

North Petherton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135830
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	360762
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Knight
Headteacher	Louise Chamberlain
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Schoolfields North Petherton Somerset TA6 6LU
Telephone number	01278 662442
Fax number	01278 663092
Email address	LChamberlain@educ.somerset.gov.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Inspection number	360762

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Nineteen lessons were observed taught by 14 teachers, and meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at policies and procedures related to safeguarding, the school development plan, reports written about the school and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Questionnaires from pupils and staff were scrutinised along with 131 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- The current rates of progress for all pupils and the extent to which boys are able to reach similar standards as those of girls, especially in Key Stage 1 but also in Key Stage 2.
- How teaching and the curriculum meet the needs of all pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The impact of the school's work to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics.
- How the governing body and leaders at all levels are effective in moving the school forward so all aspects of the school reach at least a good standard.

Information about the school

North Petherton Community Primary is a large school of its type. The vast majority of its pupils are of a White British heritage. Currently, there are no pupils in the early stages of speaking English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals is smaller-than-average. There is also a smaller-than-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A significant group of these pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties or have difficulties within the autistic spectrum.

The infant and junior schools were amalgamated in September 2009 to form the primary school. The headteacher of the junior school was appointed to the position of headteacher of the new school and a new governing body was also appointed. A privately run pre-school group and care provision, which were not inspected by the team, are situated within the school grounds.

Both the infant and junior schools achieved the Healthy Schools award. The primary school gained the Artsmark Gold award and the Basics Skills Quality Mark in 2010.

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

North Petherton Community Primary is a good school where pupils develop into well-rounded young people who are confident to take on new challenges and find learning fun. They concentrate well and are eager to show what they can do. Parents and carers agree, and one parent's comments were typical of many when they wrote, 'The teachers are fantastic! My child is very happy and enjoys school life. I am very happy with the progress she is making.'

Pupils are fascinated by the world around them and they want to help make it a better place. Their contribution to the school, the local community and to others less well off than themselves is excellent and attendance is high. They show empathy, care and responsibility, and make thoughtful and well-considered judgements. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. This is due to the good curriculum and to the school's excellent provision for community cohesion which helps pupils recognise their place in their own community and that of the world around them.

Children make a good start in their learning in the Reception Year. They are eager to talk and share ideas, which lays the strong foundations for their skills of reading and writing. Attainment is broadly average and improving, particularly in English where the school has put a strong focus on improving teaching of writing. The school has also successfully focused on extending the skills and knowledge of the more-able pupils, and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard of Level 5 is increasing. Pupils make good progress across many aspects of the curriculum, particularly in reading and writing, in information and communication technology (ICT) and in the arts.

Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding, but the quality is not consistent, particularly in mathematics. As a result, attainment in mathematics is not improving as quickly as in English. Although the quality of assessment and its use to support learning is good and much improved, not all teachers are confident to use this information in mathematics to adapt activities to consistently meet the needs of all pupils.

Care, guidance and support are excellent and all pupils feel well cared for. Support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good and these pupils make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress and also in developing their personal and social skills.

The amalgamation of the two schools was completed very smoothly. There is strong teamwork. As a result of the good leadership of the headteacher and senior staff, the quality of teaching and learning has improved and attainment is rising. A clear and very effective plan for promoting community cohesion is now very well embedded and the concerted focus on raising standards in writing is working well in all classes. Extremely strong partnerships with a wide range of outside agencies support the school's work and

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

enhance the learning opportunities of the pupils. Evaluation of the school's provision is good and the right priorities for improvement identified. Given the already good evidence of improvement, the school's capacity for further advancement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by:
 - ensuring teachers use assessment information consistently to plan activities that match all pupils' abilities and extend learning further
 - setting well-focused targets for pupils' future learning that pupils understand so that they can be actively involved in evaluating their own learning
 - ensuring that pupils who may find some aspects of mathematics difficult are identified quickly and helped so they can move on more rapidly
 - ensuring teachers monitor the targets regularly so pupils move forward at a more rapid pace.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

A whole-school approach and strong focus on improving teaching have had a positive impact on learning. Achievement is good, and boys now achieve as well as the girls throughout the school. Pupils behave well and enjoy working individually, in pairs or in groups. This was clearly exemplified in a Year 5 class where pupils were asked to develop systematic ways of working to discover the identity of four characters. The pupils listened to each other's ideas and negotiated ways of working until, with only a little support, they achieved their task. Similarly, pupils in a Year 6 class enthusiastically debated the arguments for and against the promotion of fair trade as part of their topic on chocolate. Pupils became quite animated as they debated their ideas, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities who were well involved and keen to share their ideas. In some lessons, pupils make good or better progress in mathematics but the quality of learning is not as consistently good as in English. Pupils with emotional or more complex learning difficulties receive well-targeted support and become confident learners, making good progress in relation to their starting points.

Pupils have a good awareness of what helps them to develop a healthy lifestyle, as was recognised in the Healthy Schools award, and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility and work hard to make their school a better place. They are highly involved in many activities in the local community, raising funds for both local and worldwide charities and also in helping with local projects. They are currently planning and developing the gardens at a local residential home after talking at length with the residents to discover their views and wishes.

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

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	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

Excellent care, support and guidance underpin all pupils' good progress. Staff respond to each pupil's individual personal needs extremely well, especially those that have particular barriers to their learning. Predominantly good teaching is raising standards and the more-able pupils in particular are being stretched because of the higher levels of challenge, especially in English. In a Year 2 class, for example, the teacher gave very clear explanations of what was to be achieved and structured the writing task well so that all pupils, including the boys who in the past have lagged behind the girls in their learning, were able to be successful in their task.

