

Northleach Church of England Primary School

Mill End, Northleach, Cheltenham, GL54 3HJ

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2013

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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress through the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when progress was not so good in some year groups. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is well above average by the time pupils leave the school, and has been for the last three years.
- Pupils are extremely thoughtful and responsible and their behaviour is outstanding. Many instances were seen of their excellent care and concern in their relationships with one another. As a pupil put it, 'Everyone's there for you.' Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary; pupils work keenly and are eager to do well.
- Pupils' good progress is a result of consistently good teaching through the school, with instances of outstanding practice. Teachers know their pupils and their abilities well and plan well to extend their learning. Pupils say that they are often given challenging work and that they enjoy this. Teaching assistants are skilled and play a valuable role in supporting the learning, especially but not exclusively, of pupils identified as disabled and those who have special educational needs.
- The vision of the headteacher and her drive for continual improvement are shared very well by all staff and governors. Raising the quality of teaching to outstanding is a high priority and procedures for this improvement are rigorous. A particular development since the last inspection is the extra responsibility given to middle managers. They are enthusiastic and have been largely responsible for developments in English and mathematics. Governors have good first-hand knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They support and challenge very well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is consistently good, there is insufficient outstanding teaching.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 14 lessons. Three of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors held meetings with leaders and managers, staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors met informally with parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school days and analysed the results of the 31 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted on-line survey.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its self-evaluation, development planning and policies and procedures, particularly those relevant to keeping pupils safe.
- The inspectors evaluated the school's information on the progress that pupils are making.

Inspection team

John Eadie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jenny Taylor

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Northleach Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Pupils have been grouped into one class for each age group since September 2012. Previously, the school had only six classes.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is below average.
- There is a below-average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils identified as disabled and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have statements of special needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A playgroup and a children's centre share the school site, but are not managed by the governing body and are inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that much of it is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers always use time to best advantage to accelerate pupils' learning
 - sharing the current best practice in marking to ensure the consistent use of the policy so that pupils have a clear idea of how they can improve their work and then giving pupils time to respond to this marking.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils are making good progress in all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics. This progress has accelerated in recent years, due to improvements in the quality of teaching and the specific strategies to improve pupils' skills in writing and mathematics. However, pupils are not yet making excellent progress as there is insufficient outstanding teaching that allows pupils to learn exceptionally well at every opportunity.
- An improvement since the last inspection is in the provision for the children in the Reception class. These children are making good progress in all areas of learning and are developing well into confident and independent learners. They were observed choosing activities sensibly and sticking at them.
- Pupils identified as disabled and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates as they have good plans made for their learning and are supported well.
- The few pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress and are fully integrated. As a pupil commented, 'They are English really aren't they, no different from us.'
- The pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium make progress that is at least as good as others and often better. Numbers are too small to be able to comment on their performance in national assessments compared to their peers. However, data show that their progress is accelerated and gaps are narrowing between their performance in English and mathematics and that of their peers due to the effective use of the funds provided to support their learning.
- Almost all pupils exceeded the expected standard in the 2012 national screening in Year 1 for phonics (linking letters and sounds). This good knowledge has led to pupils' good technical skills of reading and pupils read widely and enthusiastically. Books read by older pupils are sophisticated and they were able to show a real understanding of the emotions and feelings that these books communicated.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching observed was good, with examples of outstanding lessons. Evidence shows that this is typical of teaching over time in the school.
- There are several general strengths. For instance, teachers plan well for the range of abilities in their classes and often check on learning during lessons to enable them to move the learning of particular pupils on. Teachers usually make their lessons lively and interesting and this was confirmed by pupils, who said such things as, 'All the teachers make lessons really fun.'
- A further strength is teachers' analysis of how well pupils are learning. Teachers are very aware of what pupils have achieved. This enables them to quickly identify any who might be in danger of slipping behind and then very good initiatives are put in place to support their learning.
- Teaching assistants play a key role in aiding pupils' learning. The excellent practice of using planning books, which they share with teachers, ensures that they know exactly what the pupils they are responsible for need to learn. They then use these books to feed back the success of this learning to class teachers. This means that teachers know exactly where each pupil is at and can move their learning forward appropriately.
- In less successful lessons, time is not always used to best effect. For instance, examples were seen of pupils sitting for too long without being actively engaged in learning tasks. There were also instances where time was wasted, with pupils having to copy objectives into their books which could have been provided for them to stick in.
- There is a clear marking policy and this is often used well. Pupils said that they find that teachers' marking usually helps them to improve their work. However, the policy is not always used consistently and there are too many instances where pupils are not given clear guidance on how they can improve their work. Also, they are not always given enough time to respond to

teachers' marking. This hampers the rate of their progress.

