

# New North Community School

## Inspection report

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|                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 137393             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | NA                 |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 386091             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 9–10 November 2011 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Barbara Firth      |

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>                      | Academy                               |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Non-maintained                        |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–11                                  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                 |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 430                                   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                    |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Margaret Ford                         |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Mary McStay                           |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 6–7 February 2007                     |
| <b>School address</b>                      | 32 Popham Road<br>Islington<br>N1 8SJ |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 020 7704 3900                         |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 020 7704 3909                         |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | admin@newnorthcommunity.com           |

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|---------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>          | 3–11               |
| <b>Inspection date(s)</b> | 9–10 November 2011 |
| <b>Inspection number</b>  | 386091             |

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons and observed 18 teachers. Meetings were held with senior staff, a group of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plans, reports from the School Improvement Partner, policies, in particular regarding behaviour, attendance and safeguarding of pupils, minutes of the governing body meetings, and assessment information that tracked pupils' progress. Questionnaires from pupils, staff and 108 parents and carers were received and analysed.

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

- The current levels of attainment in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and the extent to which all pupils make progress across the school.
- The quality of teaching and how, together with assessment and the curriculum, this affects the learning and progress of all groups of pupils including the more able.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels, including the governing body, in identifying and addressing weaknesses in the school to secure higher standards.

## Information about the school

New North Community School is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. The school transformed into an academy in September 2011. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need, and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals, are both well above the national average. More pupils join the school at other than the usual times than is found in most schools. A very large majority of pupils come from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as a second language is well above the national average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Nursery classes and two Reception classes. The governing body is responsible for a breakfast club and an after-school club. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Healthy School award, the ICT Mark and the International Schools award.

**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

New North Community School is a good school. Pupils from culturally diverse backgrounds work and play together harmoniously as a result of the school's outstanding promotion of community cohesion. Parents and carers greatly appreciate its work, particularly the outstanding care and guidance provided for the pupils and their families and the extensive range of well-supported opportunities for them to find out about their child's experience at school. The very large majority of the responses to the parent questionnaires were wholly positive and all agreed that the school keeps their children safe. A typical parent view is, 'The school does everything it can to help us to help our children.' The effective links between home and school are a significant strength. The pupils enjoy school and this is shown in their good behaviour and outstanding social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils feel very safe in school as a result of safeguarding procedures which are outstanding and which pervade all aspects of school life. Through the relentless efforts of the school attendance is improving and is now average.

Children enter the school with levels of skills and understanding well below those typical for children of this age. As a result of the now outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make very rapid progress. By the time they enter Key Stage 1 they are ready to learn and have developed skills which are broadly in line with national expectations in almost all areas. Inspection evidence and school tracking data show that attainment in the current Year 6, and in other year groups, is similar to the national average. Given pupils' starting points, this represents good progress and achievement. Throughout the school, the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. However, not all lessons provide enough challenge for more-able pupils and teachers do not always encourage pupils to extend their learning through the use of individual targets for improvement. The curriculum is well matched to the needs and interests of the pupils. Pupils' learning and well-being are closely monitored and this makes a significant contribution to the good progress made by pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have recently arrived in the country and speak little or no English.

As a result of clear strategic planning and dynamic leadership by the headteacher, the school has improved the quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection. Leaders at all levels are involved in focused and formal self-evaluation and have made a good start in improving attainment, which is evident particularly in Key Stage 1. Senior leaders and governors make good use of

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monitoring activities to plan for improvement and have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This demonstrates that the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Accelerate the progress of all groups of children in the school and raise attainment by:
  - making sure there is a sharper match between work set and the differing abilities
  - raising expectations and increasing the challenge for more-able pupils
  - ensuring that all pupils have individual targets for improvement and understand the next steps they have to take to reach them.
  
- Sustain the improvement in attendance by targeting the small minority of pupils who are persistently absent.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge well below levels typical for children of this age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and on entry to Year 1 attainment is broadly average, except in the area of numeracy and problem solving where it is still below average. Children's better progress is reflected in the current Years 1 and 2, where attainment has also improved and is now average. Results in past years at the end of Year 6 have been below the national average. However, inspectors found that pupils' attainment seen in lessons was consistently of an average standard. Examination of pupils' work in their books confirmed this, as did detailed tracking of pupils' progress provided by the school. Pupils in Year 2 for example, were able to independently select appropriate information from research materials and use a range of connectives and simple adjectives when writing sentences on the topic of 'Plastics' which they were then able to share during the plenary with the rest of the class.

As a result of well-targeted support both in class and in small groups, progress is good for all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and also those that speak English as an additional language. Pupils enjoy learning, and in all lessons observed, they demonstrated positive attitudes and an enthusiasm to learn. Their good and often exemplary behaviour in class and around the school contributes to their good progress. This was seen to good effect in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where they eagerly cooperated with each other to work out percentages of increasing difficulty.

