School report

Northiam C of E Primary School

Main Street, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex, TN31 6NB

Inspection dates	3–4 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	**Good**	**2**
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leadership and management are good. The impact of the determined acting and consultant headteachers, supported by effective governance, is the key reason for the school's rapid improvement.
- Staff have worked effectively together to overcome previous weaknesses. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and so are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The school's strongly held beliefs and values are reflected in pupils' behaviour, which is outstanding. Effective safeguarding procedures ensure that pupils are safe and exceptionally well cared for.
- The subjects that pupils learn effectively meet their individual needs and generate an enthusiasm for learning throughout the school.
- Teaching is good in every class because it is helping pupils to develop a love of learning. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and from disadvantaged backgrounds, make good progress.
- The school is very effective in the way it promotes British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children make a good start to their schooling because they are exceptionally well taught.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- In mathematics, pupils are given too few opportunities to use and apply their calculation skills to solve problems across a range of subjects.
- More-able pupils are not making progress swiftly enough in mathematics.
- The outside area of the early years provision does not provide enough space for pupils to develop their skills in physical coordination, control and movement.
- The plans published on the school's website for what pupils learn are incomplete.

Information about this inspection

- This was the inspector's fourth visit to the school since it was judged as requiring special measures.
- The inspector saw learning in every class and observed seven lessons. Some lessons were observed jointly with the acting headteacher and consultative headteacher.
- The inspector met with a group of pupils, heard some of them read and talked informally to pupils around the school. Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, head of school, other staff, governors and a representative of the local authority. The inspector also had a telephone discussion with a representative of Chichester Diocese.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation including plans for the school's improvement, information about how well pupils are doing, records of the interim executive board's meetings and records relating to pupils' behaviour, safety and welfare. The inspector also looked at pupils' books to see how well they are doing.
- The views of parents and carers were taken into account through the scrutiny of the 16 responses to the online Parent View survey, the outcome of the school's own parent survey and a discussion with a representative group of parents and carers.
- Staff views were taken into consideration through discussions with staff.

Inspection team

Chris Nye, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school, which is much smaller than most primary schools, is led by an acting headteacher, supported by a consultative headteacher from a neighbouring school. Governance is provided by an interim executive board. This arrangement will continue until next September, when plans for the school to join an academy chain are expected to be put in place.
- Currently, there are three classes of mixed-aged pupils. Reception children in the early years and pupils in Year 1 are taught in the same class. Years 2 and 3 pupils are taught in another class and Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils are taught in a third.
- The school receives pupil premium funding for 22% of the pupils. This proportion is lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- Last year, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs was above the national average. However, this has been considerably reduced and is now similar to the proportion in other schools nationally.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The majority of pupils have a White British heritage.
- The school shares the site with a privately run nursery. This is inspected separately and the most recent report may be found on the Ofsted website.
- When Northiam Church of England Primary School was inspected in July 2013, it was judged to require special measures. The school has worked in partnership with Westfield School since September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching by:
  - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to use and apply their skills in mathematical calculation to solve everyday problems in a range of subjects that they study
  - ensuring that the most able pupils make swifter progress in mathematics so that more achieve better than average levels of attainment.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - developing the outside area of the early years so that it better supports children's physical development
  - ensuring that published plans of the subjects that pupils study are completed and accurately reflect what pupils are learning and will learn.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school has gone through an exceptionally challenging time, but the skill and commitment of the acting headteacher and consultant headteacher, who have worked in the school since it was judged to require special measures, are the key reasons for the school's rapid improvement. They have successfully united the staff who all share the leadership's vision and ambition to ensure that good quality teaching continues to lead to further improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching is rigorous. As a result, significant staff changes have been made and past instabilities resolved. Monitoring has also led to well-focused staff training and follow-up checks to ensure that weaknesses in teaching have been addressed.
- Detailed, regular and rigorous checks on how well pupils are doing closely link to the management of teachers' performance and improvement plans. These clearly identify suitable priorities and actions that will be taken to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards of pupils' achievement.
- Middle leaders, although some are new to their roles, have made a significant contribution to raising standards. They have been successful in addressing weaknesses in the areas for which they are responsible, and have well-conceived plans to develop strengths further. For example, the special educational needs coordinator has undertaken a review of the provision and has ensured that much better use is made of the resources available to raise the standards of pupils with the greatest need. As a result, the progress of pupils with special educational needs has rapidly improved in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school makes good use of the new national requirements to plan a wide range of subjects for pupils to learn and these are helping them to be enthusiastic learners. These plans are shared with parents and carers on the school's website, but are currently incomplete so parents and carers do not have a comprehensive view of what their child is studying. However, teachers' own planning shows good provision for teaching reading, writing and mathematics and that a broad range of other subjects is studied. Sport, physical education and Spanish are particular strengths and the range of enrichment activities, such as a school production of *Macbeth*, enhances pupils' learning well.
- Specific topics, such as commemorating Remembrance Day, actively promote pupils' understanding of British values and there is very effective support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and the next stage of their education.
- Following the time when there was local concern about the school's effectiveness, leaders have worked hard to develop closer links with parents and the community. Improved outcomes and a number of initiatives, such as workshops for parents and carers on phonics (the sounds that letters make) and guidance on how to support their child's reading, have had a positive impact on improving parents' and carers' confidence in the school. Almost all who responded to the school's questionnaire said that they felt their child is happy, safe, well looked after, well taught and is making good progress. The school is now at the centre of its community and is a good example of what a small English village primary school should be.
- The school actively promotes an atmosphere where all are valued and have equality of opportunity, high standards of behaviour are expected and discrimination of any form is not tolerated.
- Additional funding for primary physical education and sports is effectively used to improve pupils' health and welfare. For example, a specialist teacher has been employed to train staff and extend the provision for physical education. Clubs such as 'Multi-Sports', dance and, for the less active pupils, 'Change4life' are engaging most pupils and their welfare and fitness have improved as a result.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils has been used to fund extra support and teaching staff with a focus on accelerating progress in literacy and numeracy skills. Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally are closing rapidly. Data since September 2014 show that most disadvantaged pupils are doing as well or better than other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- All safeguarding procedures are securely in place, meet statutory requirements and are rigorously applied.
- The local authority and partnership school have provided good quality support which has focused on the areas of weakness identified in the last inspection report. Support for leaders and a focus on improving teaching and learning have had a positive impact on driving improvement, but, appropriately, this support is being reduced to reflect the school's capacity to continue to improve with less outside help.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The interim executive board is knowledgeable and well led. Board members know the school well and

