

Nonsuch Primary School

Wood Leasow, Woodgate Valley, Birmingham, B32 3SE

Inspection dates

18–19 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Good teaching, especially in Key Stage 2, is promoting pupils' increasingly good progress in English and mathematics.
- Many improvements made by the headteacher and leadership team are leading to rapid improvements in teaching and learning, and rising attainment.
- Teachers provide interesting and enjoyable lessons, in which they encourage pupils to judge their own progress and that of others.
- Pupils are well behaved, feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep healthy. Many participate in physical activity beyond school.
- Attendance has improved steadily for several years and is now above average.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is outstanding. They have an excellent knowledge of other religions and cultures. Pupils show great care for others and the environment.
- The governors check all aspects of the school so they have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They support the senior leaders well, but also ask challenging questions to make sure pupils' education continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not yet achieving as highly in mathematics as they are in English.
- The more-able pupils are not always given harder work to help them reach the higher levels they are capable of.
- Not enough marking includes clear pointers to help pupils improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons. The headteacher accompanied inspectors during five of these observations.
- Meetings were held with governors, pupils, senior leaders and managers, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the two responses to staff questionnaires, 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one parental letter in planning the inspection.
- The work of the school was observed and a range of documents considered, including those related to pupils' progress, teachers' planning, safeguarding and attendance.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Cutler

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Nonsuch is smaller than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, but the proportions from other minority ethnic groups and/or who speak English as an additional language are well above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported by 'school action' is above average, as is the proportion supported by 'school action plus' or a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils entering or leaving partway through the school year is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to outstanding, by making sure that:
 - more lessons, particularly in mathematics, reflect the creative, practical and imaginative approach typically seen in the teaching of English
 - in all lessons, more-able pupils are given demanding work that really stretches them
 - in marking, teachers always write comments that show pupils exactly how to improve their work, and so reach the levels they are capable of.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the school with skills and understanding well below the levels expected for their age. By the time they leave Year 6 they have caught up considerably and overall attainment is broadly average.
- Attainment in mathematics is a little below the levels seen in English. The steps taken by the school to tackle this are having a positive effect, and the checks on progress in 2011 and 2012 and the results of national tests in mathematics show an improving picture. However, as lessons are not yet as practical or creative as they are in English, progress is slower.
- The school makes sure that there are no substantial gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils. The more-able pupils are making good progress overall, but do not make the progress they could in some lessons because the work set for them is not always hard enough to stretch them.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide guidance and support from additional adults for the pupils concerned, individually or in small groups as appropriate. As a result they make good progress and achieve above their peers nationally. The school has set up a project to support the pupils and their families. These measures help make sure all pupils can aim high, regardless of their circumstances or ability levels.
- Accurate, regular tracking of pupils' progress, combined with careful use of additional adult support and adapted work, means that the progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also exceeds nationally expected rates.
- Such careful use of resources also helps other groups to achieve well. Any parents whose children are new to speaking English, or join during the course of the year, can be confident that the school will quickly identify their needs and provide the right help and guidance, so that pupils are soon learning productively.
- Pupils' skills in English are rapidly improving. In one lesson, outstanding teaching and questioning encouraged pupils to write a description of the rain forest with words and sentences that were at a much higher level than is usual for their age. The teacher created an excellent, stimulating learning area, through sound effects and excellent use of information and communication technology. Very good use of language and sentence structure captivated the pupils and provided excellent examples for them to use in their own work.
- Good teaching of letter and word sounds (phonics) and use an encouraging approach to the teaching of reading have resulted in the quality of pupils' reading skills being good across the school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good throughout the school, and increasingly outstanding in Key Stage 2. Teachers plan lessons well, and all staff check on pupils' progress carefully and regularly. They use the resulting information to plan future work, and so make sure that pupils build on their skills lesson by lesson.