Pupils feel very safe and are confident that adults will help them whenever problems occur. Advice on e-safety ensures they have an excellent awareness of keeping themselves from harm when using computers. Pupils have an excellent awareness of

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how to stay fit and healthy. The majority of pupils take advantage of the healthy meals provided by the school and eagerly take part in extra-curricular sporting activities. This reflects the Healthy Schools award well. Pupils are proud and committed to their school. The school council, green team and information and communication technology (ICT) technicians provide opportunities for them to take on responsibility and contribute to school life and, through extensive fund raising, to the lives of others, both locally and abroad. Average attainment in basic skills and average attendance prepare pupils satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They celebrate each other’s cultures particularly well, reflecting the school’s International award. This was seen to excellent effect in an assembly about Eid, organised and led by the pupils.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 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        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>  | <b>2</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>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| <b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>1</b> |

## How effective is the provision?

The good progress pupils are currently making is a result of good teaching. Nearly all of the teaching seen was good with none that was inadequate. Teachers manage classes successfully and make use of a variety of resources to ensure pupils take an active part in lessons. Reflecting the school’s ICT award, pupils use computers well to explain new concepts and teachers make good use of questioning to require pupils to draw conclusions and offer opinions. Pupils enjoy their work, often think and concentrate well and make swift gains in their learning when work is well matched to their abilities. A specific focus on the teaching of writing is helping to raise attainment, as is the grouping of pupils by ability in mathematics in Key Stage 2. The pace of learning is not as consistently brisk, particularly for more-able pupils, when

<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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activities are not sharply matched to pupils’ learning needs. Where there is best practice in assessment, teachers write helpful comments on how work could be improved and pupils also write comments to show they have understood. Although in Key Stage 2, pupils have individual targets to improve their learning in literacy, this is not the case for mathematics or in Key Stage 1. As a result pupils do not always know what they have to do to improve their learning.

The school provides a well-organised, imaginative and effective curriculum which contributes well to pupils’ personal development and well-being. Cross-curricular planning for literacy and ICT is good, as seen in examples of work by pupils in history, but is less well developed in supporting pupils’ progress in numeracy. The good curriculum is enriched with many visitors and visits and specialist teaching in French, music, ICT and sports. A good range of well-attended extra-curricular clubs and a variety of learning opportunities outside of the classroom, including visits to local facilities such as the Sadler’s Wells Theatre, contribute greatly to pupils’ personal and social development.

One of the key strengths of the school is the way that it looks after its pupils as individuals, particularly the most vulnerable. Pastoral support is a strength of the school and this has a positive impact on the good outcomes for pupils, particularly the promotion of courtesy, good manners and respect. Outstanding support and carefully drafted individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enable them to make good progress. Planning for their individual needs is thorough and their progress is carefully monitored. Those pupils who join the school beyond the normal starting points are quickly integrated into the life of the school so that they make similar progress to others. There are many examples of significant successes in the way that the school helps pupils overcome their difficulties and barriers to learning so that they achieve well, and potentially vulnerable pupils benefit greatly from the excellent work the school carries out with an extensive range of external agencies. As one parent said, ‘One of my children has special educational needs and the school is excellent at helping him learn. This is a really good school.’ The breakfast club and after-school club, managed by the governing body, provide a good range of activities and contribute well to the overall high quality of care offered by the school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>1</b> |

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher’s vision has been instrumental in creating an ambitious staff team who share a common outlook in driving school improvement. She ensures that resources are used well to provide a stimulating environment in which to learn. Parents value a wide range of excellent opportunities to be actively involved in shaping the life of the school and enthusiastically attend workshops about their children’s learning and also those to improve their own skills. Exceptionally well-developed support systems in the school are complemented by an extensive range of partnerships with outside specialists to support the needs of vulnerable pupils. Prudent financial management and targeting of resources have ensured that the school gives good value for money.

The school has recently revised and improved the way it evaluates the quality of its provision. Staff are challenged to further improve the quality of teaching and learning and supported in developing their practice. This was reflected in the very high proportion of good teaching seen during the inspection and in the way pupils’ progress is accelerating and attainment is rising. Leaders are using data more effectively to identify when pupils are making less progress than expected and using this information to intervene quickly and support their learning.

