

Norton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115642
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	379111
Inspection dates	7–8 March 2012
Lead inspector	Jill Bavin

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Crawshaw
Headteacher	Jane Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2006
School address	Norton Gloucester GL2 9LJ
Telephone number	01452 730531
Fax number	01452 739080
Email address	admin@norton.gloucs.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision	Norton Little Learners
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	24
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	23 May 2008

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	7–8 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jill Bavin

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed nine lessons, taught by four teachers and three childcare sessions, led by two play leaders. Additionally, the inspector met with pupils, members of staff, and the Chair of the Governing Body, listened to pupils read and examined work in pupils' books. A variety of documentation related to safeguarding, data about pupils' progress, monitoring and evaluation records, and school development plans was scrutinised. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Questionnaire responses from pupils, staff, and 59 parents and carers were analysed during the inspection.

Information about the school

This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. All pupils, including children in the Reception Year, are taught in mixed-age classes. Although most pupils are from White British backgrounds, about a fifth of pupils are from Gypsy/Roma travelling communities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average. A higher proportion of pupils join the school after the Reception Year than is typical nationally. The governing body offers sessional childcare for children between the ages of two years and nine months and four years through the Norton Little Learners provision. Most children attend for two or three sessions per week. This provision uses a classroom in the school and formed part of this inspection.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2010, having previously been the assistant headteacher and then acting headteacher. An assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2011. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is led and managed well and much appreciated by parents and carers. The school’s mission to ‘Strive Think Act Respect and Shine’ is reflected in highly positive attitudes to learning from pupils and the high expectations staff at all levels have of themselves and their pupils. The headteacher is supported ably by the governing body and staff in actively aiming to secure further improvement. This is not an outstanding school, because teaching and achievement are good, rather than outstanding.
- All groups of pupils achieve well in English and mathematics from their varied starting points. They make good use of their literacy, mathematical, and technology skills across the curriculum, though opportunities are missed for pupils to create extended pieces of writing in a variety of subjects.
- Teachers plan well to ensure lessons meet the varying needs of pupils, including for children in the Reception Year. Teaching is good in Norton Little Learners because staff have a good understanding of the needs of young children. Nevertheless, in both the Reception Year and the childcare provision, opportunities to promote children’s next steps in learning are sometimes missed when they are working at activities of their choice. Some teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is outstanding.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well. They demonstrate considerable maturity in their relationships with each other. They are acutely aware of issues related to different forms of bullying. They are mutually supportive and extremely respectful of the cultural diversity within school. Their enthusiasm for learning is a good reflection on how safe they feel in school and contributes to their good level of achievement. Attendance is above average.
- Leaders at different levels understand the school’s effectiveness well and share the headteacher’s ambition to drive improvement further. Effective leadership of teaching and management of performance have improved the consistency of good teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school so that much is

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outstanding by:

- giving pupils more regular opportunities to develop their ideas in writing over extended periods of time and across the curriculum
 - making more consistent use of pupils' reading targets on a weekly basis
 - giving pupils more opportunities to resolve mathematical problems through small group discussion.
- Enhance children's learning in Norton Little Learners and in the Reception Year by identifying and using children's individual next steps more routinely when children are working at activities of their own choice.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Lesson observations during the inspection confirmed parents' and carers' positive views regarding their children's achievements. Boys and girls, including those who join the school after the Reception Year, engage well and make good progress in their learning in lessons and over time. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those from minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress. Assessment information and specialised resources are used well to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, these pupils also make good progress.

Typically, children enter the Reception Year with skills levels and abilities that are a little below those expected for their age. They make good progress because of a good focus on developing their key literacy and numeracy skills. This was exemplified during the inspection, when they made good progress in blending sounds and letters because the work was matched to their abilities well. Pupils continue to make good progress in English and mathematics throughout the school. Although there is some variation between different cohorts, typically, most pupils leave Year 2 with above average and Year 6 with well-above average attainment in reading, writing, and mathematics. Across the school, increasing numbers of more-able pupils are on track to attain the higher levels at the end of each key stage. Pupils from Gypsy/Roma travelling families make good progress and attain higher levels than Gypsy/Roma pupils nationally, reducing the gap compared with all pupils.

