

Norton Fitzwarren Church of England Voluntary Controlled Community School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123798
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	380732
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2012
Lead inspector	Joyce Cox

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anna Jones
Headteacher	Kirsti Nelson
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Joyce Cox

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed nine lessons or parts of lessons taught by three teachers. She also observed sessions on the teaching of phonics (pupils learning letter patterns and the sounds they represent) and listened to pupils reading. Lesson observations totalled seven hours. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, teachers and governors. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey, as well as documents provided by the school, in planning the inspection. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at the school's systems to track the progress of pupils, records of monitoring of the quality of teaching, the school's improvement plans and minutes from meetings. The inspector analysed the 37 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as others returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than average and almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age group classes. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are being supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. These needs mainly relate to specific learning or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The school did not meet the government's floor standard in 2011 which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school has had six headteachers in the last eight years and the current headteacher took up her post in September 2011. Since then the school has worked in formal collaboration with another school. Each school retains its own governing body and the headteacher shares her duties between the two schools. The school is currently receiving support from a Local Leader of Education whose school was judged to be outstanding in its last Ofsted report. The school has an on-site pre-school playgroup which is not managed by the governing body and therefore subject to a separate inspection. There is a before-and after-school club which is managed by the school and so formed part of this inspection.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. After a period of disruption which led to attainment and progress falling, the school is improving rapidly and underachievement has been eradicated. The school is not yet good because there are some areas of teaching that require further improvement and because not all staff are fully involved in school improvement. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils are now making at least the progress they should and achievement is satisfactory. Attainment is in line with national averages by the end of Year 6 in English, including reading, and in mathematics. However, writing skills are not as well developed as those in reading and mathematics because the current curriculum offers too few chances for pupils to practise their literacy skills in all subjects.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is best in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class, where teaching enables pupils to achieve well through well-planned tasks. However, a lack of challenging tasks for more-able pupils, too much teacher talk and limited chances to use technology restrict pupils' progress throughout the school.
- The leadership of the headteacher is strong. The robust programme of monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance she implemented immediately after her appointment rapidly ascertained the school's effectiveness. Key weaknesses in teaching and assessment were noted and effective strategies to tackle these and raise pupils' attainment and progress were swiftly implemented. Curriculum provision is satisfactory and has correctly been focused on raising standards. Leaders are now beginning to focus on developing a more dynamic curriculum to provide more exciting learning experiences.
- All pupils behave well. They say they feel safe and display positive attitudes to learning. Year 6 pupils say that the school has improved considerably and been transformed into 'a whole new world' since September 2011.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to write at length across the curriculum.
- Improve teaching so that progress is consistently good or better in all classes by ensuring that:
 - tasks are always well matched to pupils' different abilities and that more able pupils are always challenged
 - ensuring that teachers balance the amount of teacher and pupil talk so that pupils can learn to be more independent learners
 - pupils have more opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT).
- Improve leadership and management by;
 - ensuring that all staff are fully involved in evaluating and implementing school improvement
 - developing a more dynamic and interesting curriculum.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

When children join the Reception class their skills are generally below the levels expected for children of that age. They get a sound start and make satisfactory progress in all the areas of learning. The good focus on children learning the sounds that letters and combinations of letters make (phonics) means that they are well prepared for reading and they gain a good enthusiasm for stories and books. The improved learning environment, both inside and out, is used satisfactorily and there is a suitable range of activities across all the prescribed areas of learning. There has been a significant improvement in progress across Key Stage 1 this year. The teaching of phonics continues to be of high priority and, consequently, attainment in reading is average by the end of Year 2. The pupils are developing satisfactory strategies to tackle unfamiliar words in their reading books and are learning to be increasingly independent readers. Older pupils' attainment in reading rose considerably during this academic year because of improved teaching and organisation of guided reading sessions and new reading books. Year 6 pupils can discuss their reading books and indicate interesting vocabulary with maturity and confidence. Pupils' attainment in writing is broadly average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. The headteacher has introduced new systems for tracking pupils' progress this year which have enabled teachers to identify more easily exactly what needs to be done to move their pupils on. As a result, it was clear in lessons observed and in an examination of pupils' work that pupils are learning more effectively. Teachers are starting to become more imaginative in their approach, so that pupils are much keener to write. They encourage pupils to experiment with vocabulary and imagery and provide exciting scenarios to inspire and enthuse. For example, older pupils were both horrified and inspired when their headteacher was 'captured and held to ransom' by a masked intruder and consequently produced

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high-quality recounts of the kidnapping. A good focus on handwriting and presentation means that pupils take pride in their work. Across the school, pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils are increasingly applying their mathematical skills in a variety of situations.

The school tracks the progress of all pupils well and there is very little difference in the progress made by different groups. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. A review of the provision for these pupils has ensured programmes of support are more effective in closing gaps. Almost all parents and carers believe their children are making good progress, but inspection evidence shows that pupils' progress varies in different year groups and is satisfactory overall.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory, although there are some notable strengths. Staff enjoy respectful relationships with pupils and lessons take place in a calm and purposeful manner that is conducive to learning. Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively, for example when using strategies such as talk partners that enable collaborative work. There is an appropriate mix of adult-led and child-initiated choices in the Early Years Foundation Stage that helps the children develop their learning satisfactorily through a range of experiences.