- Pupils say that the targets set for their next steps in learning help them know how well they are doing and help them improve.
- Relationships are very strong and it was obvious during observations that pupils were therefore keen to do their best and work hard.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are particularly caring and thoughtful. For instance, as pupils were arriving at school, a younger pupil dropped a box with a considerable number of small items in it. Within moments the area was surrounded by older pupils helping to pick up the dropped items.
- Pupils work together extremely well. They have extremely good attitudes to their work, even behaving very well even if the teaching does not fully hold their attention.
- Staff, governors and almost all parents and carers agree that behaviour is outstanding. Pupils said that the excellent behaviour seen during the inspection is typical.
- Although a very small minority of parents and carers expressed some concerns over bullying, pupils were extremely confident that bullying is rare, minor and extremely well dealt with when reported.
- Pupils have very good knowledge of different types of bullying. For instance, they were able to talk in detail about the dangers of using the internet. The school keeps careful records of instances of misuse of the internet, virtually all happening outside school and reported by parents and carers, and these incidents are used well to enhance pupils' learning of the dangers.
- Pupils are keenly aware of the problems of discrimination as the school is careful to include this in pupils' understanding, and they were genuinely shocked when it was suggested that pupils of different ethnicities might experience problems.
- Pupils are extremely confident that they feel safe in school and the vast majority of parents and carers agree with this view.
- Rates of attendance are high, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are good

- Despite the very positive report at the last inspection, there has been no complacency. The headteacher, very ably supported by the senior leadership team, has continued to strive for excellence. All staff and governors are fully behind this drive.
- In particular, there have been strenuous efforts to aim for the highest standards of teaching. The management of teachers' performance has been used very effectively, alongside effective training, to support and extend teachers' skills.
- An improvement since the last inspection has been the restructuring of management to include middle managers. However, this has not yet had time to impact sufficiently on pupils' achievement in English and mathematics, which is good rather than outstanding.
- At the heart of the school's ethos is a determination to provide equality of opportunity and this is demonstrated in the way that pupils are prepared for the transition to the next stage of their education. All feel very much part of the school; as a member of staff said, 'Each one of us feels valued.'
- The school has fostered extremely good relationships with parents and carers who, as the on-line questionnaire revealed, are almost universally supportive and positive about all aspects of the school.
- Funds are managed very carefully and this is demonstrated in the way that part-time teachers have been employed for extra hours to work with small groups and individuals. This means that these pupils can receive teaching that is focused on their specific needs and is having a positive impact on their improved achievement.
- The funds provided for those pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium are very

carefully used and focused on the needs of these pupils. This is effective in improving their progress.

- The curriculum has been developed well and the school has successfully ensured that pupils enjoy an interesting and broad and balanced education. This has been a further factor in pupils' improved achievement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well catered for. Pupils are developing into thoughtful and reflective young people, who are keenly aware of their place in society and their consequent responsibilities.
- Safeguarding procedures are thorough and pupils are kept safe.
- The local authority regards this as a successful school so is not involved in support. However, their representative is impressed with the range and number of opportunities taken by the school to engage in training events and to ask for expertise when needed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors gain good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development for the school from their personal knowledge as they are regular visitors. They support well and their knowledge and expertise enable them to provide good levels of challenge. They know how good teaching is and the effectiveness of the management of teachers' performance. They use this well to ratify teachers' pay. They know how well pupils are doing compared to those nationally, and locally, and they receive and understand good information on the progress that pupils currently in the school are making.

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	115641
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	403271

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	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbi Marlow
Headteacher	Deb Harris
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
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