

Norton Road Primary School

Norton Road, Luton, LU3 2NX

Inspection dates 13–14 December 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and other leaders give excellent direction for the school to improve. They quickly deal with areas of the school's work they identify as needing improvement.
- Pupils make good progress because teaching is good and improving. They reach average standards from low starting points.
- Leaders and staff act quickly to provide support for the school's pupils when their learning is slow.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they are extremely keen to learn. Pupils from different backgrounds and cultures get on exceptionally well together.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that any form of bullying is very rare.
- The school provides exceptionally good training for all staff.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress, and outstanding progress in developing their personal and social skills.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, work is not set at the right level for pupils.
- Reading books, especially for younger pupils, are not always modern or interesting enough.
- Marking does not always tell pupils how well they are doing, how to improve their work or what the next steps in learning are.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 teachers in 30 lessons or parts of lessons. Two of these were paired observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff and pupils. The inspectors spoke to members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and to parents bringing their children to school.
- Inspectors looked at school documentation about the school's work, including information about the achievement of pupils, development planning and the school's self-evaluation.
- Inspectors took into account 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and also examined the school's own analysis of parents' views.

Inspection team

Edward Wheatley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

Heather Housden

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than most primary schools.
- Pupils come from mainly minority ethnic backgrounds. About two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language, and a large minority is in the early stages of learning English.
- The school has a higher-than-average proportion of pupils joining and leaving during the year.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funds given to the school by the government for children looked after by the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals) is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that:
 - marking always tells pupils how well they are doing, how to improve their work and what the next steps in learning are
 - work is always set at the right level so that all pupils make the best possible progress
 - reading books are interesting and modern.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Standards are close to average and rising. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment has improved considerably.
- Children in the Reception classes achieve well. Many of the children start school with much lower than expected literacy and numeracy skills for their age, and with particularly low social skills. By the time they join Year 1 most have achieved the expected skills for their age, although levels of attainment are still a little below average.
- Most pupils read well. They make good use of their knowledge of linking letters and sounds to read words they do not recognise. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are rapidly gaining reading skills because teachers work hard with them to help them master different approaches to reading. They regularly read at school and at home and this helps them considerably with building their skills.
- However, for a few pupils the pace of progress in developing reading skills slows down when they have to read old books or those that do not interest them.
- Attainment in writing is average. Pupils write confidently, use a wide vocabulary and mostly spell accurately. They produce long pieces of writing when they need to. For example, a group of Year 3 pupils produced lengthy pieces of writing, which they then used to help them speak to their class about what they knew about different animals.
- Pupils have average skills in mathematics. They carry out mental calculations skills well, and have a good knowledge of times-tables, division, addition and subtraction.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. This is because teaching assistants give pupils the help they need, and also make sure they practise and gain confidence in the new skills they learn.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium achieve well because funding is used to employ additional staff to make sure teaching groups are kept small. In this way pupils receive support as it is needed, and make good progress.
- The differences in standards reached by all groups of pupils in the school, including those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, compared with standards nationally has narrowed considerably. In particular, the most able pupils now reach standards close to those of similar pupils nationally.
- Pupils joining the school during the school year quickly settle down to learning and making good progress. This is because they make friends quickly and are made to feel valuable members of a class.
- Outstanding relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, make a considerable contribution to how well pupils learn. Pupils work together extremely well, whatever backgrounds they come from. They respect each other's points of view, and help each other where they can. This helps to develop their social, moral and cultural awareness.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good, and sometimes outstanding. Small classes play an important part in how well pupils learn, and in how much they enjoy their learning.
- Teachers plan their lessons well. They work closely with teaching assistants and use accurate information about how well pupils are doing in order to organise activities to make sure learning is rapid. Teachers often provide extension activities for the most able pupils and effective help for those pupils who learn more slowly. However, occasionally work is not pitched at the right level for pupils, and then their progress briefly slows.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers' questioning is particularly good. It encourages pupils to think about their answers, to talk about their ideas to other pupils and to give considered, detailed answers.
- In a Year 2 literacy lesson, for example, the teacher had previously questioned pupils about how good or bad they thought Little Red Riding Hood was. She referred back to a religious education lesson about the 'prodigal son' and then asked them to reconsider their views and to explain them. They did this extremely well, using a wide range of vocabulary and explaining their thinking well.
- Teachers' marking is usually good. Teachers tell pupils how their work can improve, and pupils mostly follow any advice given. However, occasionally marking is not clear enough about how pupils can improve what they do, or what the next steps in learning are.
- Teachers frequently use a particular theme across several subjects to make work interesting. For example, in Year 5, the teacher used the theme of religious festivals in writing, art and religious education. This made sure that pupils were fully involved in learning because it linked closely with many of their own backgrounds but also focused on the important basic skill of writing.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is good. Teachers pay particular attention to developing children's social and emotional skills and do this especially well. They provide very good support for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills both indoors and outside.
- Parents are mostly pleased with how well their children learn and are taught.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. In lessons and around the school buildings and grounds they behave with exceptional consideration, politeness and respect for each other and adults. They work hard and enthusiastically.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of what is unacceptable behaviour, and of right and wrong. They know about the different types of bullying, and how bullying differs from unacceptable behaviour. They are tolerant and accept other people's views, and they are keen to find out about the traditions and beliefs of pupils from different backgrounds to their own.
- Pupils take on responsibilities well. The school council seeks the views of pupils from all classes. As a result, they have encouraged the school to provide equipment for a wide range of playground games.

