

Northlands Primary School

Pinders Lane, Rugby, CV21 2SS

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not consistently make good progress in their learning as there is too little good or outstanding teaching.
- Teachers do not adjust tasks quickly enough when pupils find them too easy or too hard.
- Not all teachers are clear about the intended learning in lessons, and the advice given to pupils for success is not always helpful.
- Teachers do not insist that the quality and quantity of pupils' work are consistently high.
- Marking does not always help pupils to improve their work. At times, simple spelling, grammar and punctuation errors are left uncorrected.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects.
- Pupils feel safe in school but do not think their concerns at lunchtimes are being taken seriously enough by all adults who supervise their play, or that the new behaviour policy is applied fairly by all staff.
- Leaders' plans for improving the school cover the right priorities but do not identify precisely the actions to take, how success is to be judged, or when actions should be completed.
- Leaders of subjects are new to their role and are at an early stage of checking whether pupils' achievement is good enough.

The school has the following strengths

- A marked improvement in the 2013 end-of-year results for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 demonstrates leaders' capacity for making further improvements.
- Teaching is consistently good in the Nursery and in Year 6.
- School leaders, including governors, have a good understanding of what is needed to make Northlands a good school.
- The deputy headteacher is providing good support and advice to the teachers who need to improve their teaching skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 parts of lessons, including six joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, three members of the governing body, a local authority representative and members of staff, including senior leaders and other leaders with specific responsibilities.
- Account was taken of 40 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 22 responses to the staff questionnaire were also analysed.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included the learning improvement plan, information about pupils' current progress, leaders' reports following lesson observations, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning and enjoyment of school, and looked at the work in their books.

Inspection team

Lois Furness, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Damian Booth

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Northlands is an average-sized primary school.
- There are 16 different ethnicities represented in the school, of which approximately 53% are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding for group such as pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above that found in most schools.
- A broadly average proportion of pupils are supported at school action, and an above-average proportion are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Since the previous inspection in November 2011 there have been significant staffing changes. There have been eight maternity leaves or long term absences and three teachers have left the school. At the time of the inspection there were three temporary teachers, including two newly qualified teachers.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make all teaching good or better so pupils make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, by making sure that:
 - all staff insist that pupils produce a high quality and quantity of work
 - teachers use pupils' responses to adapt and extend the activities given to them
 - teachers are clear about the intended learning in lessons and how pupils might achieve success
 - pupils have regular opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects
 - grammar, spelling and punctuation errors in pupils' writing are corrected and marking provides helpful advice to pupils on how to improve completed work
 - the most effective and skilled staff are used to model best practice for other staff to follow.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - improvement planning identifies precisely the actions to be taken and then provides measurable success criteria and tight timeframes for when actions will be completed
 - any necessary training is provided for subject leaders, and they are given time to monitor and evaluate effectively the results of their actions on pupils' achievement
 - all lunchtime staff fully understand their responsibilities regarding their response to pupils' concerns
 - senior leaders monitor carefully that the new behaviour policy is being implemented fairly by all staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Progress across year groups in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, is not consistently good enough for pupils to reach the levels they are capable of. The work in pupils' books confirms this pattern of variable progress.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has been broadly average over time. The 2013, as yet unpublished, Year 6 results show a considerable improvement in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, with the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 much higher than seen previously. The progress of this group of pupils since they were in Year 3 was good overall, but analysis of their progress over time shows that it has been uneven and even inadequate in some years.
- A similar picture is evident throughout the school and assessment information shows that too many pupils do not make consistently good year-on-year progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because there has been too little consistently good or better teaching.
- Children join the Nursery with skills and knowledge which are lower than those typical for their age. They make good progress in their personal, social and physical development and by the time they start Year 1, their skills and knowledge in these areas are broadly average. However, their reading, writing and number knowledge is still below average.
- Attainment in reading is improving rapidly, as seen by pupils' performance at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Older pupils say they enjoy reading and can speak about favourite authors. However, although younger pupils have daily reading lessons, in 2013 the outcomes of the phonics (links between letters and sounds) screening check showed that only 53% of pupils were at the expected level, which is 16% lower than the national average.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium make at least similar progress to their classmates, and on occasion, better progress. This is due to the effective use made of the funding received. Additional support is provided in literacy and numeracy to make sure they keep up with others in the school. In 2012, Year 6 eligible pupils left the school on average one term behind fellow pupils in English and in mathematics. As time is progressing the gaps in attainment are closing, and in 2013 there was little difference in the attainment of these pupils and other pupils.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that made by other pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make the same progress as others. They receive appropriate help and guidance from teachers and particularly support staff.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There is not enough good teaching throughout the school to eradicate previous underachievement. The rate of progress in many lessons is sometimes too slow, and not enough is demanded of the pupils in terms of the quality and quantity of work that they should produce.
- Where teaching requires improvement, teachers do not set work at the right level and pupils' responses are not used well enough to adapt or extend the planned activities. This was seen in a Year 1 and 2 phonics session, when it was evident that most pupils were completing the tasks

easily and could have moved on to something more challenging.

