

# Northlands Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 125576              |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Warwickshire        |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 381092              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 28–29 November 2011 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Keith Sadler        |

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>                      | Primary                           |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                         |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–11                              |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                             |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 228                               |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Phillip Ash                       |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Matthew Cox                       |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 17 September 2008                 |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Pinders Lane<br>Rugby<br>CV21 2SS |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01788 542440                      |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01788 542440                      |
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|---------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>          | 3–11                |
| <b>Inspection date(s)</b> | 28–29 November 2011 |
| <b>Inspection number</b>  | 381092              |

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 16 lessons led by eight different teachers. The inspectors held meetings with a member of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation. This included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Questionnaires from 79 parents and carers, from staff and from pupils in Key Stage 2 were analysed and their responses taken into account.

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

- Inspectors analysed the consistency of pupils' progress across the different aspects of mathematics.
- They considered what strategies teachers use to ensure that pupils are clear about the next steps in their learning.
- Inspectors reviewed the extent to which the governing body influences provision and outcomes.
- They investigated the extent of the role that teachers with responsibilities play in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures.

## Information about the school

Northlands is an average-sized primary school. About half the pupils are of White British heritage and the remainder are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. They are mainly Polish, and there are a few pupils at an early stage of learning English. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is average, as is the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of part-time Nursery provision and a Reception class.

The school's leadership has gone through a turbulent period since the previous inspection. In 2010/11 the school had an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher following the resignation of the substantive headteacher. Both these leaders have now left the school. A new substantive headteacher took up post from the beginning of the current term. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed and is due to start in the summer term of 2012.

There is a breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body and was included in this inspection. The school has gained Healthy Schools (enhanced) status and the Eco-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?**

**3**

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

**3**

## Main findings

Northlands provides a satisfactory quality of education. It has a welcoming and positive environment because of the good care, guidance and support provided. In particular, staff care for the pupils well and this leads to good relationships throughout the school. Pupils say they feel safe, and parents and carers appreciate that their children are looked after well.

The new headteacher has made a strong and effective start and is already galvanising the staff team and developing a shared ethos. This is rightly focused on driving improvements including, most importantly, bringing greater consistency in the quality of teaching. He is also determined to raise attainment, particularly in writing and mathematics. Because of inequalities in the distribution of roles of middle leaders, they are not yet playing their full part in making sure these improvements happen as quickly as possible.

Pupils generally enjoy school and make satisfactory progress. It accelerates in Years 2 and 6, where teaching is consistently good. Astute interventions and improvements in teaching mean that there is a trend of stronger progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. Not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels of attainment. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. It is higher in reading and writing than in mathematics, because pupils' skills in applying mathematics to solve problems are not strong. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory overall progress, but provision for those in the early stages of learning English is not well coordinated to be effective. For example, an increasing number of children enter the Nursery or Reception class at an early stage of learning English, and while the staff are accomplished in supporting general language acquisition, there is not enough focused individual and small group support for them.

Teaching is satisfactory. It is sometimes good, but there is not enough good practice to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. There are inconsistencies in the accuracy and use of assessment information to plan to meet the needs of different ability groups, particularly the higher-attaining pupils. Furthermore, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to reach the next step in their learning. However, there are signs of improvement. For example, a review of the teaching of sounds and letters has resulted in a re-vamped curriculum for reading and writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. This is giving a boost to pupils' literacy skills and progress is quickening.

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The new headteacher has already collected a good range of information about provision and pupils' progress. This informs a clear and honest picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses that is being used well to support the good improvement plan. He has also embarked on a programme of regular meetings with staff at which individual pupils' progress is being reviewed. This useful strategy is helping to bring more rigour and accountability into the school's management structures. The governing body has managed the senior staffing difficulties well over the past two years, but is over-reliant on staff for information about school performance because its members do not visit the school regularly to check provision for themselves. Overall, the school has satisfactory capacity to secure further improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise the quality and consistency of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment, by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to carry out practical and investigational mathematics
  - matching work to pupils' needs so all are suitably challenged, particularly the higher-attaining pupils
  - ensuring that assessments are always accurate
  - making sure that pupils are clear about what they need to do to reach the next step in their learning
  - strengthening provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
  