Pupils remain remarkably purposeful and enthusiastic when working independently of an adult, as do children in Reception Year. The school promotes successfully an interest and enjoyment in reading and books. Those pupils who struggle to decode words understand the basic principles of linking letters and sounds. Rates of progress are similar in English and mathematics, although learning is exceptional more frequently in mathematics than in literacy. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 made exceptional progress over a thirty minute period because expectations of them were pitched extremely well while they used scientific knowledge to interpret simple grid references. Learning was enriched because they had the opportunity additionally to apply mathematical and geographical skills simultaneously. Older pupils made rapid progress in a short space of time while using computer technology to explore various

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methods for calculating the volume of cuboids and while sharing problem-solving strategies together.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is typically good throughout the school. This confirms the positive views of teaching in the school held by most parents and carers. Teachers and teaching assistants are consistently successful in motivating pupils. The teaching of reading is good because it is structured and systematic. Pupils are grouped according to their abilities so sessions are focused specifically on their needs. Sessions focusing on key reading skills continue for pupils as long as necessary, into Years 5 and 6 if this is required. Nevertheless, reading records that are kept on a weekly basis and shared with pupils' families are not as useful as they could be because they do not always include pupils' individual reading targets. As a result, opportunities for pupils and adults to focus on the most important next steps are not used as regularly as possible. Sometimes, teaching of reading is outstanding, as was seen when a wide variety of teaching strategies helped higher-attaining pupils to gain confidence and accuracy in reading, spelling and using adverbs very rapidly.

Under the headteacher's leadership, satisfactory teaching has become rare. A key contributory factor to this is the school's successful focus on ensuring that pupils seldom work together as a whole class. Lessons are planned for higher-attaining pupils to address challenging work independently, while other pupils receive the introductions to new ideas and explanations that they need. Pupils report that this works well. Higher-attaining pupils value the level of challenge they experience and other pupils appreciate that teachers 'explain very well' so they are seldom, if ever, confused. While good overall, there are examples of outstanding teaching in mathematics, when pupils benefit from planned opportunities to deepen their mathematical understanding through independent discussions with peers. On occasion, opportunities to use this strategy are missed.

The curriculum supports pupils' varying needs effectively. Since the previous inspection, there has been good improvement in the planned use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed using computer software to work at mathematics National Curriculum Level 6. Teaching and curriculum topics, such as Gypsy/Roma history month, support pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development extremely well. Children in the Reception Year extend skills, knowledge and understanding well through using their imagination and curiosity, for example, expressing wonder at finding 'new' colours after enthusiastic experimentation with mixing paints.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. A higher than usual percentage of parents and carers returned inspection questionnaires and there was unanimous agreement that behaviour is good in school over time and that their children are kept safe. Staff have extremely high expectations of pupils' social skills and behaviour. The school's

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'zero tolerance' approach to any form of bullying is highly successful. As a result, during the inspection pupils from all groups represented in the school spoke with justifiable pride of the absence of any bullying of any sort in their school. This included racism and other verbal bullying related to appearance. Teachers are highly successful in giving pupils an exceptional respect for cultures that differ from their own. As a result, pupils from different cultural backgrounds share friendships based on a mature understanding of both differences and similarities in their experience.

Pupils themselves make every effort to ensure that their school's very strong track record of an absence of any form of discriminatory behaviour is maintained. The school holds records of very rare incidents of bullying, which have been reported to them, but which did not take place in school. Pupils identify that the worst behaviour they could experience in a lesson is 'fiddling on the carpet'. Those who receive extra help report that this never promotes teasing and pupils speak of their differences with considerable understanding and respect. Pupils have a good understanding of day-to-day safety issues and an exceptional understanding of keeping each other emotionally secure. Pupils from all groups represented in the school reported that they feel entirely safe at all times.

