

Northwood Primary School

Wyatts Lane, Northwood, Cowes, PO31 8PU

Inspection dates 10–11 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good 2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Early years provision		Good 2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' achievement is too varied. Pupils do not always make good progress, particularly during Key Stage 2. Too few pupils reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Key groups of pupils, such as the more able, boys and disadvantaged pupils, do not make consistently good progress. By the time they leave the academy, they have not made as much progress as their peers.
- The teaching of reading is too variable. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in the phonic (the link between letters and sounds) check in Year 1. More able readers do not achieve as well as they should.
- The monitoring of teaching is not always robust. As a result, improvements to teaching have been too slow.
- The quality of teaching is not consistent. Teachers' expectations of pupils are sometimes too low and work does not challenge pupils sufficiently.
- The role of phase leaders is not well enough developed. These staff have not been effective enough in ensuring teaching and learning are consistently good in their areas of responsibility.
- Governors do not provide rigorous challenge about the effectiveness of the academy. They do not hold leaders sufficiently to account for how resources are used to improve pupils' achievement.
- The pupil premium grant is not used effectively to ensure disadvantaged pupils catch up with their peers.
- School plans for improvement do not focus sharply enough on the achievement of pupils. As a result, work to improve the academy has not always had the impact that is needed.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils work hard in lessons, mix well with each other and contribute to the school community.
- Provision in the early years is effective. As a result, children make good progress and high proportions achieve a good level of development.
- The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils enjoy coming to the school and their attendance is good.
- The work of leaders to keep pupils safe is outstanding. As a result, pupils have a thorough understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, for example when using the internet.
- The academy is moving in the right direction under the leadership of the headteacher. The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is improving.
- All staff have a high commitment to the academy and work well together as a team. They develop excellent links with parents, who hold the academy in high regard.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons across all three key stages, two of which were with the headteacher. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes and around the academy. They also observed an assembly, analysed pupils' work and listened to some pupils read.
- Discussions were held between inspectors and the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, two phase leaders, members of staff and a group of governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector also spoke to two representatives from Hampshire County Council who have been working with the academy. Inspectors talked with some parents and considered 73 responses about the academy from parents through the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as 29 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team evaluated a range of academy documentation including the academy's development plan, the academy's own checks on its effectiveness, data about how well pupils are progressing, minutes of meetings and the academy's behaviour logs.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Christine Bulmer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Northwood Primary is a smaller-than-average-sized primary academy. There are eight classes from Reception to Year 6.
- Northwood Primary Academy converted to become an academy in April 2013. When its predecessor school, Northwood Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2007, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The current headteacher joined the academy in September 2010.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British, and there are very few pupils whose first language is not English. Around two thirds of pupils are boys.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care or known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs is broadly average, although those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs rose to well above the national average in 2014.
- Children attend the early years provision at the academy full time.
- In 2014, the academy met the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so it is consistently good, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils, so that it is consistently high across the academy and in all lessons
 - making better use of questioning to deepen and challenge pupils' thinking at their differing levels
 - ensuring marking frequently helps pupils to improve their work or move on in their learning, and that pupils take account of feedback to improve their work
 - strengthening the teaching of reading and phonics across the academy
 - ensuring work challenges all pupils well enough so that their progress is rapid.
- Improve the achievement of boys and disadvantaged pupils in all year groups.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching is robust and tackles weaknesses in teaching more rapidly
 - setting clear, measurable targets for improvement in school plans, including regular milestones that can be used by leaders and governors to check progress
 - making better use of the pupil premium grant so that disadvantaged pupils make more rapid progress and the gap in their attainment is closed
 - improving the effectiveness of the governing body so that the governors hold leaders more rigorously to account for how the use of resources, particularly the pupil premium grant, makes a difference to pupils' achievement
 - improving the impact phase leaders have on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.

