

# Northway Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115563
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379099
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jill Bavin

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	122
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bob Robinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lynn Williams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Virginia Road Northway Tewkesbury GL20 8PT
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<b>Age group</b>	4–7
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who observed six teachers in seven lessons. Four additional visits to classes were made to focus on work to promote cultural development, and two extra visits focused on Year 2 pupils' writing about design and technology work. Additionally the team met with pupils, staff and members of the governing body and analysed work in pupils' books. They observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documentation, including policies and documentation related to safeguarding, data about pupils' progress, monitoring and evaluation records and school development plans. Responses from staff and 57 parents and carers were also analysed.

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

- The impact of the school's work to raise boys' attainment in writing.
- The consistency of high-quality teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Given the newness of the staff team and governing body, the extent of their contribution to school development.

## Information about the school

Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Although the proportion of pupils from other minority ethnic groups has increased recently, few pupils from these groups are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has increased recently and is now just above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much lower than is typical nationally.

There is community pre-school provision for children aged two to four on the school site, but it did not form part of this inspection. It is managed by a local charity of which the headteacher is a trustee. Similarly, there is a local authority children's centre on the school site which did not form part of this inspection. The headteacher is a member of its partnership board. Since the previous inspection, there has been a 50% turnover in teaching staff and there have been significant changes in the membership of the governing body, including three different Chairs of the Governing Body.

The school gained Healthy School Plus status in 2009, reflecting its work to promote healthy lifestyles in the school and community.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

'Brilliant', 'fantastic', 'warm' and 'friendly' are how several parents and carers describe this outstanding school. One commented that their child's progress 'has exceeded our expectations', reflecting the views of many. Outstanding teaching and an exceptionally well-organised curriculum enable boys and girls of all ability groups and backgrounds to make exceptionally rapid progress in their learning. They reach above average levels of attainment and their achievements are outstanding. Excellent care and safeguarding arrangements contribute to pupils' exceptional sense of security and well-being. They make impressive strides in social confidence and responsibility, and their behaviour in lessons and around school is impeccable.

The school's outstanding capacity for further improvement is indicated through its extensive development from good to outstanding in most areas of its work over the two and a half years since the previous inspection. Provision for children in the Reception classes has improved well because their interests are given greater consideration than previously, and they have more opportunities to work in the outdoor areas. That said, the resources available to them when they are working independently are not always sufficiently stimulating to accelerate their learning, and there is not always an adult available to support learning at activities of their choice. All staff share high aspirations with senior leaders, both for pupils' achievement and for continued school development. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed far more rigorous assessment procedures so staff are tracking the progress of each pupil, in all subjects, more closely and sharing 'next steps' with pupils far more routinely. As a consequence, pupils are remarkably well informed about their achievements and what they are aiming for. This empowers these young pupils and is a key factor in their enjoyment and achievement.

The information generated by this assessment process is also used to analyse any patterns of relative weakness in pupils' learning and the curriculum is rapidly adjusted to address any such issues. For example, while focusing on improving pupils' writing, staff recognised that the greatest area of need was in sentence construction. They immediately planned more opportunities for pupils to develop their ideas on paper. The impact of this is apparent in work this term when boys and girls in Year 2 exceeded expectations for their age by writing text to persuade their reader to take a donkey ride.

The effectiveness of the governing body has improved from good to outstanding since the previous inspection because it has made a significant leap forward in its

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influence on the direction of the school. In spite of several changes in its membership, it has become more robust in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. One result of this is that safeguarding procedures are now outstanding. This is a highly cohesive school where members of the governing body have close links with pupils and actively seek their views. Pupils, staff and the governing body are justifiably proud of their school and their achievements.

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

- Enrich learning for children in the Reception classes by:
  - ensuring that resources for children working at an activity of their choice, either indoors or outside, are always highly stimulating
  - allocating an adult to circulate and provide sensitive support when children are working at activities of their choice.

