

Northmead Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125294
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	359879
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	333
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Roberts
Headteacher	Deborah Brown
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2008
School address	Grange Road Surrey GU2 9ZA
Telephone number	0870 2644 100
Fax number	0870 2633 101
Email address	info@northmead.surrey.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twenty-one lessons or parts of lessons were observed, taught by 15 teachers. Inspectors visited all classrooms on a learning walk to gather evidence on displays, behaviour, resources and the curriculum, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and a group of pupils. Inspectors examined pupils' work and school documents, including school improvement plans, curriculum documents, safety records and assessment information. They analysed 106 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, together with 77 completed by pupils and 22 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress all pupils make in English and mathematics, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The achievement of pupils, particularly in writing and especially for the more-able pupils, to ascertain whether teaching and the curriculum are challenging enough.
- The impact of assessment and pupil tracking systems in raising achievement.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in driving school improvement and tackling issues from the previous inspection.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average junior school. The provision of an on-site Communication and Language Centre with one mixed-age group class, primarily for pupils with specific speech and language needs, means that there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities than found in most schools of this size and includes twenty pupils with statements of special educational needs. The majority of pupils are from White British heritages with the rest representing a wide range of other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school is set to expand in 2011/12 with the admission of an extra class on entry into Year 3. The school has achieved a number of awards including Healthy Schools.

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

The school's motto to 'Try more, learn more, achieve more' has, according to pupils, been a key factor in helping to bring about improvements in this, now good, school. Everyone is focused on what they need to do to make the school even better. As one pupil said, 'We all help each other to be the best school we can.' Parents and carers appreciate the excellent care provided for their children and the good level of support and guidance which has helped pupils to make good progress in their learning. The school's good capacity to improve has manifest itself in a number of improvements since the last inspection. As a result of more rigorous tracking systems and improved teaching, the most notable impact is seen in the improvement in pupils' progress, which is now good, and the rise in the previous average attainment in reading, now above average. ♦ Senior leaders' and the governing body's unswerving drive to raise standards at a steady pace since the last inspection has enabled pupils to catch up on areas of underachievement. As a result, the vast majority of pupils, including those in the school's communication and language centre and others who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are now making good, and on occasion, outstanding progress.

Most pupils enjoy their learning. Their good attitudes and behaviour, consistently good teaching and a well-tailored curriculum help to ensure that by the end of Year 6 attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average and higher in reading. However, there is not always sufficient challenge, particularly for the more able who have not as yet achieved their full potential. This is because teachers do not always put their good lesson planning into practice to ensure that pupils of all ability groups are consistently challenged to do well in lesson activities. To help raise attainment, most pupils are set challenging targets. However, as yet, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in the assessment of their work and the quality of developmental marking is inconsistent across the school. This means that some pupils are unclear about how and what they need to do to improve.

Monitoring by senior leaders is rigorous. They evaluate the school's work accurately. This is enabling the school to set the right targets to get better. Staff are dedicated and keen to improve. All are ambitious for the future and there is a relentless focus on driving up standards, demonstrating the school's capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and in mathematics by ensuring that all pupils, especially the more able are consistently provided with tasks that are challenging and closely matched to their levels of ability
- Make better use of the assessment procedures in place by:

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- ensuring greater consistency in the quality of developmental marking across the school
- increasing the opportunities for pupils to assess their work so that they know and understand how and what to do to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are eager to do well, responding enthusiastically to the consistently good teaching they receive. In the majority of lessons, most pupils respond keenly to teachers' questions and participate in discussions. However, in just a few lessons observed, the pace and challenge, particularly for the most able, were not as good. Consequently, these pupils did not achieve as much as they could have done. However, the school's data and inspectors' observations of pupils' work showed that a number of initiatives are helping to accelerate pupils' progress, such as the setting of pupils into ability groups for literacy and numeracy, and confirms that most pupils are working broadly at levels expected for their age, and some above. Intensive personalised support ensures that pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make consistently good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. Broadly average attainment in English and mathematics, pupils' positive attitudes to learning and the good progress they make all help to ensure that pupils are securely prepared for their secondary education and later life.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. The importance the school places on this area is reflected in their recent success in achieving the Healthy Schools award. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know that teachers will help and support them with any worries they may have. Pupils say that bullying is a rare occurrence. They undertake duties around the school, enjoying their roles and responsibilities as members of the school council, eco team, playtime buddies or house captains. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in their friendships and support for each other. However, pupils' awareness of faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom is not as well developed as their knowledge of international communities. Behaviour is generally good throughout the school, characterised by general helpfulness and good manners. However, inspectors observed a few occasions when pupils could be 'off task' in lessons as a result of lack of challenge in their activities. Attendance is average but continues to improve because of the excellent administrative procedures which ensure that every single absence and lateness is rigorously followed up and nothing is left to chance.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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

¹ 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?

