

Northwood Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134720
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	381719
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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	373
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Tagg
Headteacher	Gill Morris
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2009
School address	Collingwood Road Wolverhampton WV10 8DS
Telephone number	01902 558715
Fax number	01902 558723
Email address	northwoodpark.primary@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 29 lessons or parts of lessons led by 17 different teachers. They also looked at the work of teaching assistants. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's development plans, its records of pupils' progress, and minutes from meetings of staff and governors, as well as other documents. They scrutinised 44 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as questionnaires from pupils and staff.

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

- Are pupils in Key Stage 1 making sufficient progress, especially in reading and writing?
- How much progress are pupils in Key Stage 2 making, with particular reference to the progress more able pupils make in writing and the amount of challenge offered in lessons?
- What is the impact of additional support on the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who join the school late?

Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. More children than would normally be expected join Key Stage 2 at different times of the school year. The school has gained many curriculum awards including Arts Mark Gold and a Basic Skills Award. The school provides a breakfast club.

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

Northwood Park Primary School is a good school. Pupils' enjoyment of school is greatly enhanced by a wide range of enriching activities. Drama and musical activities are an important part of school life and contribute well to pupils' good personal development. Good outcomes for pupils are achieved because the school works extremely hard to overcome the barriers to learning that are faced by some of them. The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is outstanding, especially for those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents and carers say that pupils who join the school part-way through the year receive a warm welcome and settle in quickly. The school is very prompt to recognise any additional needs these new pupils may have, and to provide effective support.

When children join the school, their skills are often below those that are expected for their age. However their attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average because pupils achieve well during their time in the school. Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although the curriculum in the Reception classes is satisfactory, it does not always take sufficient account of children's needs and interests. Activities that children choose for themselves are not always planned with clear learning intentions in mind. Additionally, staff are not always deployed in a way that ensures they are having the maximum impact on developing children's communication and language skills. Transition from the Reception class to Year 1 is not well planned. Although pupils make good progress from their individual starting points, their progress is swifter in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. These differences are reflected in the quality of teaching. Even though teaching is good overall it is more variable in quality in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. This is because the tasks set for pupils in Key Stage 1 are not consistently well matched to pupils' ages and abilities nor is a range of resources always used to make learning easier. In Key Stage 1, checks on pupils' learning in lessons are sometimes not as timely or as effective as those made in Key Stage 2.

The headteacher, senior managers and governors have high expectations of staff because they want the very best for the pupils. They lead with passion and determination. Self-evaluation is rigorous and pinpoints accurately where the school needs to improve. Important improvements have been made to the quality of teaching, especially regarding the quality of marking and pupils' understanding of how to reach their targets. This has accelerated pupils' progress. Additionally, more pupils are now attending school regularly. The determined way that the head and

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governors have embedded ambition has resulted in a motivated staff who have a strong desire to continuously improve their practice. The school's steadfast commitment to ensuring that every pupil can make the very best of the opportunities offered in school indicates a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that the curriculum always takes into account children's interests and aptitudes
 - making certain that the activities that children chose for themselves are planned with clear learning intentions
 - deploying staff more effectively in order to maximise their impact on children's learning especially in relation to improving children's communication skills.
- Accelerate improvements to pupils' attainment and progress in Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that activities in lessons are always well matched to pupils' ages and abilities
 - using resources more effectively to support learning
 - making more timely and effective checks on pupils' learning in lessons
 - smoothing the transition between the Reception class and Year 1.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment is rising at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, but remains below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn at a faster rate in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are now making much better progress in their reading and writing but the school is aware that there is still more to do in order to further accelerate their progress. Pupils in all classes have very positive attitudes to learning. They always try their very best, even if a lesson is not very interesting. Throughout the school, pupils take a pride in their work, which is always neat and well-presented. Pupils in Year 6 have particularly good attitudes to learning and this is reflected in their very rapid progress. They respond particularly well to challenging lessons, for example, more able Year 6 pupils really enjoyed the challenge presented in a mental arithmetic test and were very keen to explain exactly how they had reached the correct answers. Pupils of all abilities work hard on improving their writing. More able pupils in Year 6 were seen to be developing important report-writing skills and were good at processing, re-ordering and presenting information in an original way that engaged the reader. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they are very well supported both academically and personally by class teachers and classroom assistants. Their talents are valued and sometimes pupils are taught in the top set for mathematics even though they need extra support for English.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and, as a result, behaviour is good