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by:
  - reviewing the distribution of roles and responsibilities for staff, particularly to ensure a clear role in supporting and being responsible for pupils who speak English as an additional language
  - improving governance by ensuring that there is a regular programme of visits to the school by members of the governing body.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Learning was satisfactory in the majority of lessons seen, though in over a third it was good. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils made good progress when learning about division because the class teacher provided a strong challenge for pupils. She used the interactive whiteboard well to divide 20 virtual sweets amongst groups of four, five and 10 pupils. She set good quality practical activities for the pupils, and, on this occasion the higher-attaining pupils made good progress in their

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learning because the activity was matched well to their learning needs. However, too often work lacks challenge and this constrains the pace of pupils’ learning, particularly for the higher attainers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates. They receive a good level of support from teaching assistants, who enable them to progress steadily towards their targets. The good focus on strengthening pupils’ basic skills is starting to pay dividends. The closer attention given to pupils’ mental calculation skills is helping to strengthen progress in mathematics. In addition, more rigorous teaching of the sounds that letters make is aiding pupils’ reading and writing skills. However, too little support for pupils at an early stage of learning English slows their learning.

Pupils are enthusiastic about sport and understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle, although this is not always reflected in their lunchboxes. Their behaviour is frequently good in lessons and around school, but satisfactory overall because a few pupils occasionally disrupt learning. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility, but the influence of the school council is limited. Pupils are proud of being ‘peer mediators’ in the playground, but at present this is limited to supporting pupils in Years 1 and 2. The ‘Eco warriors’ have played an important role in the recent development of the school grounds, and they also ensure that the school recycles rubbish well. Their achievements in gaining the Eco award are celebrated in good quality displays. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They are starting to express opinions, for example in the good quality Year 5 work in which they considered children’s rights. Pupils’ satisfactory basic and personal skills mean that they are prepared suitably for their move to secondary education and life beyond.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress  | 3        |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress                      | 3        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>3</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        |

<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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**The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

**3**

### How effective is the provision?

In the better lessons, the pace of learning is brisk, pupils are challenged well, and good explanations and questioning support good progress. All these characteristics were present in a history lesson in which pupils were provided with a good range of primary and secondary sources. They were keen to classify the Egyptian artefacts and their effective learning was aided by good questions such as, ‘Who do you think used this and why?’ ‘Why do you think that?’ and, ‘What does it tell us?’ However, in too many lessons activities do not take full account of accurate assessments of pupils’ prior learning and this results in some tasks being too easy or hard, particularly in mathematics. In some classes, marking is of good quality. In all classes it is supportive and comprehensive but, in mathematics in particular, it does not always identify the next steps in learning. Teachers use ways to help pupils to understand what they need to do to be successful in lessons, though longer-term targets, particularly for older pupils, are not well focused to enable them to know how to move to the next level.

The curriculum has some good features. Improvements in the curriculum for reading and writing are bringing benefits, and weaknesses in mathematics are being addressed effectively. Well-chosen topics and themes make learning interesting and teachers provide purpose and meaning by linking subjects together well. However, enrichment activities are limited. Although the school intends to start new topics by making visits, this does not always occur. Furthermore, the range of after-school activities is no better than satisfactory, and in the past the range of opportunities available for pupils was wider.

Pastoral support is good and pupils who have social and emotional difficulties are given individual support. Parents and carers commented positively on the good-quality breakfast club, which gives those who attend a healthy and enjoyable start to the school day. Provision for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is good. The school draws well on external agencies such as speech and language specialists and health authority support for those who have disabilities. Efforts to improve attendance from previously low levels have been successful, and at the time of the inspection it had risen to above average.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 3        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>2</b> |

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## How effective are leadership and management?

Improvement has been hampered by uncertainties in the senior leadership of the school since the previous inspection. This has been resolved by the new headteacher, whose strong and effective leadership is leading to a shared commitment to improvement. He is, for example, in the process of strengthening the role of subject leaders. The supportive governing body plays an appropriate role in contributing to school direction, and ensures that arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are satisfactory. Child protection and staff vetting procedures fully meet current national requirements.

The school promotes equal opportunities appropriately. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and staff are working hard to ensure that all groups of pupils gain from what the school has to offer. However, senior staff are aware that the weaker provision for the higher-attaining pupils and those at an early stage of learning English currently limits progress for these groups.

