

Northbourne Church of England Primary School

Cockcroft Road, Didcot, OX11 8LJ

Inspection dates 23–24 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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.

- The headteacher, ably assisted by a strong leadership team, has dealt well with the disruption to teaching caused by staff absences. He has made good decisions to ensure that pupils' learning has been affected as little as possible. This has resulted in significantly improved progress by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups this year.
- One of the key improvements has been in the quality of teaching. Rigorous monitoring has ensured that teachers have been challenged to improve their practice. This has been successful and the quality of teaching is good. Governors have played an important role in this process, supporting leaders well.
- Pupils are achieving well in all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics. A particular strength is in the higher proportion of pupils working at levels above those expected for their age.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are caring and polite and show consideration for others. They are particularly keen and enthusiastic in class because they find the teaching interesting.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe and their parents agree. Pupils say that bullying is minor, describing it as more like 'big arguments', and that it is dealt with very effectively when reported.
- Children have a good start in the Reception classes and make good progress, particularly in their personal development. The early years provision is well organised and planned to meet the specific needs of these young children.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils take seriously their responsibility in bringing about a harmonious society. They are well prepared to move on to their next school and subsequently to play their role in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet consistently outstanding. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to adapt their lessons in response to how well pupils are learning so that they can make faster progress.
- Teachers' marking does not often enough indicate to pupils how they can improve their work.
- Even though they make good progress, children sometimes do not have enough opportunities to practise their newly acquired skills in reading, writing and number in the early years.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 26 lessons, two of these jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders and managers, members of staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors met informally with parents at the beginning and end of the school day and analysed the results of the 98 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey. They also considered a letter received from a parent.
- Inspectors also considered the results of a survey of staff, completed by almost all staff.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at its self-evaluation, development planning, and policies and procedures including those relating to pupils’ safety.
- The inspectors evaluated the school’s information on the progress that pupils are making, and scrutinised the work in their books.