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

**1**

Attainment in tests at the end of Year 2 over recent years has usually been high in mathematics and reading, and above average in writing. A very large majority of pupils exceed expectations for their age in science, a large majority in physical education, a majority in ICT and history, and almost half in geography. The lessons seen during the inspection confirm that these strengths in achievement across the curriculum are set to continue. For example, pupils in Year 1 demonstrated a high level of both mathematical and geographical skill in using language related to position and directions. This lesson exemplified pupils' typically excellent behaviour because they are so engaged with their learning. They are confident and independent, with impressive levels of concentration and perseverance.

The maturity of these young pupils and their understanding of what they are learning mean that they support each other very effectively, whether by offering sensible guidance or referring a classmate to an adult. Focused, individual support ensures that all groups make equally outstanding progress, including the very few pupils who are learning English as an additional language, pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities, and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. Although boys' attainment in writing reflects the national trend and does not match that of the girls, it exceeds the national average for boys nationally as much as their female classmates' attainment exceeds the national average for girls.

Pupils have a very strong sense of right and wrong which they relate to themselves and others. In assemblies, pupils demonstrated empathy as they discussed a story about a worried child and how this might apply to others as well as themselves. Staff are extremely sensitive to extending pupils' understanding of the value of cultural differences without being tokenistic. As a result, pupils respond with remarkable maturity to activities about discrimination as well as embracing new experiences and knowledge about a variety of world and United Kingdom customs and traditions. Reflecting the school's award in this area, they have a better understanding of how

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to adopt healthy lifestyles than most pupils of their age and seek to influence their families with presentations about the value of a healthy breakfast. Given the strengths in both their academic and personal development, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

High expectations from staff apply equally to all pupils’ personal and academic development. The stated approach is that staff assume a pupil ‘can do’ until they have evidence otherwise. Highly positive relationships between adults and pupils, a rapid pace to lessons and excellent use of assessment to meet each pupil’s needs combine to underpin seamless behaviour management. Teachers make extremely effective use of technology to add interest and enjoyment for pupils while maintaining high expectations of their learning. For example, impressive use of the interactive whiteboard enabled pupils in Year 1 to make outstanding gains in recognising ‘igh’ words and distinguishing them from ‘y’ words within a 30-minute period. The use of assessment to group pupils according to their needs and providing them with constant feedback about how well they are doing is highly effective. Teaching assistants are very well briefed and make discreet and valuable contributions to different groups of pupils without reducing their independence. Teaching and learning were excellent for a group of pupils in Year 2 who have been finding recognising letters and sounds quite difficult. A variety of extremely well-chosen teaching strategies enabled them to recognise their new learning and achievements, their self-confidence flourishing as the session progressed.

<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

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Interesting topics such as ‘Aliens’ inspire pupils’ imaginations and enable them to make links in their learning between ‘real’ science and imaginative writing and their use of computer technology, reflecting the school’s ICT award. Innovative and carefully planned arrangements for personal and social education enable pupils to work in ‘family’ groups of mixed ages for this part of the curriculum. This enriches their discussion, experience and their learning and contributes to their high level of thoughtfulness about serious issues. Staff have access to a raft of intervention strategies, programmes and resources to use and modify to meet individual needs. Their flexibility and rapid response help to prevent difficulties from becoming entrenched, and contribute to the relatively small proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs.

Excellent links with a range of external professionals and a variety of community organisations are used to benefit the learning and welfare of each pupil as needs arise. Several parents and carers remarked on their appreciation of the excellent links with local pre-school providers which eased their child’s transition into school. Members of the governing body and staff liaise closely to take exceptional care to support all pupils, including those who face the most challenging circumstances.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has worked highly successfully in strong partnership with new colleagues and a new governing body through a period of challenge and change. Despite this context, together they have strengthened the effectiveness of the school and its links with the local and wider community. The headteacher plays a pivotal role in local community initiatives. This ensures that the school remains extremely well informed about pupils’ needs and seeks to support families, for example by increasing learning and training opportunities for them. The governing body and headteacher evaluate their links with the local and wider community rigorously, including interviews with pupils about ‘belonging to groups’. Pupils benefit from opportunities to work with pupils from different backgrounds in the wider community.

