

Northchapel Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125846
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381139
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Corr
Headteacher	Sarah Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2009
School address	Pipers Lane Northchapel Petworth GU28 9JA
Telephone number	01428 707352
Fax number	01428 707447
Email address	office@northchapel.w-sussex.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision	Little Oaks Pre-School
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	22
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	1 July 2009

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	17–18 October 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons or part lessons taught by four teachers, observed assemblies and the work of the pre-school. They held meetings with the Chair and representatives of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning documents, school evaluations, assessment information and pupils' work. In addition, inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 49 parents and carers as well as those from staff and pupils.

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 strategies for improving pupils' writing skills, particularly for boys and pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- How well the curriculum and feedback for pupils on the quality of their work motivate and engage pupils in their learning and ensures that they know how to improve.
- How well the changed leadership and management arrangements have established a clear focus for school improvement and are giving the school the capacity to sustain developments.

Information about the school

Most pupils in this small village school are from White British backgrounds, and a few other heritages are represented in low numbers. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. There are significantly more girls than boys. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is high. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school is higher than in other schools of this size. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of Little Oaks Pre-School and the Reception class. Other pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.

Since the last inspection, the school has undergone significant change. The school has been reorganised from a three-tier to a two-tier system and the introduction of Year 6 pupils. Facilities have been developed to accommodate the increase in roll and a kitchen offering hot meals. The school has experienced staff mobility, including many periods of extended staff leave and changes at senior level. When the previous headteacher left in January 2011, the school entered a partnership arrangement with another school nearby whereby both schools share a headteacher.

The school holds Healthy School and Eco-School awards.

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

Northchapel Primary School is a good school. It successfully places itself at the heart of the community and is valued by it. The school has developed well since becoming an all-through primary school. It has successfully retained its identity as a small school which promotes aspects of pupils' personal development exceptionally well. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school, recognising its vibrant environment and positive ethos which values each pupil as an individual. Consequently, pupils develop well personally and academically, and are prepared well for secondary education.

Adults have positive, encouraging relationships with pupils and manage them well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and their explanations and questioning successfully promote learning. Pupils say that they learn well because teachers make lessons fun, reflecting the success of the revised curriculum in interesting pupils. They work hard and achieve well across all their areas of learning because the activities planned for them are relevant to their experience and motivate them to find things out for themselves. Children get off to a good start in Little Oaks and Reception. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is above average overall, and performance at the higher levels is improving steadily. The school's systems to identify gaps in pupils' learning and set targets are embedded in everyday practice, so that pupils have a good understanding of the next steps they need to take. While teaching is good throughout the school, sometimes the learning aims or success criteria shared with pupils are rather broad and not sufficiently focused on the small learning steps to be achieved within the lesson. On occasion, particularly in writing, all pupils in the class undertake similar tasks. While this enables them to demonstrate their different levels of skills, it does not always take them forward quickly enough from their individual starting points. Consequently, a few pupils who find learning more difficult do not progress as rapidly as their peers.

The new headteacher brings first-rate experience to the school and has an astute overview of the school's performance. Management arrangements are working effectively. Improvement plans are well thought-out and staff have a strong, shared sense of how these can be achieved. The links with the partner school are successfully broadening opportunities for teachers' professional development. However, the school recognises that more teachers have still to gain the skills necessary to fully implement the curriculum plans to extend learning through outdoor activities in its 'forest school'. The success with which the school has maintained its

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developments while managing significant staff changes, including at senior level, demonstrates its good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better, and thereby raise pupils' attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy, by:
 - making sure that the success criteria identified for pupils' learning always accurately identifies the small steps for pupils' learning and is closely matched to the range of abilities in each class
 - ensuring that staff have training to develop the knowledge and skills to implement the school's plan for outdoor learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Because of the nature of small year groups, pupils' abilities and attainment at the end of Year 6 varies from year to year, but is generally above average. The disruption caused by frequent staff changes has been managed well to minimise any loss of momentum in pupils' learning and progress. Consequently, pupils make good progress from their starting points in acquiring the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and develop more advanced skills, such as problem solving and independent study. Pupils work very well together in groups, supporting each other and sharing ideas. This was shown to good effect when they worked in pairs applying their basic addition and subtraction knowledge to set up word problems; these were then evaluated when other pairs tried to solve them. Although sometimes tasks are not closely enough matched to pupils' needs, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the detail of the expected learning is not always made explicit enough, all groups of pupils make good progress.

