. Pupils develop into confident, mature, caring young people. The contribution they make to the school, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of how to keep healthy are outstanding. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and what it provides for their children.

Standards vary across the school, in part because of the different starting points of pupils across year groups and the impact of previous staffing difficulties. Nevertheless, from starting points which for many are below average, attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen to be broadly in line with the national figures for the past two years, albeit lower in writing than in other areas. Current standards are also broadly average. Overall, most pupils achieve well. Where progress was previously slower, it is accelerating and is now good in the main, though still variable. The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their personal development and, for most, in their academic learning. Pupils' attainment is checked regularly, along with whether they are on course to meet their targets. The information is used in a variety of ways to help individuals keep up. They are given some helpful guidance on how to reach the next steps in their learning, but this is inconsistent. The procedures in place for tracking pupils' progress, however, do not provide a clear and easily accessible analysis and overview of how pupils as a whole, as well as different groups, are progressing across the school and this limits their usefulness as a strategic tool.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide firm leadership and a strong commitment to pupils pervades the school. A wide range of monitoring activities takes place, with more involvement of other leaders than previously. Some of the information gathered is evaluated rigorously and acted upon to positive effect, but not all of the practice is of this quality. Nevertheless, the school has built on its pastoral strengths well since the previous inspection and has taken concerted action to improve academic areas. The positive impact evident demonstrates good capacity to improve further.

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

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- Raise standards further, especially in writing, and ensure consistently good progress by:
- – providing more opportunities for pupils to widen their vocabulary through spoken language and for them to use and apply this in their writing in all subjects
- – improve procedures for analysing pupils' progress so that they provide clear and easily accessible information about how pupils as a whole, as well as different groups, are progressing across the school
- – ensure that pupils are given consistently clear information and guidance on what they need to do to reach the next steps in their learning.
- Ensure that all information about the school's effectiveness is evaluated rigorously so that everyone involved fully understands how the school is doing and how it can be improved.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils are keen, willing learners. They try hard to please teachers and do as they are asked. They invariably work hard and concentrate well in lessons. The large majority behave well, so time for learning is maximised. The small numbers who have difficulty confirming to the school's expectations of conduct are successfully helped to manage their behaviour. Pupils' enthusiasm, especially when they are actively involved in practical tasks, is palpable and the fact that they are given lots of opportunities for this, including, for example, through art and music, greatly enhances their enjoyment of school. Pupils' good learning means that they are currently progressing well overall. Where previous learning has slowed because of earlier staffing difficulties this is beginning to be compensated for. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average and lower this year than last year, despite the faster progress made during Key Stage 1 this year, but they are broadly average for those pupils just about to leave the school.

Pupils are proud of their school and make an excellent contribution to it. The very proactive school council has an impact within and beyond the school, leading fundraising and other activities. The contributions of play leaders and buddies are valued by others. Pupils respond with huge enthusiasm to the opportunities for cultural development and with maturity to those to promote spiritual development, such as 'Thinking Thursday'. They adopt healthy lifestyles with relish, enjoying sport not only in school but also in their leisure time, and are strong advocates for healthy eating and drinking, as seen when pupils made sure that water was available for the Year 1 party. Pupils have very good social skills and get on well with each other, including with pupils from the communication resource at times they are together. The positive range of skills that pupils acquire stands them in good stead for the next stage of their education. Attendance is broadly average, with factors beyond the school's control such as absence due to extreme weather conditions having adversely affected it over the past year.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress  | 2        |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress                      | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>1</b> |

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good relationships with pupils and create supportive and encouraging climates for learning in classrooms. They are clear about what they intend that pupils should learn in lessons and explain this clearly to them. They use a good range of strategies and resources to engage and interest pupils, to make learning fun and lessons well paced. Through tasks that are well matched to groups of different abilities, marking and use of targets, pupils are sometimes given helpful information about how to improve their work, but these features are not of a consistent quality. Assessment information about pupils' attainment and progress is collected and used by teachers in a range of ways to promote both further, such as deploying teaching assistants to work with specific pupils.

A strength of the curriculum is the attention paid to promoting creativity. A wide range of exciting experiences and activities engage pupils in their learning. A rich display of resources, artefacts, art work and many other elements create an attractive and stimulating environment. Enrichment activities and a broad extra-curricular programme, including sport, music and drama, engage pupils further and provide added enjoyment. The school is working towards attaining the Sing Up Gold Award and pupils have excellent attitudes towards singing. Pupils' personal development is promoted well through the curriculum, as seen in the 'Let's get cooking' and 'Grow it, cook it and eat it' initiatives. Good attention is paid to developing pupils' basic skills, although this has not

<sup>1</sup> 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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yet had enough impact on ensuring that pupils' writing is well enough developed. A range of additional programmes are used to supplement the basic curriculum to help escalate some pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy.