Learning is at its best in those lessons where activities are carefully matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils say that teachers are good at helping them to understand how to improve their work. However, despite some good practice, pupils' individual targets in mathematics are not as effective as in English. They are too broad and not easily understood so pupils find them difficult to remember or use to check on their progress. Some pupils find different aspects of mathematics, such as fractions, difficult to grasp. These pupils are not always given the help they need quickly enough and this slows their progress.

The good curriculum is having a positive impact on all pupils, particularly the boys in their desire to write. Effective teaching strategies and the carefully adapted curriculum are ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties or who have difficulties within the autistic spectrum,

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

make good progress. Links between subjects and the regular use of ICT to support learning make the activities more relevant to pupils' interests. A varied range of additional activities, visits and clubs enhances pupils' learning experiences well. The school has strong learning links with a school in Cardiff as well as a school in India which promote greater understanding of the similarities between different cultures and backgrounds very effectively.

Induction arrangements into Reception are good and close links with the local secondary school provide additional activities aimed at extending pupils' learning opportunities as well as easing transition.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides the drive and enthusiasm for school improvement, and leadership at all levels is good. The four literacy and numeracy coordinators work well together identifying the next steps in the process of improvement, particularly in improving teaching and raising achievement. A clear vision for school development in writing was used particularly effectively as a focus for all the staff at the time when the schools were being amalgamated. It promoted effective communication, raised morale and stimulated strong teamwork.

Parents are pleased about the smoothness of the amalgamation and the resulting good provision of the new school. Several parents wrote to express their support and one parent's views are typical: 'I am very happy with the school systems and processes. My child has blossomed both socially and academically particularly since the amalgamation under the headteacher.' The school's positive focus on raising standards was recognised by being awarded the Basics Skills Quality Mark in 2010. The school does not have a particularly diverse community, however, the focus on ensuring equality and supporting diversity is strong. All pupils are able to access and take advantage of all that the school offers. The provision for promoting the pupils' awareness of community cohesion is excellent.

Safeguarding remains a strong focus of the governing body and staff. Arrangements for safe recruitment and checking of staff are very well developed, safeguarding policies are comprehensive and staff are very well trained. They carry out their roles and responsibilities rigorously. The school site is exceptionally safe and secure and at the time of the inspection safeguarding was judged as outstanding.

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

The governing body was reconstituted in line with the creation of the new school. The range of experience and diverse expertise is good and used well to support the school and to challenge the senior staff. The governing body is very evaluative and has also started to reflect on how it can also improve the way it carries out its roles and responsibilities.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with a range of skills and learning. They settle happily into the school routines because of the effective induction procedures and good links with parents and carers and with the pre-school settings. Welfare arrangements are strong and children feel safe and secure. Under the sensitive support of all the staff, they quickly start to make good progress. Children achieve well now and because of improved provision reach the levels expected of them at the end of Reception.

Children have positive attitudes to their work and want to do well. One little boy spoke with pride about how well he was doing in his reading and others were eager to show their writing. The 'Talk for Writing' strategy introduced throughout the school is also having a positive impact in the Reception classes. There is a good balance of teacher-led tasks and child-initiated activities. Children have access to a good range of resources inside the classroom and in the safe outside spaces which stimulate their desire to experiment and explore.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The new leadership is promoting strong teamwork among the staff and there is a real enthusiasm from the whole team to achieve the very best for the children. As a result, children are making better progress. The systems for assessing children's progress are developing well but the recording of these data is not always consistent or the data are not as effectively used as they could be to extend learning further.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

A broadly average proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaires and the responses were very supportive of the school. Many comments were made about the 'fantastic teachers' who respond quickly to children's individual needs and inspire the children to learn. Many commented on the strong leadership of the headteacher and the caring ethos of the school. Virtually every one of the parents and carers who responded felt that pupils are kept safe and the inspection shows that this is an accurate view. There were a few parents and carers who were concerned that the behaviour of some pupils is not sufficiently well managed. There are some pupils whose special educational needs and/or disabilities affect their behaviour, but inspection showed that these pupils are very well supported to develop effective strategies that help them to behave well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North Petherton Community 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 131 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 320 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	79	60	50	38	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	86	66	44	34	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	66	50	61	47	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	47	62	47	5	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	76	58	53	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	51	59	45	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	63	48	64	49	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	55	42	70	53	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	64	49	62	47	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	34	73	56	7	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	31	79	60	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	59	45	70	53	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	53	61	47	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	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.



18 March 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of North Petherton Community Primary School, Bridgwater TA6 6LU

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we inspected your school recently. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents and carers are correct in thinking that you go to a good school.

Here are some of the things we found out.

- You get a good start to your schooling in the Reception classes.
- You make good progress and your writing has really improved.
- You want to do well and enjoy your work.
- You are polite, friendly and helpful, you enjoy taking responsibility and have done an amazing number of things to help the school to be a better place and to help people in your community and around the world.
- You are taught well and all your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are interesting.
- There are many interesting and stimulating activities that extend your learning, supported by the outstanding range and number of outside agencies, businesses and charitable groups.
- The school is led well and everyone works together as a strong team.
- The staff look after you extremely well so you feel safe and happy.

Even though North Petherton Community Primary is a good and improving school, we have asked your headteacher and staff to help you reach the same high standards in mathematics as you do in English by:

- ensuring that teachers plan activities that better match your different abilities
- changing your targets in mathematics so you can understand them more and ensuring they help you understand what you need to do to improve
- helping you more when you do not understand some tasks.

Thank you again for making our visit so enjoyable, and remember you can do your bit by continuing to work hard and helping each other.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Callaghan

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.