

Northgate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	133973
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381582
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2012
Lead inspector	Julie Sackett

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	466
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Gascoigne
Headteacher	Alison Wood
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2009
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	10–11 May 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Julie Sackett	Additional inspector
Christopher Christofides	Additional inspector
Juliet Ward	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The team observed teaching and learning in 27 lessons and part lessons taught by 20 teachers. Discussions were held with senior staff, teachers, members of the governing body, parents and carers and pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school's improvement plan, policies and records of pupils' progress and attainment. The inspection team analysed 91 questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as questionnaires from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Northgate Primary School is a larger than the average primary school. Just over half of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at expected times is above the national average. The school has a local authority funded Special Support Centre (SSC) for pupils with hearing impairments, all of whom have statements for special educational needs. There is a Nursery class and two Reception classes, which together make up the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has a number of awards including Healthy Schools and Dyslexia Friendly awards. The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Northgate Primary School is a good school. The headteacher’s commitment to the school and the local community, ably supported by senior leaders, has been central to sustaining pupils’ good achievement. The school is not yet outstanding because there are slight variations in the quality of teaching across the school. As a result, there is some unevenness in pupils’ progress across the school so that pupils do not achieve outstandingly well.
- Good achievement, identified at the time of the previous inspection, has been sustained. Pupils, including those who attend the Special Support Centre, make good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics from their low starting points to reach broadly average levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is good overall and sometimes outstanding, so that pupils typically enjoy learning and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Where teaching is less effective, opportunities are missed to use open-ended questions to actively involve pupils and evaluate and build on their understanding. The role played by teaching assistants while the teacher is talking to the whole class is less well developed than at other times.
- Pupils’ behaviour is good. They feel very safe in school. They are polite, welcoming and proud of their school. Pupils’ positive attitudes to learning are reflected in attendance rates which are consistently above average.
- Senior leaders, including the governing body, accurately and rigorously monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning. Consequently, the school has a clear and sharp focus on what needs to be done to raise achievement further. The headteacher has been instrumental in maintaining high expectations and this, combined with consistent performance management and carefully targeted professional development, has been highly successful in sustaining good quality teaching during a period of staff mobility, so that pupils

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continue to achieve well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement to outstanding by ensuring that teaching is consistently good with a significant proportion that is outstanding by:
 - increasing teachers' use of open-ended questioning to encourage pupils to contribute actively to lessons and to enable teachers to evaluate and build on pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - developing the role of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning, particularly during sessions when the teacher is speaking to the whole class.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers feel that their children are making good progress and inspection evidence supports this view. All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress overall, regardless of their ability. There is, however, slight unevenness in pupils' progress across the school, with pupils making slower progress where teaching is less effective.

Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and levels of development which are usually well below expectation. The strong relationships and clear and consistent routines established provide a secure framework for the children's future learning. Children's personal, social and emotional development is a particular strength. For example, one child in Nursery happily concentrated for a sustained period of time to colour in a picture with great care. High expectations mean that children make good progress in the development of independence skills. This was evident in the confident and determined way that a group of children used scissors to cut out their drawings of fish before going on to select materials to decorate their pictures. Every opportunity is taken to build on the children's positive attitudes so that activities are interesting and engaging. As a result, their enjoyment of learning is clear and children make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, a group of Reception children developed their understanding of different forces while they thoroughly enjoyed pouring water into a series of gutters to propel their boats. While attainment by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is below average overall, this represents good progress from generally very low starting points.

Extension of the Early Years' curriculum into Year 1 effectively supports the children's smooth transition into Key Stage 1 so that no time is lost in securing further gains in

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their learning. Pupils continue to make good progress during Key Stages 1 and 2 so that, by the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those who attend the Special Support Centre, make good progress because specialist expertise ensures that provision is carefully focused and responsive to individual needs.

There is a strong focus on the development of reading skills, including the development of a regular and systematic approach to teaching pupils the link between letters and sounds (phonics). Training for teachers of all age groups ensures that the teaching of phonics is consistent throughout the school. This ensures that pupils learn to use a range of reading strategies confidently. It also means that pupils who speak English as an additional language acquire the necessary skills to help them to make good progress in other subjects. Initiatives such as these have been successful in reversing a decline in reading attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. Inspection evidence, including current assessments, indicates pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2012 is in line with the national average. The school has been successful in securing a year-on-year improvement in English attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 with average attainment in English and in reading at the end of Year 6.

In mathematics, the school has developed the curriculum very well to ensure that there are more opportunities for pupils to apply basic skills in different subjects. This means that learning is meaningful and relevant so that pupils are highly motivated. For example, during the inspection a child in Reception made good progress in the development of number and spatial awareness to program a floor robot. Meanwhile, Year 6 pupils made outstanding progress in their ability to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to a practical problem. These pupils relished the opportunity to spend a given budget, confidently researching and calculating the purchase of adventure play equipment for the school grounds. As a result of developments such as these, there was a marked improvement in attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2011 so that it was in line with national averages.

Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers who returned a questionnaire consider their children to be well taught and inspectors agree. The quality of teaching is good overall so that all groups of pupils achieve well over time. Typically, teachers' confident subject knowledge is used well to plan lessons which are interesting, meaningful and well-paced. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and develop important personal skills. For example, Year 5 pupils collaborated well on a task to accurately measure and cut lengths of wood to construct their design, successfully modifying their technique in the light of difficulties. Meanwhile, children in Nursery demonstrated well-developed empathy for living things in the great care and attention they paid when stroking the new-born chicks. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is good quality and reflects improvements made since the previous inspection, including the increased role played by pupils in evaluating their own work and in responding to teachers' written points for development. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of what they

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are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Expectations of pupils are high, regardless of their background or ability, as reflected in the excellent quality of presentation in the pupils' work books.

A notable strength of the school is the way in which pupils who attend the Special Support Centre are very effectively enabled to play a full and confident role in mainstream lessons, in addition to sessions attended in the centre. For example, one of the pupils happily and responsibly worked with her peers to prepare and arrange cakes in readiness for a charity cake sale. Teaching assistants play an effective part in supporting pupils' good progress, particularly when they are involved in well-focused one-to-one and small group work. However, the role of teaching assistants during times when the class teacher is addressing the whole class is less well developed, so that, during these times, opportunities are missed to maximise pupils' progress.

While the quality of teaching overall is good, there are slight variations across the school, with some examples of outstanding teaching as well as a minority of lessons where teaching is satisfactory, so that there is some unevenness in pupils' progress. Where teaching is less effective, opportunities are missed to ask pupils open-ended questions so that teachers can evaluate and build on pupils' understanding more promptly and accurately. As a result, pupils are too passive and their progress slows.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils are kept safe and that behaviour is typically good. Most parents and carers who returned a questionnaire agree with these judgements. Relationships are excellent and pupils usually demonstrate care and consideration towards others. Pupils are welcoming and polite and generally behave very well. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions confirm that this is typically the case over time. Nevertheless, while the large majority of pupils' questionnaires suggested that pupils feel safe, a minority indicated that there was some bad behaviour and a very small minority of parents' and carers' questionnaires also noted that this was the case. In discussion with inspectors, pupils suggested that, while most pupils are well behaved, a few can be unkind. However, pupils are confident about what to do if they have any concerns and feel that the school responds promptly and successfully. School records and logs considered during the inspection confirm this view. Pupils have a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying and know that it can take many forms. They have a sensible understanding of their personal safety and of the steps they can take to minimise risks. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, from the youngest children in the school to those in Year 6, make a strong contribution to lessons. Attendance rates, which are consistently above average, reflect pupils' enjoyment of school and all it has to offer.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's commitment to the ongoing development of the school and a sustained drive to help pupils to do their very best has been a key feature in the

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school's success. Senior leaders work very well as a team and complement each other's strengths. The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body know the school's strengths very well and have accurately identified what needs to be done to secure further improvements. The quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress is monitored and evaluated rigorously. Well-targeted professional development successfully supports the development of teachers' practice and has resulted in an increase in the proportion of good and outstanding teaching since the previous inspection, despite some changeover in staff. A range of carefully planned initiatives have been successfully introduced since the previous inspection and these have contributed to pupils' consistent good progress and their enjoyment of learning. These factors illustrate the school has the capacity for continuing improvement.

The curriculum is broad, effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and is very well enriched. There are many opportunities for pupils to work cooperatively and to apply basic skills in different subjects, so that learning is meaningful. The school is strongly inclusive and expectations are high of all pupils, regardless of their ability or background. Senior leaders and governors are effective in tackling discrimination should it occur. Safety matters are given a high priority which ensures that the school is a safe and secure place to be. Safeguarding procedures are effective and meet statutory requirements.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northgate Primary School, Crawley RH10 8DX

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and would like to tell you what we found out about your school. We found that Northgate Primary is a good school and we know you agree. These are the main reasons why we consider it to be a good school:

- Teachers plan interesting and fun lessons for you so that you enjoy learning and attend school regularly.
- You are polite, behave well and want to do your best.
- Teaching is good so that you make good progress. Teachers mark your work very well and this helps you to know what you can do to make your work even better.
- All the adults in school look after you very well and you know what to do if you have a concern.
- Your headteacher and her staff do a really good job in helping you to do your best and to make sure the school gets even better.

We have asked the school to help you to make the best progress you possibly can by increasing the amount of good and excellent teaching. All of you can help by continuing to work hard and doing your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett
Lead inspector

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