

# Northumberland Heath Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101447
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	354998
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kath Beck

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>	473
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Mashader
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Barry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	Wheelock Close Erith, Kent Erith DA8 1JE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors who observed 20 lessons taught by 15 teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, staff, representatives of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation that included information about pupils' progress, examples of pupils' work, and the procedures for safeguarding. The inspection team also looked at records linked to the monitoring of the quality of teaching, the school development plan, reports from the School Improvement Partner, school improvement plan and the school's self-evaluation form. In addition to the responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils and 90 parents and carers were considered.

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

- Is the school successful in raising standards, especially in writing?
- How are leaders, managers and the governing body responding to the structural changes to the school?
- Is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage giving children a good start to their education? Is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage giving children a good start to their education?

## Information about the school

This is a much larger than average school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, while others come from a range of minority ethnic groups, especially Black African and other White backgrounds. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is below average. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals or identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than that found in schools nationally. Pupils' special educational needs relate mostly to speech, language and communication, as well as moderate learning difficulties.

The school was federated in January 2010 with Peareswood Primary School under The Woodland Federation. The two schools have the same governing body. The headteacher of Northumberland Heath is the executive headteacher of both schools. Each school has a head of school who is responsible for day-to-day operations. Senior staff have leadership and management responsibilities across the federation.

A children's centre under the management of the governing body and executive headteacher opened in 2008, but moved to purpose-built accommodation on the site in 2010. Day care provision for young children aged from three months to five years run by a private provider operates from the children's centre. These provisions were not due to be inspected at the same time as the school.

**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**

**1**

## Main findings

Northumberland Heath Primary is a good school that is strengthening its role significantly within the local and wider community. An experienced and highly capable governing body, together with the executive headteacher working in close partnership with the head of school, has been instrumental in devising an exceptional long-term plan. The determination to make a real difference to the lives of pupils and their families underpins the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of its work. Changes to the ways in which skilled leaders and managers are organised together with sophisticated self-evaluation procedures are having a significant impact on outcomes for pupils. Central to the school's drive and ambition is the rigorous promotion of equal opportunities. The school's aim for every child to fulfil or exceed their potential by the time they leave the school is frequently met. Since the last inspection the school has undergone many changes that brought substantial challenges, for example the building of the children's centre on site and the federation of the schools. These changes have been faced with fortitude, and the focus has remained on improving provision and achievement in the school. Able pupils are challenged to do as well as they can. Attainment in writing has risen from a low base. Marking and assessment give pupils a clear idea of what they do well. All these factors contribute considerably to the school's outstanding capacity to improve.

Pupils are very proud of their school and have a comprehensive understanding of healthy lifestyles. They know what constitutes a healthy diet and promote this strongly in school. Many participate in sporting activities in and out of school. Pupils play an important role in decisions that they consider will make the school better. High levels of care, guidance and support promote pupils' learning, development and well-being very effectively. Safeguarding is a key priority, not only within the school, but in enabling parents and carers and children to feel safe, for example, when using the internet at home. In addition much closer and highly effective partnerships with parents have resulted in a substantial reduction in persistent absence, better punctuality and improved rates of attendance.

Determined action, including rigorous performance management and frequent reviews of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, are bringing about greater consistency in the quality of teaching. Consequently much of it is good and some outstanding. More pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make consistently good progress as they move through the school. Consequently, pupils' skills in writing are improving, albeit slowly in Years 1 and 2 because of their low level of skill when they start school. In 2010, pupils leaving Year 6 made exceptional progress from their starting points, especially in mathematics, with some pupils reaching particularly high levels in this subject. Senior leaders have accurately identified the small pockets of satisfactory teaching and are working with staff to raise expectations. Pupils and inspectors are clear that lessons would be even better if they contained more practical work and were linked more closely to their interests.

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The curriculum is well organised and provides a broad range of experiences that promote pupils' personal development and well-being, especially in how to keep safe. Through its meticulous self-evaluation procedures the school has identified rightly that there are not sufficient opportunities for pupils throughout the school to contribute their ideas about how they learn best or to use and develop their imaginative and creative ideas.