Children in the Reception Year share positive attitudes to learning with their older schoolmates. One typical example was a boy, spontaneously, volunteering the comment, 'I like writing', very enthusiastically, during a letter and sounds session. They share their ideas with adults willingly, explaining, for example, that they are being 'superman in a spaceship', because they know their ideas will be valued. They demonstrate considerable confidence and trust in the adults around them.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, governing body and staff share high ambitions for the school. They have a realistic and accurate understanding of its strengths and priorities for further development. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher, ably supported by the governing body, has successfully driven improvements. Most significantly, the school has successfully promoted equality of opportunity with improved attendance rates. This has contributed to eliminating previous gaps in achievement for different groups of pupils. The curriculum has retained previous strengths and improved to give all pupils more opportunities to use technology in different subjects throughout the day. Its contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is a strength of the school. The curriculum for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has become focused more precisely on their needs and its impact is monitored more closely. The analysis of information about each pupil's progress is more rigorous and frequent. As a result, it is used more promptly and effectively to address pupils' individual learning needs and teachers are held more closely to account. This good track record of improvement indicates that the school has a good capacity for improvement.

A considered and strategic approach to professional development has improved the consistency of good teaching across the school. The current focus to develop subject

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leaders’ roles and responsibilities has begun well. The governing body contributes effectively to safeguarding procedures, which meet all requirements. The school is highly successful in preventing any form of discrimination within the school community.

The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

Norton Little Learners provides morning and afternoon play sessions. Children join the provision at different ages and stages of development with a wide range of abilities. However, most typically, they join with fewer key skills than expected for their ages.

Children are kept safe, cared for well and make good progress in their learning. Staff set a good example to children of how to behave and speak. This is particularly important as several children arrive with limited social and communication skills. Staff provide a good variety of stimulating activities and promote children’s independence effectively through daily routines. For example, children scrutinise a folder of photographs of available activities in order to choose what they want to do.

Good leadership and management have successfully sustained previous strengths in supporting good progress and a high level of enjoyment for children. Since the previous inspection, links with parents and carers have been extended, with a wider range of communication routes. Planning and assessment systems are good. Staff make detailed observations to record children’s developments and use these to promote children’s achievements. However, the next steps in children’s learning are not always recorded clearly and, on occasion, opportunities to promote children’s individual needs are missed when staff are circulating and supporting children at independent activities. Activities and topics take good account of children’s interests and backgrounds, including resources to reflect Gypsy/Roma culture. These developments help all children to feel secure and ready to learn. Adults support children effectively because they know them well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage of the registered childcare provision, inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006

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 for the registered provision	2

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



9 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Norton Church of England Primary School, Gloucester GL2 9LJ

Thank you very much for being so welcoming when I visited your school recently. I should like to say a special thank you to those pupils who read to me, talked with me and showed me their work, and to everyone who completed a questionnaire.

I understand why you and your parents and carers value the school so highly. You attend a good school, where you make good progress in English and mathematics. Teachers plan well to meet everybody's needs and teaching is good. You help by attending more regularly than most pupils of your age and by behaving extremely well. It was great to see how well everyone in your school gets on together. I was delighted to hear about the complete absence of any form of bullying and of the responsibility you take as pupils to keep the school this way.

The governing body, the headteacher and members of staff work well together and want to keep making the school even better. I have asked them to prioritise:

- increasing the amount of outstanding learning in literacy by giving you more opportunities to write at length in different subjects – you can help with this by developing your ideas as fully as possible when you have the opportunity
- making use of your reading targets in the reading logs that you take home during the week – you can help with this by remembering your reading target
- giving you more frequent opportunities to discuss how to solve mathematical problems together during lessons – you can help by challenging each other to identify different and more complicated approaches to mathematical problems
- making even better use of their understanding of what children in Reception and Norton Little Learners need to do next when they are supporting them at activities they have chosen.

I hope you always enjoy learning so much and wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin
Lead inspector

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