- Teaching assistants are used well to support individuals and groups at all levels. They ask searching questions and challenge the pupils to show their initiative while providing help and guidance when needed.
- In one lesson on creating a story, both the teacher and teaching assistant constantly prompted pupils to create better sentences and use words that were more interesting. Pupils clearly enjoyed this challenge, were highly motivated and produced some adventurous work, such as: 'I'm going to a forest filled with exotic animals in a humid, shaded place where the canopy blocks out the light and keeps the water in.'
- Teaching is stronger in English than in mathematics. The mathematics subject leader has changed the content of lessons and provided training for the staff to improve the quality of teaching. The result has been a steady and consistent improvement. However, teachers do not yet always use practical and creative ways to engage the pupils, and so progress rates do not as yet match those seen in English.
- In a mathematics lesson observed, pupils were tackling multiplication problems, finding key words or numbers to solve the problems. The tasks set were demanding for all ability groups and the teacher's questioning, discussion and support made sure they all made good progress.
- Although teachers' verbal comments support pupils' learning well, written comments do not provide enough information to show pupils exactly how to improve their work. This is especially important for the more-able pupils, who need this information to move on quicker.
- In the majority of lessons teachers set demanding work but this is not consistent, and more-able pupils are not always stretched enough. In a poetry lesson, the work set interested the pupils but the more-able pupils were not encouraged to write anything more than basic sentences.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Discussions with pupils and observations around the school show that behaviour is typically good. Pupils, parents and carers and staff all feel this is the case. Pupils are polite and courteous, both to each other and to adults. One pupil commented, 'One or two children sometimes become excited and silly but everyone here is so friendly.'
- Leaders and managers make sure that all the pupils are safe and secure. All pupils spoken to and the parents' questionnaires confirm this. There have been no recorded instances of bullying or racial incidents, and pupils strongly felt that this sort of thing does not happen in their school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and many take part in physical activities, not only in school but also after school and at weekends. Pupils eagerly enjoyed running around in the playground and joined in their physical education lessons with real enthusiasm.
- Pupils generally enjoy learning and are very positive about their lessons and teachers. They strive to do their best and persevere with challenging work. However, in the few lessons that are not as interesting, pupils are easily distracted and do not try as hard.
- The scheme the school set up to assist pupils and their families has resulted in a marked improvement in attendance, which is now above average. This is because the families feel they are part of their child's education and see a value to learning and school in general.

- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is built into every lesson, and topics across different subject areas include learning about various countries, cultures and ideas. This makes sure pupils gain excellent skills and understanding, which they then use in their everyday lives.
- Some excellent examples of thoughtful behaviour were seen during the inspection. Several pupils assisted a distressed younger child during lunch time, and went well out of their way to help. Several boys were later seen assisting another younger pupil, and they not only comforted the child but went much further by helping them to improve their assembly costume. In a lesson on rain forests, young pupils engaged in a complex discussion on the morality of damaging these forests and the potential impact on their own lives.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and have used their knowledge and experience well to bring about marked improvements since the last inspection. These strengths show that the school is well placed to improve further.
- The senior leadership team has improved the quality of teaching, and links staff performance effectively with both salary progression and further training. All the members of the senior leadership team and the governors have a good understanding of what constitutes good or better teaching, and this helps to ensure that all teachers meet the national 'Teachers' Standards'.
- Leaders have changed the way subjects are taught to make learning more interesting and fun for the pupils. This helps to consistently raise attainment and speed up pupils' progress. As one stated, 'Learning is fun and interesting and we helped decide on the areas we learn so we work harder.' This has been particularly successful in English, but less so in mathematics.
- Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has supported improvements to both the indoor and outdoor areas. As a result, children are making good progress and enjoy learning. Teaching has been improved, more suitable equipment has been purchased and more accurate ways of checking on the children's progress have been introduced.
- The school has good links with other institutions such as community groups, local schools and schools abroad. This allows the pupils to experience a greater range of learning opportunities. It makes a marked contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development, as they mix and become friendly with a wide range of other pupils from different countries and cultures. There is a very strong 'pen friend system', which the pupils are rightly very proud of.
- All leaders and managers make sure that staff provide opportunities for pupils to do the very best they can, but have recognised that in some lessons this does not always happen for the more-able pupils. New systems have recently been introduced to put this right, but it is too early to measure their effectiveness.
- The local authority has a good relationship with the school. As it considers the school to be good, it provides only 'light touch' support. The local authority has helped the school to improve teaching, and assisted in setting up the pupil and family support project.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- is good. The governing body is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and uses this knowledge effectively to challenge the headteacher, set targets for improvement and monitor the performance of staff, including the headteacher, and that of the pupils
- provides good leadership and contributes to strategic planning - for example, it fully supported the spending of pupil premium funds on the family support project
- makes sure that all legal requirements are fully met, including those relating to safeguarding
- thoroughly checks the quality of teaching, by regularly spending time in lessons
- uses regular training opportunities to make sure governors' skills are up to date so they can effectively challenge and support the senior leadership team.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103335
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	402910

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Thomas
Headteacher	Johanna Walkley
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2008
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