

Northfield Primary and Nursery School

Cox's Lane, Mansfield Woodhouse, Mansfield, NG19 8PG

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2013

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.

- Pupils make good progress, often from very low starting points. They achieve well because teaching has improved and is good.
- Some teaching is outstanding. In these lessons teachers plan activities that fully engage pupils' interest and make them think hard.
- Marking offers good guidance to help pupils improve. Pupils are given time and encouragement to respond to it, reinforcing their learning.
- The range of techniques introduced to improve reading is reaping significant benefits.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and say they enjoy coming to school.
- The use of the pupil premium funding is helping eligible pupils catch up with others in their learning. Pupils who are at risk of underachieving are quickly identified and well supported by skilled practitioners.
- The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are highly effective in achieving improvements in teaching and this is leading to higher standards across the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few lessons require improvement. In these, pace is too slow and whole-class work predominates, so that too little time left for pupils to work on individual tasks.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, small-group activities led by the teacher are not frequent enough to enable children to make the best progress possible in early literacy and numeracy.
- Some subject leaders take a limited role in leading improvements in their subjects, and monitoring the impact. They do not ensure writing and mathematics opportunities are reinforced sufficiently in other subjects or that the natural links between different subjects are fully exploited.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors heard pupils read in two small group sessions as well as during the course of lesson observations.
- Documents scrutinised during the inspection included the school’s data on pupils’ progress, planning, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and school improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered the 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) website, as well as parental correspondence and telephone calls received, and the views of the parents they spoke to during the inspection.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders, a group of governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors received the views of pupils through both informal and pre-arranged discussions and considered the responses in the 23 staff questionnaires received.

Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Moore

Additional Inspector

Stephen Palmer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Since the previous inspection, it has increased in size to provide two Reception classes. There is one class in each of the other year groups.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for certain groups of pupils, which in this school are those known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority) is higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through 'school action plus', or with a statement of special educational needs is below that seen nationally. An average proportion of pupils are supported at 'school action'
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so that none requires improvement and a more significant proportion is outstanding, by:
 - limiting the time spent on whole class introductions and explanations to enable pupils to work by themselves to complete the tasks they have been set
 - ensuring all learning activities are pitched to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities
 - increasing the number of small group activities that are led directly by adults to help children make faster progress in early literacy and numeracy in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve the impact of subject leaders' work by:
 - ensuring they lead improvements in their subject areas and monitor the impact these then have on pupils' achievement and teaching
 - ensuring that writing and mathematics skills are fully developed across a wider range of subjects in all year groups
 - developing more opportunities to link subjects together

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are much lower than those expected for their age. They achieve well, making good progress through the school, including the children in the newly formed additional Reception class. In the 2012 national screening test for pupils at age six, which is used to check their understanding of how sounds link with letters, pupils did better than average.