A review of the academy's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The leadership and management of the academy require improvement because leaders have not ensured that teaching and achievement over time are consistently good. Recent improvements in pupils' writing and in the teaching of mathematics indicate that the academy has the capacity to improve further.
- The headteacher provides supportive and ambitious leadership. She has a clear vision for the academy, including innovative approaches to developing the curriculum. She has effectively cultivated a strong team ethos at the academy. Staff feel valued because their training needs are provided for effectively.
- The senior leadership team has an accurate view of how well the academy is doing. However, the plans for improvement have not been linked well enough to the achievement of pupils. As a result, improvements have not been rapid enough in the areas most needed.
- Phase leaders are not effective enough. They carry out some useful work to evaluate the quality of teaching at the academy; however, they do not use this to bring about rapid enough improvements in their areas of responsibility. This is because they do not provide robust challenge to teachers who work in the phases that they oversee. Subject leadership is also underdeveloped. This means subjects other than English and mathematics are not given a high enough priority in the curriculum.
- Checks on pupils' progress and observations of lessons carried out by senior leaders provide teachers with some useful feedback on their performance. However, too often observations focus on the work of teachers rather than on the difference being made to pupils' learning. This means that teachers also focus too much on what they are doing and not enough on what difference it is making to the progress of the pupils in their classes.
- Academy leaders set high expectations to try and ensure there is equality of opportunity for all. This is reflected in the aims of the academy. However, they have not been effective in narrowing the gap for important groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils and boys.
- Leaders have rightly added useful experiences to the curriculum to develop pupils' understanding of themselves as British citizens. Links made to schools in London, as well as the work done to achieve accreditation as a 'Gold' standard international school with the British Council, mean that pupils can explore and appreciate different faiths, cultures and perspectives. This has ensured that pupils have developed a more refined sense of the diverse nature of Britain and the wider world. They respect and value each other's differences and so are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' behaviour is good and that discrimination is not tolerated.
- The curriculum has some strengths which pupils appreciate. For example, the academy has its own Forest School, which brings learning to life. At times, opportunities to utilise these strengths are missed. This is because they are seen by teachers as separate areas of learning and not as an opportunity to learn key concepts in a way that is meaningful for pupils. There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply what they are learning across the curriculum.
- Leaders' use of the sport funding has been effective. Leaders have improved practice by allowing staff members to work alongside specialist coaches. Pupils are now benefiting from a rich, broad and more diverse physical education curriculum. Consequently, attendance at sports clubs has improved and is good. The academy has achieved the silver award from Sainsburys because of the increased participation rates of their pupils in sport.
- Leaders have made good use of external support. For example, the headteacher rightly identified that the package of support from Hampshire County Council would be beneficial for improving the work of the academy. A good example of this is the improvement being made to the teaching of mathematics.
- Leaders, including governors, have ensured that rigorous systems are in place and that all statutory safeguarding requirements are fully met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is not as effective as it needs to be at holding the headteacher to account. This is because the governors rely too heavily on the expertise of the headteacher. For example, they receive a range of useful information, including data about the performance of pupils, from the headteacher, but they do not use this effectively enough to hold leaders to account. As a result, they have not ensured that the underachievement of boys and disadvantaged pupils has been tackled rapidly.
 - Other aspects of the governing body are more effective. Governors ensure that there is a strong link between teachers' performance and how teachers are rewarded. Governors have helped the headteacher raise the expectations of staff about what they should be doing once they have reached the higher pay scales. This also means they have a good understanding of where there are strengths and weaknesses in teaching at the academy. Governors also undertake useful work with school leaders

to review how, for example, the sport funding has been used and what difference it is making. At times they too readily accept anecdotal evidence when evaluating the impact of how money has been spent.

- Governors have worked effectively with school leaders to ensure that pupils at the academy are kept safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and try their best.
- Behaviour logs kept by leaders demonstrate that incidents of poor behaviour are rare. On the unusual occasions when there have been difficulties, the academy's actions have been appropriate and effective. There have been no exclusions at the academy.
- Pupils say that almost all behaviour is good. They acknowledge that a very small number of pupils find it difficult to maintain the high expectations set by academy leaders. However, they say that all staff support these pupils to understand the consequences of their behaviour and this leads to them making better choices.
- Parents also believe behaviour is good at the academy. They say staff ensure there is a strong sense of community shared by pupils and their parents. This was demonstrated well by the manner in which pupils play and mix with each other during playtimes and around the academy.
- Pupils contribute positively to the academy in a number of ways. There is an active school council, for example, through which pupils influence changes made by academy leaders. The academy has an allotment which pupils help manage. Older pupils look out for younger pupils and act as role models. All of these things help with the strong sense of community at the academy.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe and this is supported by the very positive views of their parents. Pupils themselves contribute to the safe environment at the academy because they look out for one another.
- Pupils have a very strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe. This is developed early in their time at the academy through their experiences in the Forest School, where children are asked to evaluate the risks of the tasks they are doing for themselves. Academy leaders have made effective use of speakers to help raise the profile of e-safety. They have provided training for staff, parents and pupils. This has allowed pupils to develop a sophisticated understanding of the risks they face when using the internet.
- Bullying is exceptionally rare. Discrimination is not tolerated in any form. Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Strategies such as circle time have been particularly effective in teaching pupils how to deal with difficult situations that they might face, including online. This has also allowed pupils to understand the importance of using language that does not cause offense to others.
- Attendance has remained consistently above the national average at the academy. This is because pupils enjoy coming to the academy. There are effective systems in place to ensure that all pupils attend well.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the academy is variable and not yet consistently good. It requires improvement because, in too many classes, expectations are too low. This means that work does not always sufficiently challenge pupils to make as much progress as they could.
- Teachers do not always make the best use of questioning to help pupils to learn. This means pupils are not asked to think for themselves frequently enough and so deepen their learning. For example, in a Key Stage 2 reading lesson seen, pupils were only asked questions about grammar and punctuation when sharing a book with the teacher, such as, 'Can you find the adjective in the sentence?'
- Academy leaders have improved the way that writing is taught. Pupils know what constitutes good quality writing and they use this knowledge to edit and refine their work. Teachers regularly mark pupils' writing in their English books. Although feedback gives clear guidance for pupils, to help them improve their work, they are given too few opportunities to act upon the advice and therefore do not always make as much progress as they should.
- Teaching assistants and other adults are skilled and support children in their learning well. When teachers deploy them appropriately, they give particularly strong support for pupils in their learning. As a result, pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are often well catered for.