Pupils are articulate and have a wide vocabulary because of the emphasis placed on developing pupils' communication skills as preparation for their writing. However, pupils' writing skills are not as well developed as their reading and numeracy skills. Pupils are confident and self-motivated, and thoroughly enjoy finding things out for themselves and sharing their ideas about what they want to learn in their 'learning journeys'. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the many practical tasks set for them, such as when they consolidated their understanding of the properties of cubes by making them from straws and soft modelling material; more-able pupils effectively extended their knowledge by making cuboids. Throughout the school, pupils work with high levels of concentration.

Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' great enjoyment of school and all that it offers. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is demonstrated in their positive personal qualities such as cooperation, kindness and respect. In assemblies, pupils celebrate and take a pride in one another's achievements and reflect on important issues impacting on their lives. Pupils respond extremely well to the school's promotion of healthy lifestyles, for example in the introduction of hot

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meals and active participation in a range of sports clubs, and recognised in the Healthy School award. They share their understanding extremely well with their families, such as when reflecting on how much fruit and vegetables they have eaten in school. They undertake the 'global challenge', where older pupils monitor their own activity using pedometers to see how far they can 'get around the world' over a period of time. They feel extremely well cared for and know that there is always an adult to turn to for help when needed. Pupils are taught to manage risks for themselves, for instance by playing safely on the climbing equipment or when working in pairs in the 'forest school'. Pupils make good contributions to the school and wider community, including successful fundraising to cover the swimming pool as a community facility. Those on the school council represent their peers well, planning book week or advising staff on setting up the new house system. The school's family ethos is promoted well through the buddy system, for example ensuring that younger pupils or those new to the school fully enjoy their playtimes.

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	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are typically planned to make learning practical and relevant to everyday experiences. Teachers are clear in their expectations and consistently apply the systems designed to motivate pupils. For example, pupils are very enthusiastic about the 'Pen Licence' and strive hard to improve their handwriting so that they can change from writing in pencil to pen. The introduction of a new handwriting policy is having a positive impact on pupils' fluency in getting their thoughts down on paper. Teachers set tasks which interest both boys and girls, making sure that all are

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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equally engaged in their learning. Topics successfully grab pupils' interest, keep their attention and make learning coherent. For instance, pupils reinforced their understanding of the impact of rationing during and after the Second World War when they developed their understanding of measures by weighing and measuring out the weekly rations for a family of four. The school has developed good practice in the regular assessment of pupils' progress, identifying gaps in pupils' understanding, and sharing this information with pupils. Marking is informative and time is given to follow up work to ensure that pupils have understood what they have to do to improve further. In the few lessons where pupils made satisfactory rather than good progress, this was because the planned learning was not precisely enough focused on pupils' next steps.

Attractive and stimulating displays give a good insight into the wide range of pupils' learning experiences, and provide them with useful information and challenge for further investigation. The school has successfully revised its curriculum to ensure that subjects are studied in depth whilst giving pupils opportunities to apply their basic literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. The locality is used very well, and recognised in the Eco-school award. For example, topic learning is brought to life through visits to local farms and museums, and particularly with the introduction of the 'forest school' for one class. The impact of this development was seen during the inspection when the lesson took place in the woods near the school and pupils were enthused by their task to find items to turn into paint pigments, effectively extending their art skills and their understanding of early paintings.

Good care, support and guidance underpin the school's positive ethos and effectively support learning. Pupils, parents and carers appreciate the safe environment. The school's work with pupils and families facing challenging circumstances provides valuable support for pupils in potentially vulnerable situations, and helping to remove barriers to their learning. Many parents and carers commented positively on the success of transition arrangements into the school. A variety of strategies are used to promote progress when pupils are identified as not making the expected progress. Some of these arrangements to target support more closely to pupils' needs are relatively recently introduced, and their impact is not yet reflected in stronger rates of progress over time for those involved.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

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The leadership team shares a clear vision for the school's development with the governing body, and staff morale is high. The governing body is well led and has taken prompt action to secure strong leadership and the future viability of the school. The governing body researched the principles of partnership work before entering a formal agreement, and carefully set up arrangements to meet the needs of this village school. Collaborative work with the partner school is at a relatively early stage but its impact is seen in the introduction of new approaches. For example, the introduction of 'The Northchapel Way', based on a system running very successfully in the partner school, extends the information for parents and carers about their child's academic and personal development and readiness for learning. Parents and carers commented positively on the way in which they can raise any concerns at an early stage because the headteacher or governing body representatives are present in the playground each morning.