The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to school life, helping them to settle and establish positive attitudes to learning. The programme of work has particular strengths in promoting children's, personal, social, emotional and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Planning does not include enough opportunities for children to explore themes that offer continuity between their learning indoors and outdoors.

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

- Increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching by July 2011 to ensure all staff:
  - have high expectations of what pupils know and can do
  - provide more practical and engaging lessons that are linked to pupils' interests and enable them to be more active in their learning.
- Monitor the changes to the curriculum over the next year to check that it is innovative and motivating all pupils to achieve as well as they can, especially in writing, by:
  - providing memorable and rich opportunities that respond to pupils' views about how they learn best giving pupils further opportunities to use and develop their imaginative and creative ideas.
  - giving pupils further opportunities to use and develop their imaginative and creative ideas.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, provide more opportunities for planned, purposeful play that enables children to explore themes offering continuity between indoor and outdoor learning to extend their imaginative ideas and communication skills.

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

**2**

Most pupils enjoy school and take pride in writing neatly and presenting their work in mathematics accurately. They prefer to be active in lessons and like practical work best. In a Year 1 lesson pupils had to give instructions to a partner with the appropriate ingredients to make a jam or cream cheese sandwich. They worked well with their partner and gained a good idea of how to give clear instructions. It also motivated them to write as they had something interesting to write about. This is one of the reasons why standards in writing are improving in the younger classes.

Pupils make a very strong contribution to the community. Good behaviour and positive attitudes mean there is a happy atmosphere in which to learn. Their comprehensive understanding of healthy lifestyles was utilised effectively during the award of the contract to provide nutritious school meals. The pupils' restaurant committee reviews the menus

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regularly to check that healthy meals are provided and makes suggestions for further improvement. Over half of the pupils now eat a school meal each day and a high proportion take part in sporting activities. Peer mentors, class monitors, active play volunteers and representatives of the school council are proud of their roles and carry them out sensibly. Pupils raise substantial sums of money for charity and contribute to the annual community event, as well as performing musicals in the local secondary school which members of the local community can appreciate. These events add much to their personal development.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: 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: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

A good curriculum, linked to the effective use of assessment, is enabling pupils to build their skills systematically, especially in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. It is particularly successful in promoting pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills. High levels of participation in out-of-school activities, especially sports and cooking clubs, enhance pupils' health and well-being. The increased number of visits to places of interest has resulted in a greater sense of purpose and enthusiasm for learning. Residential visits and sailing classes in Year 6 and the opportunity for all pupils in Year 4 to learn a musical instrument add much to pupils' social and personal development. That said, such memorable experiences are not consistent throughout the school. There are not enough planned activities to challenge pupils'

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individuality in expressing their creative or imaginative ideas in writing or through other aspects of the curriculum.

Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that pupils of all abilities are fully included and build up their knowledge, skills and understanding effectively. Mostly, teachers have high expectations of what pupils should know and be able to do. They use good strategies to engage pupils, capture their interest and make lessons purposeful. For example, following on from a previous lesson in which pupils had designed and made a piece of jewellery, they were invited to write a letter to persuade the head of a design department that their design was the best one to make and sell to the public. This activity enabled pupils to work together well, share their ideas, draw on previous learning and apply their skills to a real-life situation. On occasion, however, teaching is not as effective as pupils are too passive and spend too much time listening or waiting for an adult to say what they are to do next. Consequently, they lose interest and the pace of learning slows.

Effective marking, especially in Years 3 to 6, gives pupils a clear idea of what to do to improve. They respond to the teachers' comments, and are given time to correct the errors identified through the marking. This, together with very specific targets that pupils can achieve in a short period of time, enhances their rate of progress.

Close links with the federated and local secondary school ease the transition when pupils move to the next stage in their education. This is because pupils already know many of those who are transferring at the same time. Sharply targeted, one-to-one help for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress. High quality support from the learning mentor, parent support worker and other professionals has enriched partnerships with parents and carers, so that pupils are helped successfully to overcome difficulties that interfere with their learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: 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?**

Exceptional long-term strategic planning involving the governing body, leaders and managers at all levels is inspiring the school community to enable all pupils to do as well as they possibly can. They have risen to the challenges that face them and gained new expertise and confidence which are bringing about improvements at a faster rate. New staff have been inducted very well and are really clear about the school's ambition to pursue excellence through its high expectations for the pupils. All are clear about their roles and are held fully accountable, especially for the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress. Rigorous monitoring through lesson observations, scrutiny of work and detailed

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tracking of pupils' progress identifies clearly the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Targets set for improvement are monitored closely and staff are supported through training to raise their skills. As a consequence of this determined approach, the majority of lessons are consistently good and occasionally outstanding.