Teaching is good in the Communication and Language Centre as well as in the main school. The good quality support is seamless, regardless of whether pupils are being taught in the centre or in mainstream lessons, and carefully crafted individual plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enable them to make at least the same good progress as their peers, and sometimes outstanding progress in their learning. As a result of good teaching, pupils are enthusiastic in their learning, as seen in a good Year 3 mathematics lesson. ♦ Pupils were seen excitedly opening their pirate treasure chests to read number problems set hidden there. They swiftly set about solving these problems using a range of calculation methods to establish how much feed the goats on the pirate ship would need for the journey, and establishing the number of flags to be distributed amongst the ship's masts. As one pupil said '...we love maths, our teacher always makes learning fun...' However, not all teaching consistently challenges pupils, particularly the most able. As a result, the attainment of these pupils is not as high as it could be. Much is done to help pupils consider how well they have worked and what they most enjoyed. However, self-assessment opportunities focus heavily on pupils' enjoyment of learning, missing opportunities to encourage pupils to evaluate how they could improve. ♦ Although work is regularly marked, there is inconsistency in the quality of feedback provided. All this means that some pupils are not always aware of how well they are doing, or how to improve their work.

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Teachers' good subject knowledge and creative planning provides pupils with highly effective learning opportunities. For example, a visit to a dry-ski slope for an English lesson helped pupils to develop their ability to write instructions on 'How to ski' from first-hand experience. This good, well-planned curriculum is enriched by improved cross-curricular links and specialist teaching in French, art, sport and music. A good range of well-attended extra-curricular clubs, visits and curriculum-themed events such as 'Year 3 Fly to India', Roman and Space Days and World Cup week all enhance pupils' learning. ♦

Good personal, social and health education has a positive impact on the good outcomes for pupils, particularly the promotion of courtesy and good manners, which is clear throughout the school.

Parents and carers frequently commented on the excellent care and nurturing provided by the school, especially in the Communication and Language Centre. They appreciate the comprehensive range of early intervention programmes and special arrangements made to support pupils, especially those who experience barriers to learning. Staff work closely with parents and carers and a wide range of outside agencies and partnerships to provide just the right level of support for pupils to help them in their learning. Good induction and transfer arrangements to and from the school all help pupils to feel valued and welcome in the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the last inspection, the determination of the senior leadership team, purposefully led by the headteacher, has brought about a climate of improvement where everyone is ambitious to make the school even better. The embedding of structured assessment systems to track and target pupils at risk of underachievement and the setting of challenging targets have been effective in raising attainment in reading and accelerating pupils' progress. Effective systems are now in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the school and there is a clear plan for further development to which staff can contribute. There is an understanding by leaders that good teaching is at the heart of good progress. The involvement of subject leaders in the monitoring of progress and classroom practice has already gone some way to improving the quality of teaching and use of assessment. ♦

There is a determination to sustain and build upon recent gains. In this way, the school promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils and makes sure there is no discrimination. However, this has not yet ensured that all pupils, particularly the most able, reach their full potential.

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Governors are hard working and very supportive of the school's work. They take their monitoring roles very seriously and provide constructive feedback following visits to the school. They challenge the school and are aware of areas of relative underperformance. Well-developed support systems within the school are complemented by a wide range of partnerships to support the needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to help ensure the needs of pupils are appropriately addressed. ♦ Measures for safeguarding pupils are good and all statutory requirements relating to child protection are met.

The school has developed satisfactory provision for global and cultural development within its community cohesion policy. Strong links within the local community, particularly through a linked church, and a project with a school in France, are beginning to provide pupils with opportunities to develop their understanding of local and international communities. Their understanding of communities in other parts of Britain is less well developed, although the school already has plans to rectify this position.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who returned questionnaires, or who spoke to inspectors, held positive views about the school. A very large majority were happy with their children's experiences and many commented favourably about how safe they felt their children were and how well the school kept parents/carers informed about their child's progress. Many wrote positively about the school, especially the work of the Communication and Language Centre. 'Teachers are excellent and dedicated to the children' and 'My child is happy; he really enjoys coming to school' were typical examples. A small minority of parents/carers expressed concerns about their child's preparation for secondary school, home-school communication and how well the school met their child's needs. A few also

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felt that the school did not always deal effectively with behaviour. Inspectors agreed that the needs of some pupils, particularly the most able, could be better met; they confirmed that pupils were soundly prepared for the future and that the school was working hard to improve communication. A very small number of parents and carers expressed individual concerns about aspects of the school, but there was no pattern or trend.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Northmead Junior 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 106 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 333 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	42	55	52	5	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	53	49	46	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	28	73	69	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	29	65	61	8	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	29	69	65	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	25	64	60	15	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	26	70	66	4	4	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)	28	26	66	62	7	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	28	64	60	8	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	17	69	65	13	12	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	24	65	61	8	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	21	64	60	12	11	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	31	64	60	7	7	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



7 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northmead Junior School, Guildford GU2 9ZA

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently.

We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about the things you like about your school. We particularly enjoyed listening to your enthusiastic singing in the school's Singing Club and looking at your lovely displays of art work and models around the school. We would like to thank pupils who came to talk to us, and those who filled in the pupils' questionnaire. We agree with you that you go to a good school that has improved since the last inspection.

These are some of the best things about your school:

- you are happy at school and enjoy learning
- all of you make good and sometimes outstanding progress in your learning, particularly in your reading
- you make a good contribution to your school and the wider community through the responsibilities you hold, such as the school council, eco team, playground buddies and your involvement in fund-raising
- your headteacher and staff are making sure that your school gets even better and are helped to do this by the governing body.

So that your school gets even better, we have asked the teachers to do these things:

- ensure that work is not too easy or too hard but at just the right level of challenge so that more of you make faster progress ♦♦
- ♦♦♦ ensure that you all understand how and what you have to do to improve your work. ensure that you all understand how and what you have to do to improve your work.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Forbes

Lead inspector

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