Safeguarding arrangements are robust and embedded in the school's work. Local services and agencies are used well to enhance the well-being of pupils experiencing potentially difficult circumstances and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has a good understanding of the community it serves and promotes community cohesion well. Because of the increased opportunities for pupils to visit other locations and places of worship, pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures and faiths has developed well since the last inspection when it was a key area for development. The promotion of equality of opportunity and approaches to tackle any form of discrimination are good. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly so that teachers identify the needs of individual pupils at an early stage. As a result, all groups of pupils make good progress.

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	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

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Early Years Foundation Stage

The close proximity of the pre-school and the Reception class ensures close working between the two stages. The good leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are reflected in positive parental comments. For instance, parents and carers of children who recently moved into Reception comment particularly favourably on the ease of transition. Children are settled and happy in both areas because they are well cared for and safe. The pre-school meets the requirements of its registration. Staff are experienced and understand the needs of children in their care, including the youngest children who are still under three. Provision is linked closely to meet the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The creation of a separate Reception class this year rather than in a mixed class with Year 1 pupils reflects the governing body's targeted investment of resources, ensuring that children have a focused range of experiences which meet their needs closely. Reception children are given a good start to school, and pre-school children benefit from easy interaction with older Reception children.

Children's attainment on entry varies significantly from year to year because of the nature of small year groups so that there is some variation in children's attainment at the end of each year. Generally, by the time children start Year 1, their attainment is in line with that expected for their age in all areas of learning, which represents good progress from their starting points. Children sustain interest and concentration well, for example when dressed as firemen in the role-play area. The strength in the teaching of key skills, such as letters, sounds and writing, is seen in children's early recording of their activities in their 'learning journals'. Staff provide an exciting range of activities, seen when the teacher dressed up to introduce the festival of Divali, and followed up with tasks which helped children to understand Indian food and art.

The assessment of children's learning is detailed and thorough, and key achievements are recorded in children's 'learning journeys', which are shared regularly with parents and carers. Staff plan a wide range of activities both inside and outdoors, and children enjoy good opportunities for free-flow between these. The outdoor area is well organised to support all areas of learning, although opportunities are more limited for physical development on a regular basis. The school plans to improve facilities for easier and more regular use of tricycles and scooters as the next stage of development when finances become available.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

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Views of parents and carers

Around 64% of parents and carers returned inspection questionnaires. All but a very few of the responses expressed positive views about the school's work. A number of parents and carers wrote additional comments and most of these included glowing remarks about how much their children enjoy school, the inspirational ethos for fun learning, and the quality of staff and school leadership. A few questionnaires raised reservations about a small number of issues and these views were taken into consideration during the inspection. They included concerns about how the school helps parents and carers to support learning at home. The inspection found that the school provides parents and carers with detailed information to keep them in touch with learning in school and advice on how this can be extended at home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Northchapel 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 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 76 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	73	11	22	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	73	13	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	51	23	47	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	43	26	53	0	0	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	29	59	19	39	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	49	21	43	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	59	19	39	1	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)	29	59	15	31	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	51	23	47	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	41	27	55	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	47	20	41	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	57	18	37	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	61	17	35	1	2	1	2

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.



19 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northchapel Primary School, Petworth GU28 9JA

Thank you for being so welcoming when we inspected your school and to those of you who completed questionnaires. It was good to see you all so happy and talking about the fun things you do in lessons. Northchapel Primary is a good school.

We were impressed by your exemplary behaviour and the enthusiasm you showed in lessons. You feel very safe and benefit from good care and support from adults. In turn, you look after each other very well. You have an excellent understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles, and I saw this in your energetic involvement in extra-curricular sports clubs. You make a good contribution to your school community, led well by the school council and those of you who undertake regular responsibilities. You work hard because you find learning interesting so that you do well. Teaching is good and the new curriculum is exciting. You learn much because of the way teachers make literacy and numeracy link into your 'learning journeys'. The new 'forest school' is a fun way for Class 3 to learn outdoors.

Our job is to make suggestions about how the school can be even better. We have asked the staff to help you to make faster progress, particularly in English and mathematics. They can do this by making sure that the success criteria for your learning show you exactly what is expected of you by the end of the lesson, and that it is at just the right level for each group, neither too hard nor too easy. More of your teachers have still to be trained to plan activities for you in the 'forest school' and this will give all classes opportunities to learn more new and exciting things in the future.

We wish each of you every success in the future and hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now. You can all help by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings
Lead inspector

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