Governors have a good understanding of the school and share with it a passion to make New North Community School outstanding. They are very supportive of the school’s work and take their monitoring roles seriously. Safeguarding is outstanding and there are rigorous recruitment and vetting checks in place to ensure that pupils are kept very safe. Child protection procedures are exemplary and implemented rigorously. The school is inclusive and there are good systems in place to promote equality, and the staff and the governing body ensure that discrimination in any form is not tolerated. The school works exceptionally well with its parents and carers and has developed outstanding provision for local, global and cultural development within its community cohesion policy. Pupils’ understanding of international as well as local communities is promoted very well, through links forged with a range of communities including schools in South Africa, which pupils raise money to support.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 2        |
| <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>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>2</b> |



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|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b> | <b>2</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>2</b> |

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection and is now outstanding. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. They settle in quickly and are keen to learn. Children play well together and are very well behaved. They enjoy learning in this busy environment. Data showed that children’s attainment when they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage is well below that expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and personal and social development. As a result of highly effective teaching, by the end of Reception they have made good progress and attain levels that are broadly in line with those expected for their age, except in numeracy and problem solving, which remain below average. The children make friends quickly and relationships between adults and children are excellent. They share toys and books and are able to choose and initiate activities.

Children enjoy a wide range of stimulating and purposeful activities, indoors and out, which are carefully chosen to meet their needs and interests. There is a balance of activities that are led by well-qualified and skilled adults and those from which children can choose, for example when children were seen to be enthusiastically participating in animated role play in the home corner. Teaching is consistently good with some outstanding elements. Teachers know how young children learn very well and engage and motivate them very effectively. For example in an outstanding lesson observed in the Nursery, the children were highly engaged in talking about the bread they were baking for ‘the tiger who was coming to tea’. At the same time, in the role play area children were very skilfully acting out running a cafe scenario which involved them in exchanging tea for money.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Exceptionally high levels of care and welfare are provided for the children to ensure their well-being. The school’s support for the vulnerable children is of the highest standard. Partnerships with parents and carers and external agencies are strong so that specialist help is sought and provided when needed. Teachers and helpers are highly perceptive and note down significant moments of each child’s progress. These records are used astutely to ensure that learning is moved speedily forward with joy. As one parent said, ‘The teachers are really inspiring, friendly and funny. Our son really loves it and is making good progress.’

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>1</b> |
| Taking into account:   |          |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage                          | 2        |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage                       | 1        |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1        |

## Views of parents and carers

Approximately 25% of parents and carers returned questionnaires, which is a below average return rate, and not all completed every question. The school enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of parents who returned a questionnaire. Almost all respondents were very positive about the school and felt that it keeps pupils safe and helps them maintain a healthy lifestyle. A number of individual comments praised the high quality care, support and guidance given to pupils, and parents of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were particularly supportive of that provision. A very small minority of parents disagreed that the school communicates with them well about their child’s learning and also disagreed that the school met their child’s individual needs well. Inspectors found that the school does meet the needs of the large majority of children well, but that more could be expected of more-able pupils. Through discussions with school staff, inspectors found that the school gave good quality advice and support as to how parents and carers could help their children with their work.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at New North Community 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 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 430 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 63             | 58 | 44    | 41 | 1        | 1  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 64             | 59 | 41    | 38 | 3        | 3  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child’s progress   | 47             | 44 | 55    | 51 | 3        | 3  | 1                 | 1 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 33             | 31 | 65    | 60 | 9        | 8  | 0                 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 43             | 40 | 51    | 47 | 4        | 4  | 2                 | 2 |
| The school helps me to support my child’s learning  | 38             | 35 | 53    | 49 | 13       | 12 | 1                 | 1 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 39             | 36 | 57    | 53 | 5        | 5  | 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) | 39             | 36 | 51    | 47 | 7        | 6  | 3                 | 3 |
| The school meets my child’s particular needs  | 31             | 29 | 61    | 56 | 13       | 12 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 40             | 37 | 52    | 48 | 10       | 9  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 36             | 33 | 54    | 50 | 6        | 6  | 6                 | 6 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 42             | 39 | 56    | 52 | 3        | 3  | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school   | 49             | 45 | 56    | 52 | 3        | 3  | 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](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.**



11 November 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of New North Community School, London N1 8SJ**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently and for helping us with the inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and sharing your lessons. We found that New North Community School is a good school and is giving you a good start to your education. These are some of the things we liked about your school.

- Everyone at the school works well together and you are making good progress in your lessons because you are well taught.
- You are happy at school, have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and you behave very well in class and around the school.
- You make a good contribution to the daily life of the school and you have good relationships with one another, your teachers, and you show respect for the different backgrounds of others.
- The staff make your school a very safe and caring place to learn and provide you with interesting opportunities to make your learning better.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to an excellent start with their education.
- The senior leaders are doing a good job and know how to make the school even better.

To help the school improve further, this is what we have asked the staff to do.

- Work with some of your parents and carers to make sure you all attend school regularly.
- Make sure that the work they set you is challenging so that you reach even higher standards.
- Work with you to set you targets for English and mathematics and ensure that you know what you have to do to reach them.

We really enjoyed being in your school and hope that you will continue to work hard and enjoy everything that your school offers.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Firth  
Lead inspector

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