- The teaching of reading is inconsistent. The teaching of phonics, for example, has developed pupils' understanding of how to blend words effectively. However, too many pupils have not mastered the exact sounds that letters make and so their blending skills do not always help them to read. More-able pupils are not taught effectively enough to help them reach the higher levels. At times, what they are asked to read is not challenging enough and does not engage their interest.
- School leaders have improved how pupils are taught grammar, punctuation and spelling in Key Stage 2. This can be seen in the improvement in pupils' writing.
- The teaching of mathematics also varies in its effectiveness. Recent work to improve the teaching of mathematics has improved the use of imagery and practical experience to support pupils' learning effectively. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in groups with pupils of similar abilities. This has helped ensure the more able are better catered for and so they benefit from this arrangement. However, teachers do not always ensure that they match the work they are doing to the different abilities of the pupils working in the other groups. This means that some pupils still do not make the progress in mathematics that they should.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils do not make as much progress as they could from the time they enter Year 3. This is because leaders have not ensured teaching is consistently good.
- The number of children leaving the Early Years Foundation Stage with a good level of development is above the national average. This demonstrates that children make good progress during their time in Reception.
- The number of pupils who achieved the expected level in the phonics check in 2014 was below the national average. This is because too many pupils have not acquired a secure grasp of the sounds letters make. As a result, when they attempt to blend sounds to read words, this is not always helping them to read. This is also contributing to pupils' poorer spelling skills as pupils move through into Key Stage 2.
- By the time pupils finish Key Stage 1 their attainment is often above average. This has improved quickly over the last three years. In 2014, pupils attained levels that were significantly higher than the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 had been declining for the previous three years. In 2014, pupils attained levels that were below the national averages, and significantly so in writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Work seen in pupils' books demonstrates that pupils are now making better progress in Key Stage 2, particularly in writing. This is because of the improvements that have been made by the headteacher. The academy's current data demonstrate that pupils are likely to achieve results that are much more in line with the national average in 2015, and in some cases better.
- Boys achieve much less well than girls across the academy.
- More-able pupils do not make as much progress as other groups across Key Stage 2. Too few achieve the higher levels.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make better progress than their peers nationally. They achieve well in lessons.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is below that of other groups in the academy and all pupils nationally. The attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant is, on average, just under a year behind their peers nationally in reading and writing and just over a year and a half in mathematics. Within the academy their attainment was on average just under a year behind in mathematics, just under two terms behind in reading and a term behind in writing.

The early years provision is good

- Provision in the early years is good. Leaders have been particularly effective in developing the curriculum to meet the needs of boys. Assessments of children are used well to ensure that the outdoor and indoor environments meet children's needs.
- Activities led by adults are effective in helping children to make progress. For example, a whole class phonics session led by the teacher helped children to develop their blending skills well. This is because the teacher made the session active and fun. Both she and the children role-played being pirates and used treasure from a treasure chest to sound out letters and blend them for reading.
- Sessions in which children lead their own learning, however, are not always as effective as they could be,

because adults do not always make the most of opportunities to extend pupils' learning by questioning children effectively.

- The majority of children come into the Reception class with skills expected for their age. Cohorts have varied skills and sometimes come in with some areas that are weaker than others. For example, children currently in Reception came in with physical skills that were lower than you would expect for their age.
- Children make good progress in their time in the early years and the majority leave with a good level of development. In 2014, the proportion who achieved a good level of development was above the national average. This means children are well prepared to start Year 1 and demonstrates why the provision is better than other areas of the academy.
- Children show good attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school and work and play well together. Adults work hard to ensure that children are, and feel, safe. They manage behaviour well on the rare occasions that they need to. As a result, opportunities to play are positive and enjoyable.
- There are good links between staff and parents. Parents are particularly positive about the online profiles that are used in the early years. They appreciate the way that they can keep up to date with how their children are doing. Parents also contribute useful information to the profiles about the learning their children do at home.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. Leaders use information about how children are doing to adjust the provision to meet children's needs. Academy leaders make accurate assessments of where there are strengths and weaknesses in provision. Other adults are used effectively to ensure that children of all abilities have carefully tailored opportunities to extend their understanding and make progress.

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	139454
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	453176

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy Converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Wendy Bluestone
Headteacher	Miss Sarah Hussey
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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