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in the classrooms and around school. The school's special rule, 'Always treat others as you would like them to treat you,' is put into practice. Consequently, pupils feel safe in school. Pupils understand the need to take regular exercise and to eat healthily. Although pupils make a good contribution to the school community, including through the school council, their contribution to the wider community is more limited. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils grown in maturity and confidence as they grow older and, by the time they join Year 6, many demonstrate the self-assurance and poise necessary for future success. Pupils have extensive opportunities to develop their social skills through activities that need cooperation, such as musical performances and residential visits. They have a good understanding of their own culture. However, pupils' awareness of other cultures is not as strong because they have limited opportunities to meet others from different backgrounds to themselves. Attendance rates are rapidly improving and there are fewer instances of persistent absence. Pupils' make good progress in developing their basic skills and this, combined with their good work ethic, means that they are well equipped for the next stage in their education.

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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and supportive. As a result, pupils are confident to ask for help when they need it. In Key Stage 2, work is consistently well matched to pupils' needs but this is not always the case in Key Stage 1 where there is sometimes an over-reliance on teaching in ability sets. As a result, some pupils in the set struggle when the work is too hard or the pace of the lesson is too

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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quick for them, whilst more-able pupils within the set are not sufficiently challenged. Throughout the school, marking is exceptionally thorough and gives pupils excellent guidance about how to improve their work. Pupils are set academic targets and teachers work well with pupils to ensure that they understand exactly what they must do to reach the next national curriculum level. In Key Stage 2, teachers use questioning very well to check learning in class and to make pupils think. However, in Key Stage 1, teachers are not always using effective methods to check pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils occasionally appear to be working hard and doing well when their work is inaccurate. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used particularly well to support learning in both key stages but, in Key Stage 1, pupils are not always supplied with other resources that would help to underpin their learning.

The curriculum has a strong emphasis on developing basic skills including those related to ICT. The school's focus on promoting literacy skills, including the use of phonics, has been very successful and has boosted children's skills in reading and writing in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This has not been at the expense of promoting pupils' personal development and there are extensive opportunities for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument and to take part in musical productions and residential visits. These activities enhance pupils' self-esteem and help them to grow into mature and confident young people. Additionally, there is a good range of clubs which are valued by pupils and their parents. Strong links with local secondary schools have enhanced the opportunities that are available for pupils. The transition from the Reception class to Year 1 is not well developed and young children in Year 1 have insufficient opportunities to learn through well planned play at this early stage in the school year.

The school provides an extremely welcoming and cheerful environment where pupils feel confident and safe. The breakfast club ensures that pupils have a positive start to the day. Exceptionally well-targeted support is offered to pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or other additional needs. This strongly supports all pupils in making good progress, and making the very best of the opportunities offered by the school. Pupils are very well-known as individuals and have confidence in the staff. Those pupils that join from other schools have their needs quickly assessed and are exceptionally well supported. Consequently, they settle in very quickly and are able to make the same good progress as other children. The school's systems to monitor and promote regular attendance are very successful and this is reflected in rising attendance rates. Transition into secondary school is particularly effective and substantial efforts are made to smooth transition for those pupils who may find the switch to secondary school difficult.

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

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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 ambitious vision and high expectations of the governing body, headteacher and other leaders and managers have been enhanced by good management systems. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are very thorough, involve a good range of staff and have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching as staff know exactly where they need to improve their work. Additionally, the school has an extensive range of data about pupils' attainment and is starting use this more effectively to keep a closer eye on the progress of different groups of pupils, and the progress in different year groups and classes. Development planning is improving because plans have been simplified in order to have closer focus on those developments that are most likely to have the maximum impact on pupils' progress. Careful thought has been given to staff deployment in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and a good attempt has been made to strengthen teaching in Key Stage 1, although it too early to judge the impact of changes in personnel on pupils' progress.