- In previous years, progress and standards have been varied and sometimes not good enough. The school has put this period firmly behind it. Improvements in progress have been made and sustained to the point where achievement is now consistently good.
- Pupils reach standards in English and mathematics that are in line with most other eleven year olds by the time they leave Year 6. Able pupils regularly achieve the higher level 5 in both English and mathematics.
- Progress is fastest when there is real excitement in learning, such as in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, which contained a variety of problem solving activities that were well-matched to pupils' different abilities. Some pupils showed skills well in advance of their age in reading tables and calculating data for theatre audiences, using logical thinking to work out the right answer to the problem they had been set.
- Pupils' reading skills are improving as a result of the excellent support provided through the school's carefully structured programme, which offers 'one to one' and small group tuition for pupils who have difficulty reading.
- Writing standards are improving because teachers constantly emphasise the importance of pupils using accurate grammar and punctuation in longer sentences. Teachers have also worked successfully to improve pupils' spelling and handwriting.
- Children soon settle into the Nursery and Reception classes because adults provide a welcoming start and a good range of activities from which children can choose. However, in both year-groups, there are too few teacher-led small-group sessions during each week, so that children do not have enough opportunities to make the best possible progress in communication, literacy and numeracy early on.
- The school is using pupil premium funding effectively to ensure improved achievement for pupils for whom the school receives it. Extra teaching assistants and one-to-one and small group additional sessions have resulted in accelerated progress for this group of pupils. In the most recent results, they had narrowed the gap with their classmates so that they are only a term behind them in English, and two terms behind in mathematics.
- The gains in the progress made by pupils receiving the pupil premium, as well as by disabled pupils and those with special education needs, show that the school makes every effort to provide all pupils with equal opportunities to learn and to ensure that there is no discrimination.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make the same rates of progress as their classmates through well-constructed learning activities that are quickly adjusted if any pupil has difficulty understanding what they are expected to do and learn.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved in response to leaders' and managers' drive to eliminate weaknesses. It leads to pupils' good achievement.
- Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are going to learn and how they can make their learning successful. Lessons offer a variety of activities well-matched to the differing abilities in the class. For instance, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the use of demanding tasks led to pupils making rapid progress. The teacher was quick to spot difficulties and brought the class together at the end to ensure understanding, bringing comments from pupils such as, 'This is really good and makes you think hard.'
- Not all teachers plan and deliver their teaching as well as this. In a small number of less-successful lessons, there was too much teacher-talk and too little individual or group work that was properly matched to pupils' abilities.
- The good and better teaching encourages pupils to think really hard. Examples of this occurred in literacy lessons where pupils had to work out which plural ending to add to singular words in Year 2 and a mathematics lesson involving an investigation into shape in Year 3. This high quality teaching helps pupils to understand how to learn for themselves and prepares them well for their futures.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. This is evident not only in the accurate teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make), literacy and mathematics but also in the good quality work pupils produce in other subjects. A good example was seen in a Year 5 science workbook that showed investigative work requiring a range of mathematics and literacy skills. When it occurs, this linking of subjects enables the best possible progress because it brings topics studied into real-life situations, but it is not widespread in the school.
- Marking is good, with most teachers informing pupils about how well they have done and exactly what they need to do to improve. Pupils are given time to respond to the guidance, ensuring that it is used to reinforce learning and accelerate progress.
- Teaching assistants are well managed. They give very effective support to pupils who need it, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those in receipt of pupil premium funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Teachers expect pupils to be on their best behaviour at all times and they respond well.
 - Pupils enjoy school, attend regularly, and show enthusiasm for their learning. They concentrate and work well, both independently and in groups.
 - Pupils are kept safe at school and say that the school is a friendly place where people get on well with one another.
 - Pupils know about the different forms of bullying that pupils of their age might encounter. They
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reported that bullying and any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare. They understand the code of conduct the school expects.

- Assemblies, teaching programmes and the very thoughtful ethos of the school all support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils also know the importance of treating everyone as equal, whatever their background or beliefs.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a highly effective team. Together they have made significant improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Leaders know how the school is performing and have identified the right priorities for improvement. They undertake regular observations of teaching and coach and support staff to eliminate weaknesses. Pupils' progress is tracked systematically and meetings are held regularly with staff to discuss their assessments and to check if pupils are doing well. Staff work well together and all are committed to the further improvement and continued success of the school.
- Targets set for teachers are rigorous and their performance is carefully managed. Decisions made about teachers' salary progression are based on the quality of their teaching and the progress of their pupils.
- The effectiveness of subject leaders varies. Some do not take enough of a lead in bringing about improvements in their subjects or in checking the impact of whole school initiatives. This has limited the school's understanding of where opportunities exist to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, or how learning would be enhanced by linking subjects together.
- Teaching programmes are enhanced by clubs and additional experiences that are much enjoyed by pupils. For instance, the trips to a nature reserve, for each year group, organised by the 'Friends of Northfield', offered a range of exciting opportunities for pupils, to help them understand bird life and conservation. These activities contribute well to the school's good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Partnerships with parents are good and much improved since the previous inspection. Parents spoken to during the inspection spoke highly of the school.
- Strong partnerships with other local schools have helped the school share expertise and experiences. The local authority supports the school well and has helped promote the good improvements made since the last inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are closely involved in the life of the school. The Chair of the Governing Body and other experienced governors have a good knowledge of its work. The regular 'monitoring profile' report they produce is the result of their careful checks on the school. This ensures that all governors know how well the school is making progress on its priorities and are aware of the quality of teaching and what is being done to improve it. They are aware of the management of teachers' performance and how decisions are made about salary increases. Procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Governors know that pupil premium funding is being spent on carefully targeted additional provision and that this is improving

pupil outcomes. Governors ensure that they receive the professional training they need to develop their roles further and receive detailed data and reports on standards that allow them to compare their school with others nationally.

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	132770
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	406493

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	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Woodcock
Headteacher	Julie Jenkins
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2011
Telephone number	01623 625589
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