

North Downs Primary School

Whealers Lane, Brockham, Betchworth, Surrey, RH3 7LA

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Since the last inspection, leaders have been very successful in improving the quality of teaching. Pupils are now making consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Strong leaders have galvanised the three sites so that there is a shared vision and high level of commitment of staff. Everyone is pulling in the same direction and there is a collective desire to improve even further.
- Teachers know pupils well and so are able to plan work that interests them. Teachers' questioning is good and pupils respond thoughtfully and listen to each other's answers. This enables them to learn from each other as well as their teachers and deepens their learning as a result.
- Systems to check on the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching are rigorous. Teachers know what is expected of them and this is improving teaching and resulting in pupils making faster progress.
- Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is good. Pupils work hard and show a strong desire to learn. They are very well mannered and extremely polite.
- Procedures to ensure that pupils are safe on the three sites are outstanding.
- Governors have an excellent understanding of the school and visit regularly to check on progress on the school's development priorities. This enables them to challenge effectively and make a good contribution to plans for the future.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their skills of reading, writing and mathematics in a wide range of subjects and contexts.
- Teachers' marking does not give pupils precise enough guidance as to how they can improve their work in mathematics.
- The school has not been successful in communicating with some parents and carers about how well their children are doing and about how and why decisions are made.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons across the three sites, nearly all of which were joint observations with the members of the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons. They also observed other aspects of the school’s work.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, as well as with teachers and school leaders. Inspectors also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Pupils took inspectors on a tour of the school. The inspectors also listened to pupils read and spoke with them about their reading and their work. They spent time in the dining hall and on the school playground where they also spoke to pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 61 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for the current school year and the school’s own parent survey. Account was also taken of one letter received from a parent or carer, three emails sent to the school and forwarded to the inspection team and 31 comments from parents and carers forwarded to the inspection team via the inspection service provider. Inspectors also spoke to a parent or carer who requested an interview and spoke to parents and carers at the Brockham site. Inspectors reviewed 32 questionnaire responses from staff.
- A number of documents were looked at, including the school’s own information relating to pupils’ achievement, the school’s self-evaluation summary and plan of action, records relating to behaviour and attendance and checks on teaching, and documents relating to safeguarding. The inspectors also visited the school’s website.

Inspection team

Martin Marsh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lee Selby

Additional Inspector

Lynne Thorogood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school. The school is split over three sites in three villages: Brockham, Betchworth and Leigh. In Betchworth there is one Reception class and in Leigh one Year 1 class and one Year 2 class. Brockham has the full age range from Reception to Year 6. An external provider manages the on-site nursery on the Betchworth site and this is subject to a separate inspection.
- One in 14 pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding which supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority), which is below average. In Year 6 in 2013 there were three eligible pupils.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion on school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- Only a very small proportion of pupils belong to ethnic groups other than White British with only a small number of these pupils not having English as their first language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- Since the amalgamation of two schools in September 2010 the school has undergone considerable upheaval including having four headteachers in that time. Since the last inspection in October 2012, the school has had the same headteacher, senior leadership team and Chair of the Governing Body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to outstanding levels so that more pupils make rapid progress by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their reading, writing and mathematics skills in a wider range of different subjects and contexts
 - giving pupils more precise guidance as to how they can improve their work in mathematics.
- Improve communication with parents and carers so that they have an even better understanding of the progress their children are making and how the school makes decisions.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils arrive in Reception and other year groups with a wide range of skills. The school builds on these well so that by the time pupils leave in Year 6 they are reaching standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average.
- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently good across all year groups on all three sites. The school has improved pupils' writing and mathematics. Their rates of progress in these subjects are now similar to those found in reading.
- Pupils quickly learn to read because there are consistent approaches to teaching pupils their letters and the sounds they make (phonics) in Reception and Key Stage 1. When pupils leave the school they are excellent readers and have developed a real love and interest in books and text in electronic media.
- Pupils have excellent calculation skills. In Year 6 most pupils can calculate percentages of amounts in their heads, can apply their knowledge of multiplication tables in a range of different contexts and can use written methods of calculation appropriately and confidently in solving problems.
- Additional funding is well used to quicken the progress of the small number of eligible pupils. This enables them to make at least similar and often faster progress than their classmates. A range of strategies is used including one-to-one and small-group work in addition to focused work in lessons. Careful checks are made on their progress to ensure any additional support is effective.
- More-able pupils make similar progress to their classmates. They are regularly challenged with more difficult content, particularly in mathematics, and teachers' questioning is used well to enable them to think deeply about what they are learning. A higher proportion of pupils than is found nationally achieve Level 6 in mathematics.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs have their needs quickly identified so that strategies can be put in place to help them to make good progress. Good support from additional adults in lessons and extra support outside lessons enable them to take a full part in lessons and so learn well. The very small numbers of pupils who are not White British or whose first language is not English make similar progress to their classmates. This shows the school is successful in providing opportunity of learning for all.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers question pupils well and give them plenty of opportunities to express their ideas in lessons. Teachers listen to pupils' responses well and so they have a good knowledge of their ability and interest, enabling them to plan lessons that are suitable for different groups. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoyed their learning and that lessons are interesting.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to work in a range of ways so that they learn well. This is especially true when what they are given to do is challenging, as it typically is. They listen to each other and communicate their ideas very clearly, learning well from each other as well as their teacher.
- Pupils enjoy writing and the guidance they are given is usually very good, pointing out what is good and what could be improved. In a Year 3 writing lesson following a visit the previous day to the Tate Gallery, pupils were engrossed in writing in the first person. They used interesting phrases such as 'Suddenly I walked into this magnificent room' and 'I was bubbling with excitement.' Pupils were revelling in trying to share how inspired they had been by the visit and making excellent progress with their writing.
- Additional adults work well with pupils. They are effectively managed by the teacher and have a clear idea of their role in all parts of the lesson. When supporting disabled pupils

and those who have special educational needs, they help them to take a full part in the lesson and give them sufficient time to resolve difficulties themselves. This enables them to learn well and not be over reliant on adult help.