use achievement data effectively to hold leaders to account. For example, their analysis of data and high expectations supported leaders in making difficult decisions to resolve past weaknesses in teaching. They have a clear understanding of how teachers' performance is managed and closely monitor the progress that the school makes. Their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

– The interim executive board has been proactive in working with the local authority and Diocese of Chichester to prepare the school for when it joins a diocesan academy chain in September 2015. This has now been approved by the Department for Education and a cohesive plan for transition is in place to ensure that recent improvements are maintained and further enhanced.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. In every class, they demonstrate a love of learning across all the subjects that they learn because they are well taught and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, because teachers have developed an effective system for pupils to track their learning, pupils can clearly say what they have learned and can confidently explain what they need to do next to move their learning on. Their attitudes to work are exemplary and they are keen to do well, with the result that the progress that they make has accelerated significantly.
- Pupils are exceptionally polite and well behaved in class and around the school. Disruptive behaviour is extremely unusual and behaviour management policies are consistently applied so that they effectively resolve any rare incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Detailed records are kept of how such incidents are resolved.
- Adults have high expectations of behaviour to which pupils respond extremely well. Together they have successfully created a positive atmosphere for learning in the school in which pupils are valued, listened to, nurtured and cared for. The school operates as an inclusive and successful community and relationships across the school are warm and friendly.
- A strong feature is the way in which older pupils support, befriend and guide younger ones. The 'lunchtime buddies' take their responsibilities seriously and, as one parent or carer commented to the inspector, 'Behaviour here is terrific, especially how the older children support the younger ones – which is good for both groups.'
- Pupils' enthusiasm for school is illustrated by their attendance figures. Last year these were well above the national average, which is a considerable improvement on two years ago, when they were below average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and know how to keep themselves from harm. Safeguarding systems are very effective and rigorously applied.
- The school is proactive in preventing bullying through events such as anti-bullying week, and responds swiftly and effectively to the rare incidents that occur. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of the different types of bullying, including racism and cyber bullying, and know what to do if they encounter it. They are confident in the school's ability to resolve any issues.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection and past weaknesses have been resolved. Throughout the school the quality of teaching is consistently good, and outstanding in the youngest class. The impact is reflected in the good progress that pupils are making across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching is not yet outstanding because pupils, especially the most able, are given too few opportunities to use and apply their mathematical calculation skills to solve problems in other subjects as well as mathematics.
- Following a review of phonics, this is now exceptionally well taught throughout the school with the result that pupils who were underachieving in this area are catching up fast.
- Pupils demonstrate an enthusiasm for reading because they are encouraged to read widely and often. They make good use of the refurbished library, are keen to talk about their favourite books and authors and can explain why they like them.
- Teachers have high expectations and know their pupils very well. As one pupil commented, 'Our teachers know us really well and know how to make our learning fun.' Teachers meticulously plan lessons to meet

the wide range of pupils' ages and abilities in their classes and use questioning very effectively to check their progress and understanding.