Staff are totally committed to school improvement and the promotion of equality of opportunity for pupils. They are reflective practitioners who constantly review and refine their practice to meet the needs of pupils and their families. They are fully involved in detailed analysis of how well different groups of pupils are doing. This is a

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major contributory feature in the equally outstanding progress made by different groups of pupils and the successful narrowing of previous gaps in achievement between boys and girls. Safeguarding procedures are extremely thorough and exceed statutory requirements. The extent to which members of the governing body evaluate the effectiveness of the school’s policies through discussion with pupils and hearing their views is exemplary.

*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>2</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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management of this provision have supported good development since the previous inspection. The team more regularly takes greater account of children’s interests and prior learning in planning activities. Assessment has become more detailed and organised so staff share more precise information about how to promote each child’s development. Teaching and learning are good because good use is made of this assessment and there is a skilful emphasis upon promoting children’s key skills. For example, during the inspection children enjoyed working with an adult to find words beginning with ‘c’ and, having produced a sizeable list, then had their learning reinforced effectively by appealing ‘creative cutting’ activities to make ‘castles’ and ‘crowns’. Children developed key literacy and mathematical skills well by sorting items beginning with ‘s’ and ‘e’ into two different groups, and sustained a good level of cooperative working without direct adult intervention to do so.

Increasingly, children have opportunities to make choices and learn independently both inside and outside. During the inspection, a group of boys sustained good levels of concentration, made good use of coordination skills and made good gains in their understanding of weight and balance as they tested themselves in the construction

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of towers with wooden blocks. However, not all resources are equally stimulating and so not all activities are equally successful at accelerating learning when children work independently. Adults usually lead each activity, so there is not always an adult available to circulate and provide sensitive support for independent work both inside and outside. That said, children enjoyed developing imaginative stories related, at least initially, to ‘castles’, with the support of a teaching assistant in the outside area. Children’s welfare is paramount and they demonstrate a strong sense of security and well-being in their willingness to embrace new experiences.

*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

A higher proportion of parents and carers returned inspection questionnaires than is usual in primary schools. Most are happy with the work of the school. A few shared a variety of concerns that were shared anonymously with the school, the most common of which related to the way the school communicates with them, either about their child’s progress or taking account of their views. The inspection team judged that these aspects were good. For example, there are several opportunities on a day-to-day basis for parents and carers to communicate with class teachers or senior staff, and several methods of sharing information for those who may not be able to come into school on a daily basis. A very large majority of parents and carers agreed that the school keeps their child safe and helps them to have a healthy lifestyle. These are outstanding elements of the school’s work.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Northway Infant 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 122 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	68	14	25	3	5	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	40	70	14	25	2	4	1	2
The school informs me about my child’s progress	29	51	22	39	3	5	2	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	51	20	35	3	5	3	5
The teaching is good at this school	34	60	17	30	4	7	1	2
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	34	60	18	32	1	2	3	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	58	21	37	2	4	1	2
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)	29	51	20	35	3	5	2	4
The school meets my child’s particular needs	31	54	20	35	2	4	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	42	26	46	2	4	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	49	20	35	3	5	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	35	61	16	28	2	4	3	5
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	35	61	16	28	3	5	2	4

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 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"> <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.**



12 October 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Northway Infant School, Tewkesbury GL20 8PT**

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. A special thank-you goes to those pupils who shared their work and ideas with me in the library, and those pupils who talked about their work with me when I visited their classroom. We know that most of you enjoy school enormously and most of your parents and carers are very happy that you attend Northway. We can understand this, because you go to an outstanding school. There are too many very good things to mention every one, but here are some.

- You make fantastic progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You learn extremely well in lessons because teachers are brilliant at planning to meet everyone's needs. They know how well you can achieve and help you to aim high.
- We are very impressed by your extremely good behaviour.
- You are enthusiastic about learning, work really hard, and help each other.
- You have plenty of exciting topics such as 'Aliens' that make really interesting links between subjects.
- All the adults in school and the governors want the best for you and they work very hard together to keep making the school even better.

We think the most important thing for the school to do next is to make sure that all the activities for children in the Reception classes are always equally interesting, and that there is an adult to move around and see what everyone is doing when children are working on their own or in small groups at something they have chosen.

We know that you will continue to behave so brilliantly and hope that you always enjoy learning so much.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin  
Lead inspector

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