The school itself is a harmonious community and it successfully promotes links within the locality, such as by contributing to the design of a statue and also being involved in art activities in the nearby Caldecott Park. There are good links with a nearby village school, with the two school councils working closely together. Work to promote links with other countries is developing, but in its infancy.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 3        |
| <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>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>  | <b>3</b> |

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Good induction procedures for children entering the Nursery ensure that children



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settle quickly and well. However, a few parents and carers commented that they would have appreciated a home visit for their children who entered school in Reception rather than the Nursery year. Both the teachers are new to the Early Years Foundation Stage, but they work closely together to ensure that activities are planned to provide continuity in learning across the two year groups. They also ensure that there is a good balance between activities that they direct and those that the children choose for themselves. The inside learning areas are of good quality and provide an attractive environment. However, even though the outside area is large and generous, at present it is not well resourced to enable staff to provide good-quality activities across all six areas of learning.

Assessments are used well to ensure that activities provide a good match to children’s learning needs. Much of the teaching is of good quality. This was the case in a sounds and letters session in which Reception children thoroughly enjoyed the routines and were successful in building words from the ‘q’ and ‘qu’ initial sounds. Their good learning here was aided by the teacher having developed good routines for these short sessions. However, a number of children, particularly in the Nursery class, are at an early stage of learning English and their progress is slowed because there is no specialist provision for these children to ensure that they can rapidly access the curriculum.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, although the experienced and well-qualified leader teaches in Year 2 and this limits her opportunity to check provision and children’s progress.

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

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>3</b> |
| 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**

The parents and carers who completed questionnaires were unanimous in saying that their children enjoy school, and most said that overall, they are happy with their children’s experience at the school. A very large majority also said they thought the school is led and managed effectively, and many made positive comments about how the school has developed since the new headteacher was appointed. Their views are summarised by one who wrote: ‘Northlands has struggled recently without having an experienced headteacher. We are hopeful that the new headteacher will be able to make improvements. The school is now starting to get a grip on this and we can already see a difference.’

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A small minority of parents or carers felt that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. This was investigated by the inspection team, who found that a good quality behaviour policy is applied appropriately and that pupils' behaviour is frequently good in lessons and around the school, including in assemblies. A few pupils have emotional or social difficulties and even though these pupils are managed well, and in line with the school's policy, they do occasionally interrupt the learning of others. The school's records show that such incidents are diminishing this term.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Northlands 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 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 228 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 44             | 56 | 34    | 43 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 44             | 56 | 30    | 38 | 1        | 1  | 2                 | 3 |
| The school informs me about my child’s progress   | 35             | 44 | 41    | 52 | 2        | 3  | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 35             | 44 | 35    | 44 | 5        | 6  | 3                 | 4 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 32             | 41 | 40    | 51 | 4        | 5  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child’s learning  | 31             | 39 | 39    | 49 | 7        | 9  | 2                 | 3 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 35             | 44 | 40    | 51 | 3        | 4  | 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) | 37             | 47 | 36    | 46 | 1        | 1  | 1                 | 1 |
| The school meets my child’s particular needs  | 37             | 47 | 32    | 41 | 7        | 9  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 22             | 28 | 38    | 48 | 12       | 15 | 4                 | 5 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 26             | 33 | 41    | 52 | 8        | 10 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 30             | 38 | 46    | 58 | 1        | 1  | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school   | 31             | 39 | 40    | 51 | 7        | 9  | 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 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.**



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Northlands Primary School, Rugby, CV21 2SS**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school, and for telling us your views. I particularly enjoyed watching the Year 3 assembly and I thought that your 'Good Samaritan' rap was brilliant!

Yours is a satisfactory school, which means that you are helped to do some things well but some areas need to be improved. You learn in a friendly atmosphere where the adults take good care of you. Your behaviour is satisfactory and you play together sensibly. We know that you enjoy the topics that you are studying. Year 5 and 6 pupils, for example, have learned well about Egyptians and they enjoyed telling me all about Egyptian life. The teachers make lessons interesting for you but sometimes they do not provide you with work that is challenging enough, particularly for those of you can learn quickly. This is because sometimes, their assessments of your work are not accurate enough. More children are coming into your school who do not speak English, and we have asked the school to help these children learn English even quicker by having an adult to make sure their needs are fully met.

You make satisfactory progress, but it is better in reading than in writing and mathematics. We would like to see you making good progress in mathematics, but at the moment you do not get enough chances to carry out practical mathematical investigations. Also we have asked the school to help those of you who can learn quickly to make more progress, so that many more pupils reach Level 5 by the end of Year 6. We have asked the governing body to make sure that governors come to visit you more often to find out how well you are doing. Finally, we have asked your headteacher to make sure that some teachers have fewer responsibilities, so that they all have enough time to do their jobs well and add to the many improvements made recently.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your education. You can help by making sure that you continue to attend school each day unless you are ill.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler  
Lead inspector

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