Inspection team

John Eadie, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paul Winterton	Additional Inspector
Lucy Maughan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Northbourne Church of England Primary School is larger than the average primary school. There are 11 classes, two for Reception and three for Years 1 and 2, three for Years 3 and 4 and three for Years 5 and 6. Almost all children in the early years attend full time though a few who are not yet of statutory school age still attend part time.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after, is a little below average. There are currently no children looked after by the local authority in the school.
- Almost nine out of 10 pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remainder are from a wide variety of minority ethnic groups. About half of these pupils speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- Pupils from Northbourne attend an after-school club at a local school, which is managed by that school.
- Long-term staff absences have been much higher than usual over the last two years and there are still three of the 11 classes taken by temporary teachers.
- The school has a pre-school on site, but this is managed independently and is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, and hence develop pupils' and children's achievement, by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently adapt their lessons on the basis of how well pupils are learning
 - teachers' marking consistently shows pupils what they need to do to improve their work
 - children have more opportunities to apply their skills in reading, writing and number in the early years through a range of different activities.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has dealt very well with the disruption to teaching caused by unavoidable staff absences over the last two years. Parents are particularly impressed with how well they and their children have been kept informed of the necessary changes. The senior leadership team, and particularly the deputy headteacher, have provided very good support through these difficult times.
- There is an ethos of ambition and the school's motto 'nurturing excellence' is at the heart of its work. There is strong teamwork among all staff, who were hugely positive on their questionnaires, saying, 'Our school is a very strong community where every staff member is considered part of the team and strives to do their absolute best for all children and their families.' As a result of this positive approach, teaching and behaviour continue to be good.
- Leaders have carried out considerable work over the last two years to improve the quality of teaching. Monitoring has been rigorous and teachers have been fully supportive and keen to improve their practice. They appreciate the review process, where a leader who is to monitor their teaching goes through the areas for development from their last review, so that they can both see whether action has been taken. All this work has been successful and the quality of teaching, and hence pupils' achievement, has improved significantly.
- Middle leaders play their full role in driving improvement. They have clear plans for development and can give evidence of the success of past initiatives. More than this, they are prepared to work on less successful areas as they keep a careful check on how well their plans are progressing.
- The extra funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Many of these pupils are now making the same or better progress as their classmates and the gap between their attainment and that of others is closing; in some year groups it has already closed.
- The school's ethos is one of meeting the needs of every child. Parents were eager to tell inspectors how the needs of their particular child or family circumstance had been met most effectively. This is a good example of how well leaders promote equality of opportunity. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated and pupils were keen to tell inspectors how all are valued and included, regardless of race or religion for example.
- The school works very closely with two other local schools and this 'triad' has significant benefits for all three. For example, the schools pooled their extra funding for physical education and sport, which enabled them to employ a sports specialist. Staff training is also often carried out jointly and staff regularly meet together to help each other, for instance by scrutinising pupils' work to agree how effectively pupils are learning.
- The school provides a broad curriculum and subjects are often linked to develop pupils' learning. For example, pupils were observed using their current science topic to write creatively in English. The curriculum is significantly enhanced by a range of visits and visitors. For instance, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 went on a trip to Warwick Castle during the inspection to enrich their learning in history and English.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins all aspects of the curriculum. It is not an add-on extra but permeates all aspects of school life. This has meant that pupils are growing up into responsible and responsive young people, well prepared for the move to their next school and beyond that for life in modern Britain.
- The extra funding for physical education and sport is used well. As well as sharing the employment of a sports specialist, a considerable range of sports has been added to those available. Pupils were particularly enthusiastic about the opportunities now available for girls' football, mixed tag rugby, a swimming gala and basketball, for instance. This has led to much greater involvement and has had benefits for pupils' health and well-being.
- The breakfast club is becoming increasingly popular. One of the reasons for this is the expertise of the staff. They have developed a good programme to enhance the learning of the children of Reception age who attend and they liaise well with the Reception class teachers to contribute to their assessments. An extremely wide range of festivals is celebrated by all the pupils who attend, such as Japanese Children's Day, History of Australia Day, Burns Night and Earth Day. Splendid displays have been created as evidence of the work done.
- The policies for keeping pupils safe are rigorous. All statutory requirements are met in this regard. The site is safe and secure.
- The local authority has provided good support during the time of staff turbulence, but now provides support on request in accordance with the school's growing capacity to improve itself.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is strong. Governors are knowledgeable and therefore well able to challenge leaders. They are very aware of what data on pupils' performance are telling them, for instance. Governors offer good support to leaders in the development of teaching and are well informed on its quality. On the basis of this knowledge they make sound decisions on rewarding good teaching during the process to manage teachers' performance. They also know what is being done to tackle any underperformance. Governors take a keen interest in the effectiveness of the spending of the funds for disadvantaged pupils and ensure that this is used effectively. This is a good example of the way that they keep a tight control over spending. They fulfil all their statutory duties well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are courteous and caring and very welcoming to visitors. They play sensibly, having due regard to the needs of others.
- A particular strength is in pupils' attitudes to their learning. This is a key focus for the school and has been successful, as evidenced in pupils' keenness and enthusiasm for their learning. They say that incidences of disruption to lessons are rare and almost always minor.
- Relationships are strong at all levels. Pupils have due respect for adults, but are quite happy to chat with them and know that there is always someone to turn to if needed. They get on very well with each other, valuing these friendships, which mean that when working in pairs or small groups there is no friction.
- Pupils take responsibility in a variety of ways, such as on the school council, which is active and has initiated several positive benefits.
- Leaders have worked hard to ensure good attendance and the school's attendance rate is well above average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Systems and policies are very rigorous and are effective. Pupils and their parents say that they feel very safe in school.
- Pupils and their parents say that bullying is rare and minor. A parent sought out an inspector to say that their child had been subjected to an instance of very minor bullying, but they wanted to say how promptly and effectively it had been dealt with. Pupils confirmed that they have every confidence in staff dealing with bullying swiftly and effectively when reported.
- Pupils have good awareness of different types of bullying. The dangers of cyber bullying are regularly discussed and pupil-created posters on its danger are displayed around the school. Pupils are therefore well aware of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They are also conscious of risk and know how to react when they confront it in a variety of situations.
- Pupils found it difficult to understand why anyone would think of bullying someone racially, as they respect and appreciate difference. Similarly, they recognise the inappropriateness of homophobic and discriminatory bullying.

The quality of teaching is good

- Although the quality of teaching was adversely affected by the turbulence to staffing last year, it has improved due to initiatives by leaders and is now good in literacy, reading and mathematics. This is especially the case in reading where standards in phonics (linking letters to sounds) have improved strongly and are built on well through the school.
- A particular strength, and an improvement since the last inspection, is the level of challenge given to pupils in lessons. Pupils were observed engrossed in really challenging work. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 6, they were successfully working out formulae for complex number patterns. This has resulted in better achievement for the most-able pupils.
- A further strength is the way that teachers use questioning to deepen pupils' understanding. For instance, during a literacy lesson in Years 3 and 4, the class was building a start to a piece of imaginative writing. Pupils were being asked to provide openers for sentences. They were creating really imaginative ideas due to the skilful use of questioning by the teacher.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and guided well and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who find learning more difficult.

