

Norton-in-Hales CofE Primary School

Main Road, Norton-in-Hales, Market Drayton, TF9 4AT

Inspection dates 13–14 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Much of the teaching is good, with some that is outstanding.
- Pupils make good progress through Years 1 to 6 and leave school with standards that are well above average.
- Standards are very high in science.
- Teachers develop a love of reading among pupils, who read widely and very well.
- Teaching assistants provide expert help for pupils with special educational needs in reading and writing.
- Pupils feel safe at school and behave well. Their behaviour in lessons in Years 3 to 6 is often exemplary.
- Teachers help pupils to become highly independent.
- The school's leaders, including governors, have made significant improvements to teaching since the school was last inspected. They have carefully identified any weaknesses and have provided good quality training for staff in Years 1 to 6.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Children in Reception are not always given work that is well-enough matched to their abilities for them to make good progress.
- Teaching assistants have not been trained in supporting pupils with special educational needs in mathematics, so their progress is slower than it is in English.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons. In addition, the inspector listened to pupils reading and analysed the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and staff.
- The inspector took account of the 34 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector also met parents informally.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, records relating to behaviour and bullying and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

David Driscoll, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most other primary schools.
- Very few pupils with special educational needs are supported through school action.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or belong to other groups for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The number of pupils at the school is falling. The school changed from four classes to three in September 2012. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now taught with children of Reception age.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to accelerate children's progress in Reception by ensuring:
 - activities are better matched to children's abilities
 - children do not spend too much time working with pupils from Years 1 and 2
 - all teaching assistants are better trained to support children of this age.
- Provide training for teaching assistants in how best to support pupils with special educational needs in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school with skills and experiences that are typical for their age. They make steady progress through Reception and start Year 1 with standards that are broadly average. From then on progress is good. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils quickly become confident readers because staff make sure they always have books that are well matched to their abilities. Each new book they are given in Years 1 to 4 is just a little bit more difficult than the last and introduces them to new vocabulary, so all are reading independently by Year 5.
- By Year 6, pupils are reading a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, including newspapers written for children. They choose to read about Egypt, for example, to gain a deeper understanding of the country they are studying in their topic lessons. These topics give pupils plenty of opportunities to write in different styles and use their computer skills to present their work in different ways.
- Standards are particularly high in science, where pupils very much enjoy learning about difficult concepts, such as how to draw ray diagrams to show how light behaves when reflected. Pupils also make good use of their mathematical skills in science lessons.
- While most groups of pupils make good progress, there are one or two whose progress is slower. Pupils with special educational needs do as well as others in English because teaching assistants know exactly when to help them and when to leave them to get on by themselves. This is not always the case in mathematics as pupils are sometimes given support when they do not need it, or struggle for too long without the advice that would help them to get going again.
- Children in Reception make steady progress. They learn quickly when working independently, but in activities led by an adult they are often given tasks that are too easy or too difficult for them and their progress slows.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers assess pupils accurately throughout the school and are clear about what each individual needs to do to improve further. In Years 1 to 6 they use the information well to plan several tasks, of varying degrees of difficulty, for each lesson, so that every pupil has work that is just right for them.
- No time is wasted in lessons. Teachers get pupils straight down to work and expect them to work hard for the duration of the lesson, which is usually the case in Years 1 to 6. Teachers expect pupils to be well-organised and prepared, so there are never any delays between the end of one lesson and the start of the next.
- Teachers give pupils lots of opportunities to become independent. From Year 3, for example, they are not given spellings, but told to find them for themselves. Pupils organise their own experiments in science and investigations in mathematics.
- Adults provide good opportunities for children in Reception to choose their own activities. When

learning about money, for example, children set up their own shop, including pricing the stock.

- In Reception adults teach children as a whole group for too much of the time and so progress is slower than in other year groups. Often teachers plan work that is too easy for the most able and too difficult for the least able. Too frequently, they end a lesson by combining Reception children with pupils from Years 1 and 2, who are doing much more difficult work and this leads to confusion amongst the younger children.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are hardworking and conscientious. They are proud of their school and the quality of the work they produce. Pupils want to do well to please their teachers, with whom they have excellent relationships. By Year 6, for example, they are lending books to, and borrowing them from, their teachers.
- Behaviour is often exemplary in lessons in Years 3 to 6. Rarely do teachers have to resort to even a gentle reminder to a pupil to concentrate as they work so hard. The playground is a happy place with older pupils keeping a close eye on younger ones to make sure none are unhappy.
- Pupils cooperate very well in groups. They listen carefully to the views of others and take account of them when reaching decisions. Pupils are courteous and friendly towards visitors. They have excellent manners.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They, and their parents and carers, say that there is never any bullying and that any unpleasant name-calling is quickly dealt with by staff. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe outside of school, especially when using the Internet.
- Attendance is consistently above average, and punctuality to school is good.
- Behaviour in Reception is not as good as that in other year groups. Children do not always do as they are told and lose interest when tasks are not matched well-enough to their abilities. Staff do not always ensure that routines, such as tidying up, are followed by all children.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has improved significantly since it was last inspected. Standards are higher and pupils are making better progress, because the school's leaders, including governors, have worked hard and successfully to raise the quality of teaching.
 - The headteacher and governors accurately identified the aspects of teaching that were preventing pupils from making good progress. They ensured that teachers received extra training where necessary and used the good links forged with other schools to allow teachers to observe the best practice.
 - Plans for moving the school forward are well thought out, with clear and measurable criteria against which the success of actions can be checked.
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- Leaders analyse data from assessments well to identify any pupil who is at risk of falling behind. They quickly provide extra help where it is needed, including making good use of the pupil premium to provide individual support to those pupils who are eligible, so that there are no gaps in the performance of different groups.
 - Parents and carers are delighted with the school. They frequently described it as 'fabulous' when speaking to the inspector.
 - The Local Authority has provided good quality support to help the school improve and ensure that its good quality of education is being maintained.
 - The curriculum is broad, balanced and interesting. It provides good opportunities for pupils to learn about how others live, such as visiting their pen-pals from a very different school in Birmingham, to gain an insight into different beliefs and cultures. Assemblies are a time for quiet reflection, and joyous singing.
 - The key weaknesses in Reception noted in the previous inspection report have been tackled well. However, leaders have not placed as much emphasis on improving teaching here as they have in other year groups. In particular, when Years 1 and 2 were combined with Reception, leaders did not ensure that teaching assistants were adequately trained in how to best teach children of Reception age.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors carry out a wide range of checks, including visiting lessons and comparing the school's performance to others nationally, to ensure they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ask challenging questions of the headteacher and support him well. Governors have had to take difficult decisions to ensure that the school balances its budget, but staff morale is high. They keep a careful check on how the pupil premium is spent to ensure that it is used effectively. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and how the best teaching is rewarded through making pay awards. They are well-trained and ensure that all statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding, are met.
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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	123491
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	402167

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	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary McDonald
Headteacher	Darran Hall
Date of previous school inspection	10-11 June 2010
Telephone number	01630 653084
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