The highly experienced and very well-informed governing body challenges the school's performance robustly. It plays a very active role in taking the school forward and in bringing about its long term aims. Policies and procedures, especially those relating to the promotion of equal opportunities and safeguarding, are reviewed annually and monitored regularly for their impact. This ensures pupils are safeguarded, that gaps in the attainment of different groups are closing, and that pupils of all backgrounds contribute fully to the school community. Discrimination is tackled rigorously. Visits to lessons result in changes, for example in the effective deployment of teaching assistants.

Leaders and managers have a thorough understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of the community. A good plan to promote community cohesion shows the school is building on its significant local community links and extending pupils' knowledge of different countries and cultures around the world gained over the last year. This is being accomplished by supporting a child in Kenya and establishing pen pals and email links with schools nationally and abroad.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</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

In order to enable children to make the best start to their education, senior leaders have focused on improving provision and outcomes in this age group. Training to enhance skills in teaching and assessing children's achievements means that progress towards the early learning goals is good in most areas of learning except creative development. The new

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Early Years Foundation Stage leader is very clear about the initiatives to be undertaken to improve provision further.

Children start in the Nursery with limited communication skills. Staff successfully help children to become independent, settle quickly to engaging activities, make choices about what they would like to do, and play happily together. During role play and adult-led activities, staff pay close attention to developing children's vocabulary. In Reception, children make a good start in learning to read. They know how individual letters and sounds can be combined to make a word and that a series of words make a sentence. They enjoy testing out their new learning when attempting to write on their own. While most activities engage children's interest and concentration well, some opportunities to enhance their creativity and communication skills are missed. This is because planning does not give enough priority to activities that provide continuity between their indoor and outdoor learning.

*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**

The parents and carers responding to the questionnaires, and those who met with a member of the inspection team, were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the education it provides. The results of a recent survey of 190 parents' and carers' views, carried out by an independent company, were also scrutinised during the inspection. These too showed very strong support for the school. It is not clear why some parents and carers believe their suggestions are not taken into account as no comments were added to the questionnaires about this issue. Where comments were added, these related positively to the good teaching and progress pupils are making, the school's sense of community and the inclusion of parents in their child's education. Only three questionnaires had negative comments that related to personal viewpoints and were drawn to the attention of the school.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Northumberland Heath Primary 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 473 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	74	21	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	71	25	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	46	51	43	48	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	52	36	40	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	56	35	39	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	54	35	39	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	52	40	44	1	1	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	41	43	48	2	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	53	40	44	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	47	39	43	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	49	33	37	7	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	58	33	37	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	61	33	37	1	1	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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are 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 and spring terms 2009/10 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 pupils' 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.**



25 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Northumberland Heath Primary School, Erith DA8 1JE**

Thank you for being kind, friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. You answered all our questions politely and patiently. You told us you feel safe and enjoy coming to school, especially when lessons are practical and capture your interest. You would like more lessons like this because you say you learn a lot in them and we agree.

You go to a good school. Adults take very good care of you and work very hard to make sure that you achieve well and are successful. You contribute well to this through the lively contributions you make to the daily life of the school through the school council, restaurant committee and play volunteer scheme, for example. Your involvement with making the decision about the provider of school lunches has been particularly important in raising the profile of healthy eating.

The school is led and managed exceptionally well and adults are always keen to find ways to improve it even more, so we have asked them to make sure that:

- they all expect you to do as well as you can and that more of your lessons involve you in practical activities that interest you
- more of the work you do takes into account your preferred ways of learning so that you can express your imaginative and creative ideas clearly, especially in writing
- the youngest children in the school have more opportunities to use their creative imagination in their play indoors and outdoors so they can be more confident in their use of spoken language.

We know you will help by sharing your ideas sensibly with your teachers and working as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely

Kath Beck

Lead inspector

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