Governance is good. The governing body provides the school with effective support and challenge, as well as ensuring statutory requirements are met. Safeguarding procedures are good. The school ensures that adults who work with children are vetted and works hard to minimise hazards. The school's actions to promote equal opportunities are good. All pupils and their families are made welcome regardless of their background. The school has worked hard to close any gaps in performance and to ensure that the maximum number of pupils reach national expectations at the end of Year 6. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. It understands its own context very well and has very good links with the local community, including hard-to-reach families. The school is establishing links with a rural school in Africa, however links with the wider community in the United Kingdom are less well developed. As a result, pupils do not always have sufficient first hand experience of people with different backgrounds than themselves.

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

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

There have been recent staff changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and currently children are making satisfactory progress in lessons. Children's skills on entry to the Reception class can vary but they are often well-below expectations, particularly in areas relating to communication and language. There have been improvements to outcomes for children in recent years, although children's skills remain below expectations on entry to Year 1. Children settle quickly when they join the Reception class. They grow in confidence, behave well and quickly learn school routines and often make good progress in their personal development. However, the curriculum is not always responsive enough to children's interests and needs. Activities that are available for children to select for themselves are not always planned with a clear learning intention in mind. As a result, children have limited opportunities to show initiative and to learn by themselves. Staff use questioning well to move learning on when they are supporting key activities, but they do not always provide enough support for children when they are working on activities that they have chosen for themselves. Consequently, opportunities are missed to develop children's language skills. Although leadership and management are satisfactory, and are leading to satisfactory outcomes for children, the recent deployment of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader in upper Key Stage 1 makes it difficult for her to have an immediate impact on the quality of provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Although relatively few parents responded to the questionnaire, those that did were pleased with what the school provides. There were relatively few written comments but some of those parents that did comment said it was a wonderful school with very supportive staff. A small number of parents were concerned about their children's progress in Key Stage 1 and others commented about communication with the

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school particularly regarding their children' progress. Although progress in Key Stage 1 has improved the school is well aware that it needs to further accelerate progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Northwood Park 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 373 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	70	13	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	75	11	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	41	21	48	4	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	55	19	43	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	55	20	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	52	17	39	4	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	48	21	48	0	0	2	5
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)	24	55	17	39	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	43	23	52	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	48	19	43	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	43	20	45	4	9	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	24	55	18	41	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	68	14	32	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



22 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northwood Park Primary School, Wolverhampton, WV10 8DS

It was a pleasure to visit your school. We really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. You are clearly proud of your school and we can understand why. It is a good school that provides lots of exciting things for you to do. We enjoyed listening to Year 5 and 6 practise their singing for the multi-faith festival. We were pleased with your good behaviour. You are right when you say you are well looked after, we found the quality of care guidance and support to be outstanding. We were very impressed by the way you all understand your targets and know what you need to do to get to the next level because of the very thorough way teachers mark your work.

You are right when you say you are well looked after. We were very impressed by the way you all understand your targets and know what you need to do to get to the next level.

Children in the Reception classes enjoy coming to school because their teachers are very caring. However, staff do not always take enough account of children's interests when they are setting up activities. It is not always clear what children are expected to learn from activities that they choose for themselves and staff do not always do enough to help children to develop their speaking and listening skills. By the end of Year 6, your attainment is similar to that reached by pupils in most other schools and you have made good progress. However, pupils in Key Stage 2 make better progress than those in Key Stage 1. This is because, in Key Stage 1, sometimes pupils are all set similar work and some of them find the work too hard. Teachers in Key Stage 1 do not always make enough checks on pupils' learning in lessons and sometimes not enough use is made of resources that can help pupils to learn more quickly. So we have asked your teachers to improve this.

Managers at your school are doing a good job. They are working very hard and trying to make your school into one of the very best. You can help your school to improve further by continuing to work hard in all your lessons and making sure you always attend school regularly.

Thank you for all your help with our visit.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh Lead inspector

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