- Pupils feel safe and say that staff are always there to help them if for any reason they are worried. They behave safely in lessons and around school, and take great care when moving around classrooms and corridors not to accidentally hurt someone else. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and know all about avoiding common risks around the home and when outside.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively. The most likely transgression is usually due to pupils' enthusiasm for work, so they do not hear the teacher's request for attention.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. The school follows up all absences rigorously and works hard to make sure pupils with a record of being frequently absent are encouraged to be in school. The school is mainly successful in reducing absence.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school is exceptionally well led and the headteacher is very clear about how he expects the school to continue to improve. Leaders at all levels reflect his determination to raise standards, and all staff are committed to further improvements. Leaders and other staff have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The school takes action quickly to deal with any weaknesses as they arise, and plans very well for further improvement. For example, it has acted effectively to improve considerably the performance of the most able pupils, and increased staffing to make sure lower-attaining pupils achieve well.
- Teachers are keen to improve their teaching from good to outstanding. Teachers' targets to help them improve their work reflect the school's priorities, and are closely linked to how well pupils are doing. The school gives extremely effective training to staff, aimed at helping them improve teaching further.
- Local authority staff, and private consultants, offer good support in helping improve teaching, particularly in working with pupils from the wide range of ethnic backgrounds in the school.
- The way subjects and topics are taught has improved considerably in recent years. Links between subjects encourage pupils' interest in learning. The wide range of visits and visitors to school enrich pupils' experiences in art, history, literacy and mathematics. The personal, social and health education programme is well planned, and along with assemblies, promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- Any differences in performance between different groups of pupils are small, and the school works successfully to reduce these further, and to make sure progress improves. It has effectively focused on small teaching groups, high quality support for pupils and fostering excellent relationships to encourage improvements in progress.
- Leaders are determined that all pupils should achieve equally well. They do not tolerate discrimination at all. Given the continuing rise in standards, especially of the most able pupils, the good and often outstanding progress made by pupils from low starting points, and the improvements in the way subjects are taught, the school's capacity for further improvements is extremely strong.
- Relationships with parents are good. Almost all parents speak highly of the school, and feel well

informed about how well their children do. The school offers good support to families, especially when their children are new to the school and settling in.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is well informed and committed to helping the school improve. It makes sure its members are trained and up-to-date with information so that it can support the school effectively and ask searching questions about its work. It understands about performance information and how this compares with similar schools. It knows about the quality of teaching and makes sure teachers are given targets to help them improve their work and pay is linked to their performance. Safeguarding requirements are met and the governing body makes sure procedures for the safe appointment of staff are applied. It monitors school expenditure and, for example, checks the impact of the spending of pupil premium funds on speeding up pupils' progress.

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	109548
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	403090

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	392
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Rowlands
Headteacher	Mike Austins
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 November 2007
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