- In the Reception classes, adults question children well. In a session based around a book called *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch*, children were making excellent progress in planning a seagull trap because they were challenged to justify their design. Other children were working on producing a simple animation on a computer which retold the story developing their literacy skills well. Observations are detailed and accurate allowing teachers to plan activities both inside and outside the classroom that relate to children's interests and build on what they already know. Activities sustain children's interest and they are keen and enthusiastic and proud of their learning. They make good progress and develop a range of skills as a result.
- While the guidance pupils are given to improve their writing is typically of high quality, marking in mathematics books is not as precise and so pupils do not have a clear enough idea as to how they can improve their work and so make more rapid progress.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to use their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in other subjects and contexts. This stops some pupils making even more rapid progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are very well behaved around the school and take a pride in their appearance and in their school. Inspectors did not see any litter or graffiti. Pupils work hard in lessons and they generally take care to present their work well and complete it. Most pupils are fully involved in lessons and these positive attitudes are contributing to their good progress. Occasionally, where teaching is less strong, pupils sometimes lose concentration.
- The pupils told inspectors that they were happy and that they enjoyed coming to school. The vast majority of parents and carers who wrote to the inspection team or who responded on Parent View felt that pupils were well behaved in school and their children were happy. 'My son is very happy in this lovely school' was typical of most of the comments received in emails sent to the inspection team.
- Bullying is very rare and pupils know that it would not be tolerated by adults should it occur. They are aware of the different forms of bullying including through electronic media.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibilities. They enjoy being on the school council, are caring about the environment and look after each other in the playground. One pupil, during a singing assembly, asked the inspector if she was alright sitting in a draught and offered to close a door for her. Pupils loved sharing their work and talking about their school with inspectors.
- Attendance is above average and pupils are typically punctual for school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school takes all aspects of safety very seriously. Regular checks are made by leaders on all three sites to ensure that health and safety requirements are fully met.
- Commitment to child protection is a high priority and all adults receive the appropriate training in how to recognise and report signs of possible child abuse.
- Pupils are taught to have respect for the cultures and beliefs of others and know that if any prejudiced-based incidents did occur they would not be tolerated. This shows the school is successful in fostering good relations and tackling discrimination.
- The school's curriculum provides age-appropriate training to pupils on how to keep safe on the internet and in other situations such as on the roads. A Year 1 class, prior to a visit to a canal the following day, were being taught about the dangers of water and the importance of taking extra care. The posters they were designing showed that they had

good understanding of the potential dangers.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong and passionate leadership of the headteacher and her two deputies has successfully brought the three village sites together into one school. There is now consistently good teaching which is leading to the good achievement of pupils.
- Since the last inspection significant changes have been introduced. These include regular checks on the progress of pupils and on the quality of teaching. These changes, together with the good staff appraisal procedures and an emphasis on training for all staff, have raised the expectations that teachers have of themselves and their pupils. There is a strong commitment to the shared vision of making the school outstanding.
- The school has increased its capacity to improve by investing in the training of subject leaders. They are making an increasingly significant contribution to improvements in the quality of teaching across the school. One example of this is the work of the leader of physical education who is using the additional government funding for school sports to develop teachers' ability to teach physical education, work closely with a sports coach to provide expertise in a range of different sports and provide a greater range of aerobic and sporting opportunities for pupils. This is leading to greater participation in sports, particularly for those pupils who are more reluctant. Over 50 pupils recently joined in a school cross-country race.
- The amalgamation of the two schools into one in September 2010 was a difficult time for the school. There is still some disquiet among some of the parent community about how this was done and decisions that have been made since about the school's organisation. Some parents and carers do not believe the school communicates with them well enough about what is happening and why. A small proportion of parents and carers also expressed some concerns about the information they were given about their children's progress. The school is aware of this and leaders are working to improve this aspect of the school's work.
- The school's curriculum is supplemented by a range of trips and visitors to school. Transition is well managed when pupils move to a new site and when pupils prepare to move to secondary school. The curriculum is consistent across the three sites. The school provides well for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is enriched by the inclusion of African drumming and Indian pattern making.
- The school's breakfast club is well run and pupils are safe and happy.
- The local authority has been very successful in supporting school leaders to make the necessary improvements to ensure a good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the strengths and areas that still need to be improved very well. They have an excellent understanding of how pupils' achievement compares with that in other schools nationally and locally.
 - Governors visit regularly, always with a focus related to an aspect of the school's work. Recently they looked at pupils' work in books to check on how successful improvements in marking were helping pupils to learn. They are fully involved in the school's evaluation of its performance, including the quality of teaching. This enables them to challenge school leaders appropriately and be fully involved in making plans for the future.
 - Governors make a strong contribution to the outstanding safety in the school and in meeting statutory requirements for safeguarding and the recruitment of staff.
 - The governors know how the additional funding for eligible pupils is being used and the impact it is having. Governors are clear that teachers' salary progression links to improved performance informed by the school's appraisal process.

- Governors understand the value of training and make good use of the local authority training packages. They have also received good training from school leaders, particularly in understanding the school's pupil performance information.

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	124949
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	443142

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Morgan
Headteacher	Angela Ewing
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 October 2012
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