- One of the key reasons for pupils' greater enthusiasm for learning is that pupils say that teachers make it fun. Teachers are creative and use a good variety of resources to catch the pupils' interest. For instance, when introducing the topic of translating shapes in mathematics, a teacher took her class outside so that they could experience translation for themselves. This added to their understanding significantly when they returned to do the tasks on paper.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning well over time. They quickly identify any pupils in danger of falling behind. Effective arrangements are then put in place to help them catch up.
- There are occasions when teachers do not assess pupils' success in learning during lessons. For instance, on one occasion, the teacher wanted to make sure that all pupils had understood the introduction before she set them to their task. However, it was clear that several had understood much earlier and could profitably have been sent to start their task sooner and progress more quickly. Similarly, there are times when some are struggling with their work and teachers do not always pick up on this early enough and provide further support.
- There is a clear marking policy that identifies the need for teachers to ensure that pupils know how to improve their work. However, this is not used consistently and pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement dipped last year during the initial period of staff turbulence and this was the reason for the poorer than usual results in the national assessments in Year 6. However, there have been considerable improvements this year and pupils are now achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although the progress that last year's Year 6 cohort made from Key Stage 1 was disappointing, this has been totally reversed and the current Year 6 has made very good progress from their scores in the national assessments in Year 2. This is the situation through the school and pupils in all year groups have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics since September 2014.
- Pupils who have identified special educational needs make good progress. This is because these needs are identified early and provision is designed well to address their particular needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils also make good progress. The funding has been used very well to ensure that they are able to close the gap between their performance and that of their peers and this gap is closing well. An innovative feature that encourages their reading is that a teaching assistant takes the older ones to the local library, an opportunity that they requested themselves.
- In the national assessments in Year 6 last year, disadvantaged pupils were about a year and two terms behind other pupils nationally in reading. They were about a year behind in writing and mathematics. They were about a year and a term behind their classmates in reading, a term and a half in mathematics and a term in writing. This has improved this year and they are currently about a year behind their classmates in reading, and a term in writing and mathematics.
- The progress that disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in 2014 made from their scores in Year 2 was slightly better than that of their classmates and, therefore, a similar amount below that of other pupils nationally. That situation has continued this year and the gap between their performance and that of their classmates is closing. This is the case through the school, where in some classes, Year 2 for example, the gap in progress has almost entirely closed.
- In the national phonic screening in 2014, 86% of pupils in Year 1 achieved the expected standard. This is markedly better than the national figure and reflects the work that the school has done to teach this basic skill successfully. Evidence suggests that the proportion will be similar or even better this year.
- The most-able pupils are challenged well. Although there was a lower than average proportion that gained the higher levels in the national assessments in Years 2 and 6 last year, there is currently a good proportion of pupils working at the higher levels in Years 2 and 6. For instance, evidence shows that several pupils in Year 6 are working at the highest Level 6 in reading, writing or mathematics. This reflects the much greater levels of challenge teachers are giving pupils this year.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups make the same good progress as their classmates. Very few of these are at an early stage of learning English and those whose home language is not English are also making the same good progress as their classmates. This is because they are supported well, particularly in their early stages when they join the school.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children start in the Reception classes with levels of skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. They make good progress and by the time they join Year 1 a broadly average proportion is achieving a good level of development. This is particularly the case in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Adults use questioning and conversation skilfully to develop children's language skills. Phonics is also taught effectively, with children's ability to blend sounds developing well. The quality of teaching in the early years is good.
- Leadership and management of the early years are good and provision is very well organised. There are good resources, both for work in the classroom and outside, with plenty to interest and stimulate the children. Children are prepared well for the move to Year 1.
- While children make good progress overall in the key areas of reading, writing and number, they do not always have sufficient opportunities to apply their skills through different activities.
- Children settle quickly into Reception and they behave well. They play happily and sensibly together, particularly enjoying opportunities for role play, such as the current camping and seaside theme. They are safe as the leader has clear procedures in place to cover possible risk.
- There are very strong links with parents, who receive good information about their children's progress and play an important role in supporting their children's learning and development.
- Good links have also been established with feeder nurseries and play groups and staff manage the transition for children into the school well. There are particularly strong links with the on-site pre-school group. There are also close links with the early years staff in the other schools in the 'triad' of local schools, which enable joint training and agreement on judgements.

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	123221
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	456214

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	302
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	Jon Driscoll
Headteacher	Paul Shaughnessy
Date of previous school inspection	29 February–1 March 2012
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