The view that all pupils are special lies at the heart of the school's pastoral ethos and there is a constant emphasis on the worth of all, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable in any way and those who have additional needs. The wide range of personalised strategies and approaches, extensive links with external agencies and the positive work of the communication resource all contribute to the outstanding care, guidance and support provided. Arrangements to promote attendance are well established and include strategies such as early morning calls home when pupils are absent and the celebration of good attendance through high-profile notices. Procedures for helping pupils to settle into school and to inform them about future options are also very thorough. The very popular and well organised breakfast club extends the care provided beyond the school day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>1</b> |

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Strong direction by senior leaders has helped steer the school through its period of staffing instability and has kept it very centred throughout on improving what is offered to pupils. Monitoring activities result in what the school does well being recognised and celebrated. There is generally an appreciation of what could be improved. However, although leaders at all levels are more involved in monitoring than previously, some lack of rigour in evaluation results in an imprecise understanding of effectiveness in some areas. The strategic analysis of information about how pupils are progressing is not rigorous enough. Nevertheless, actions taken are improving the provision the school is making for pupils and the impact it is having on them. Governors are committed to the school and are very supportive of it. They ask questions of it to hold it to account, but do not use all of the information available to check its effectiveness fully. There is a deficit budget, although there are plans for eliminating this. A lot of effort is put into engaging with parents and carers who appreciate the efforts made. They make a positive contribution to the school, such as by running a 'mother and toddler' group on site one morning each week and by acting as volunteers to hear pupils read. The school also works closely with a range of external partners to help meet pupils' needs and broaden their experiences well. The good promotion of equal opportunities is seen in the

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very inclusive climate and the way barriers to pupils' learning are actively tackled, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Some analysis of how well different groups are performing takes place, but this is not yet comprehensive. Positive steps to promote community cohesion are taken, with a particularly strong impact in the school's immediate locality, but action is also being taken to develop understanding and involvement on a wider scale. Arrangements to keep pupils safe are in line with recommended good practice and ensure that pupils feel secure.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 2        |
| <b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>  | <b>2</b> |

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Well established links with parents and carers, including those developed through the mother and toddler group, help children to settle into the Early Years Foundation Stage very quickly and happily. Children's welfare is accorded high priority and they receive excellent care and support. A wide range of exciting tasks that cover all areas of learning are provided and these engage children's interest and stimulate their curiosity. At its best, teaching identifies where children are in their learning and builds on their knowledge to extend it further through individualised input and guidance. Children's interests are often used as starting points, with adults then intervening to expand their horizons. Effective questioning helps to develop children's thinking, language and other skills. Not all practice is of this quality, however, and some opportunities to check what children understand and to promote and extend their learning are missed. Nevertheless, children enjoy their time in school very much and generally participate in activities with great enthusiasm. Attainment on entry varies, but many join with language and personal



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skills that are below expectations, and sometimes well below. They make good progress overall. Some reach the goals expected for children of their age by the time they enter Year 1, although the proportion that does so varies from year to year due to the different nature of the groups concerned. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well organised, with a supportive climate among the team of adults. There is a recognition of the fact that some aspects of practice vary in effectiveness and actions are being taken to strengthen provision further.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>2</b> |
| 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**

Almost one third of parents and carers returned questionnaires outlining their views of the school. The vast majority were positive about all aspects of the school and there were some very supportive accompanying comments, such as, 'This is a lovely, happy school,' and, 'Both my children love this school.' Inspectors agree that this is a good school. A very small number of parents and carers raised some concerns about behaviour and bullying. Inspectors found that while a small number of pupils have difficulty meeting the school's expectations with regards to behaviour, often associated with their special educational needs and/or disabilities, the large majority behave well in lessons and around the school. On the infrequent occasions where bullying is reported, the school takes the matter seriously and works hard to resolve the issues.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Northfield Primary School: With Communication Resource 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 241 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly Agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |   | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | % | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 45             | 58 | 31    | 40 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 53             | 68 | 24    | 31 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress   | 48             | 62 | 29    | 37 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 41             | 53 | 34    | 44 | 2        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 54             | 69 | 23    | 29 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 47             | 60 | 29    | 37 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 50             | 64 | 26    | 33 | 0        | 0 | 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) | 42             | 54 | 31    | 40 | 2        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 44             | 56 | 31    | 40 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 41             | 53 | 28    | 36 | 3        | 4 | 3                 | 4 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 39             | 50 | 33    | 42 | 4        | 5 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 54             | 69 | 19    | 24 | 3        | 4 | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 54             | 69 | 22    | 28 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |

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

| Type of school       | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) |      |              |            |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
|                      | Outstanding   | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools      | 51  | 45   | 0            | 4          |
| Primary schools      | 6   | 41   | 42           | 10         |
| Secondary schools    | 8   | 34   | 44           | 14         |
| Sixth forms          | 10  | 37   | 50           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 32  | 38   | 25           | 5          |
| Pupil referral units | 12  | 43   | 31           | 14         |
| All schools          | 9   | 40   | 40           | 10         |

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul> |
| 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.**



28 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northfield Primary School: With Communication Resource, Pontefract, WF9 3LY

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when my colleagues and I inspected your school and for talking with us and showing us your work.

I am delighted to be able to tell you that Northfield is a good school. Some aspects are outstanding. There are extremely effective arrangements in place for caring and supporting all of you. As a result, you feel safe and happy. The contribution you make to your school and local community, your understanding of how to keep healthy and some other aspects of your personal development are excellent. You get on well together and are kind to each other. Your behaviour is good. You work hard and enjoy your learning and appreciate the wide range of exciting activities provided for you. You told us that you like your school very much and we can see why you do.

The curriculum and teaching are good and you achieve well. You reach the standards that most children do across the country. We have asked the school to take action to help you reach even higher standards, especially in writing. Most lessons enable you to learn well because you get good explanations from your teachers and they give you interesting tasks that you can get actively involved in and which you find fun.

Sometimes you are given clear information about what you have to do to reach the next steps in your learning, for example when your work is marked and by referring to your targets. We have asked the school to give you more information to help you improve your work. Your leaders are working hard and successfully to improve the school for you. To help with this work we have asked them to check even more fully the progress you are making and how effective the school is being. This is to make sure they know the very best steps to take to improve the school further and make sure you are all achieving absolutely all that you can.

You can help by continuing to work hard and being so positive and by attending regularly. I send you and your teachers very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ms Joan McKenna

Lead inspector

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