The teacher's high expectations result in all pupils working hard in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class. Good subject knowledge, planning to meet pupils' different abilities and clear explanations focus lessons well. Well-chosen activities and a brisk pace ensure that learning is effective. This was illustrated well in a mathematics lesson in which pupils worked with great enthusiasm as they estimated, and then carefully measured, angles. They worked speedily and accurately and also extended their vocabulary as they grasped the meaning and correct use of acute and obtuse angles. Where lessons are less successful, those features are not as evident. Teachers do not use the outcomes of assessment consistently to provide suitable tasks which challenge all groups of pupils or adjust tasks to meet pupils' different needs. In those cases, it is the potentially higher-attaining pupils that are catered for least well. On some occasions, the chances for pupils to learn independently and use their initiative are limited as sometimes teachers' talk dominates parts of the lesson. The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is informed by detailed analysis of their learning to date. Carefully planned support from teaching assistants means that these pupils are able to participate fully in activities and to make steady progress in improving their basic literacy and numeracy skills

Pupils have limited chances to use ICT and smart boards to enliven lessons and the curriculum. Marking is regular and encouraging but it does not always make clear what the next steps are in pupils' learning. Most parents and carers regard teaching as good. School data and inspection findings show that teaching is mostly effective

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in the Years 4, 5 and 6 class and assists pupils in making up previous lost ground, enabling them to reach the standards expected for their age. However, teaching is not yet consistently good across the school and overall it is satisfactory.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes in lessons and around the school are key factors in their steadily improving achievement. There are strong relationships between the pupils and adults in the school and a mutual respect clearly exists between them. The breakfast club and after-school clubs provide a calm and sociable start and end to the day. Attendance is broadly average and has improved well during this school year. Punctuality is also shown to have improved greatly during this school year.

Pupils say bullying is extremely rare, although they are aware that it has been an issue in the past. They discussed the different types of bullying knowledgably, such as cyber bullying, name calling, and that related to colour and race. They were confident that any bullying would not be tolerated in the school and that, should it occur, it would be dealt with effectively. There are very positive relationships throughout the school and pupils said that they feel safe. Pupils clearly understand the dangers of cyber bullying, internet chat rooms and social networking sites. All parents and carers feel that their children are kept very safe and virtually all feel that the behaviour in the school is good. The school's own records show that there had previously been some disruption, particularly amongst older pupils. The introduction of a new behaviour policy, with clearly identified sanctions and rewards, and its consistent application have led to a significant improvement during the year. Older pupils said there had been some pupils last year with 'anger problems' but there were none this year. The procedures that the school has in place to deal with any incidents that might occur are comprehensive and records show these to be effective in preventing any disruption to other pupils' learning.

Leadership and management

The leadership of the headteacher is strong. Working closely and effectively with a nearby support school, the headteacher has successfully pursued opportunities to improve provision and raise achievement since joining the school. She has worked hard with the staff to motivate and enthuse them and has provided them with training in order to help them become more confident and proficient. There is now a shared vision for the school and all are striving for greater improvement. However, leaders are aware that there is more to do to ensure all staff are clear about what needs to be improved, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school's self-evaluation is mainly accurate, although somewhat over generous in some areas. Significant recent improvement in teaching and learning throughout the school and in the progress made by all groups of pupils demonstrate the school's capacity to improve. The governing body recognises the need to continue to improve pupils' progress. Members are knowledgeable about changes made to raise standards in reading and mathematics and keep a close watch on how this is strengthening

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progress, for example through the headteacher's reports. Their role in holding the school to account is developing securely.

The school is rigorous in ensuring that children are safe and secure and all statutory requirements regarding safeguarding and child protection are fully met. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets most of their needs. However, pupils require increased opportunities to practise their improving literacy skills in all subjects through a more dynamic and interesting curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are taught to be thoughtful and reflective and consider the needs of others. The school ensures that there is no evidence of discrimination and tracks the progress of all groups of pupils carefully, so that there are no gaps and all make at least satisfactory progress. Parents and carers feel that they are well informed and some commented on the positive improvement in the school during this school year, particularly in terms of the leadership and management. One wrote, 'The school has improved greatly since last September because the new headteacher has set greater expectations and all the staff seem more positive in their attitudes.'

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.



6 July 2012

Dear Pupils,

**Inspection of Norton Fitzwarren Church of England Primary School,
Taunton TA2 6TB**

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave me when I came to inspect your school. I really enjoyed talking with you and listening to your views. Your school gives you a satisfactory education and is rapidly improving.

These are some of the things I found out about your school.

- You make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall because not enough is good.
- You like school, feel safe and behave well.
- Your headteacher, governors and staff are working hard to improve your school.

I have asked the school to do a few things to improve the education you receive.

- Make sure you can practise your writing and computer skills in all subjects.
- Make sure that you have more opportunities to work independently and that those of you who learn quickly are always given challenging tasks.
- Make the curriculum more exciting and interesting for you.
- Make sure all the staff help the headteacher to keep on improving the school.

You can help by always working hard and continuing to behave well.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox
Lead inspector

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