- Imaginative activities are well planned to encourage pupils' enthusiasm for learning. For example, in one class a science investigation of light and dark was effectively encouraging very young pupils to explore and record the reflective properties of different materials.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects that they teach and ensure that the classroom environment supports learning well. For example, an exemplary display of pupils' work and artefacts on the Second World War effectively supported learning about the topic as well as celebrating pupils' work.
- There is a helpful homework policy and pupils are keen to carry out the tasks which link well to the work that they do in school. This supports and enhances their learning well.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and make a positive impact on pupils' learning, especially those with special educational needs. A recent review ensures that they work closely with teachers and support pupils within the classroom. This is resulting in an acceleration of progress in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teachers' marking is a significant strength across the school. Pupils' work is accurately marked against clear criteria, which pupils fully understand. Written feedback to pupils on their work is very detailed and provides clear guidance on how to improve. Pupils are encouraged to respond to feedback and this, too, is having a positive impact on accelerating their learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement across the school is good, because although improvements are relatively recent, they are secure in every class. Numbers in each year group are exceptionally small. Published information regarding pupils' progress and attainment does not fully reflect their achievement, especially in those year groups where there is a significantly higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
- Children start in Reception with variable skills and understanding. Some have skills typical for their age, but others do not. Halfway through last year staff changes resulted in a delayed but rapid improvement in progress and by the end of the year the percentage of children achieving a good level of development was higher than the national average. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1 and this strong picture has been built upon further this year.
- In Year 1, achievement in phonics last year was lower than that found in other schools nationally, although all those who do not have special educational needs attained the expected standard. Changes in how phonics is taught have meant that in the current Year 1, pupils are on track to achieve much higher outcomes and older pupils, who previously underachieved, are rapidly catching up.
- Pupils' attainment in Year 2 last year was above the national average in reading and writing and slightly below the national average in mathematics. The school recognises the need to increase the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics.
- In Year 6 last year, pupils' achievement did not meet the government's minimum expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. This was because the majority of pupils had significant special educational needs. However, all pupils made good progress relative to their starting points.
- In other year groups, inspection evidence confirms the accuracy of the school's own analysis of progress. Across the school the percentage of pupils making the expected progress last year in reading, writing and mathematics was between 60% and 80%. The percentage exceeding this was also proportionately high in reading and writing, but in mathematics too few more-able pupils achieved high enough standards.
- Since September there is secure evidence that pupils' achievement has accelerated across the school. Assessment data show that all pupils have made the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics and the school is on track to meet its challenging targets. This encouraging picture is supported by inspection evidence in lessons and in pupils' books, where the quality and quantity of work is consistently well-presented, of a good standard and demonstrates good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Those who benefit from pupil premium funding are making the same or better progress as other pupils nationally and in school, and there is now no significant gap between them and other pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs are also making rapid progress, relative to their starting points, and are rapidly catching up with their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because they are well taught and resources are well targeted to their needs.
- The most able pupils make good progress in reading and writing, but this is slower in mathematics.

The early years provision is good

- The early years provision is good, with all areas of learning well-catered for within the reception classroom. However, early years provision is not outstanding because the outside area does not provide sufficient space to adequately encourage children's physical development, in particular their coordination, movement and control of larger pieces of equipment such as tricycles and bicycles.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding and this is resulting in children making rapid progress, especially in developing their reading, writing, number, speaking and listening skills. Phonics is exceptionally well taught and children's writing is of a high standard, relative to their age. Adults work effectively together to support learning and there is a good balance between adult-led activities and those that the children choose for themselves.
- All safeguarding arrangements meet legal requirements.
- Children's social skills are being well developed and they welcome opportunities to work and play together. They behave exceptionally well, are kind to each other and have exceptionally good attitudes towards their learning.
- The improvement in early years provision is due to the good leadership provided by the early years leader. There are very strong links with parents and carers, who are actively encouraged to contribute to their child's learning. Parents and carers hold the provision in high regard.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	114516
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	446227

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	69
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Ian Jungius
Headteacher	Matthew Montebello (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 July 2013
Telephone number	01797 252141
Fax number	01797 253020
Email address	office@northiamcep.e-sussex.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014