- Teachers are not consistently clear about what they expecting the pupils to learn, and at times there is too much focus on what pupils will do rather than on what they will learn. All teachers try to help pupils by providing them with 'steps for success'. However this information, as in marking, does not always give sufficient advice in helping pupils to produce their best work. At times basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling are left uncorrected, for example 'fule' instead of 'fuel' and 'astoid' instead of 'asteroid'.
- There is some good teaching in the school, particularly in Nursery and in Year 6. Where the quality of teaching is good, the pace of learning is brisk, and pupils know precisely what they are learning and what they have to do to meet the teachers' high expectations. There are opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves and questioning is used effectively, as seen in mathematics as Year 6 pupils interpreted the meaning of a line graph.
- In all classrooms the relationships between pupils and adults are good. Classrooms are attractive and provide a good balance of pupils' work and resources to help learning. Teaching assistants mainly provide good support, ensuring that pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who are disabled or have special educational needs are able to access activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- When pupils find work interesting they have positive attitudes to learning and show good enjoyment of their work. However when there is too much teacher talk or pupils do not understand what they have to do, pupils lose concentration and off-task discussion takes place.
- Pupils understand that there are different types of bullying including name-calling and cyber-bullying. They say bullying does occur sometimes at playtimes and lunchtimes. Although they say teachers deal with bullying seriously, they also say that not all adults who are supervising their play at lunchtimes listen well enough to their concerns. Also they say the new behaviour policy is not implemented fairly by everyone. Some staff in the questionnaire responses commented on the lack of consistency in the implementation of school policies.
- Parents, pupils and staff say that the behaviour of the majority of pupils is good, but comment that a small number of pupils demonstrate challenging behaviour. School records confirm this and there have been three exclusions in the recent past. During the inspection adults managed any incidents sensitively and minimised any potential disruption to learning.
- Despite their concerns about the way bullying and behaviour are managed by a few staff, pupils say they are happy in school and feel safe. They have a good awareness of how to stay healthy and safe, including a good knowledge of e-safety.
- Attendance is average and has improved over time due to actions taken by leaders.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because, although attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 rose in 2013, and more pupils are making faster progress than in the past, there is still more to do to ensure consistency of teaching to enable all pupils to make good progress.
- Senior leaders and governors are realistic about the school's effectiveness and priorities in the

learning improvement plan correctly focus on ensuring all teaching is good or better. However, actions are too woolly and the lack of sharp, measurable criteria and dates of when actions will be completed makes it difficult for governors to monitor regularly the school's progress.

- Many changes of staff have made it difficult to establish strong subject leadership. In September new leaders were appointed for English, mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage. All are enthusiastic and know there is much to do. However, as yet they have not had leadership training or had the time to make a difference in their areas of responsibility.
- Monitoring of pupils' progress is thorough and regular. Senior leaders' judgements of lessons observed jointly with inspectors were accurate and perceptive. Underachievement is identified quickly and this is followed up with good additional support. However, the monitoring of how well agreed school policies such as the behaviour policy are applied is less effective.
- The management of teachers' performance is securely established and teachers are set targets appropriately linked to pupils' achievement. A good system of coaching helps teachers who require support to learn from the best practice within school and from other schools.
- The pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to work together, and the range of visits and visitors also contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are interested in learning about people from a wide range of cultures and respect others' beliefs. However, they have too few opportunities to practise and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects.
- The school is appropriately extending the opportunities for physical development through the use of the primary sports funding, for example through additional athletics opportunities and resources.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's work through its termly visits. It has the confidence that the leadership team is doing the right things to move the school to good.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support and are committed to seeing the school improve. They have a secure understanding of the school's work and the quality of teaching. Appointed governors set targets for the headteacher and check that pay increases for teachers are now only awarded where there is evidence that pupils are making good progress.
 - Governors regularly visit the school to gain first-hand views of its work. They receive regular reports from senior leaders, including on how well each year group is doing. They keep a close eye on finances and know, for example, how the pupil premium is spent and what difference this is making to the achievement and well-being of eligible pupils.
 - They attend training to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date and ensure they fulfil their statutory duties effectively, for example those relating to safeguarding.

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	125576
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	427009

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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Ash
Headteacher	Matthew Cox
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2011
Telephone number	01788 542440
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