

Northgate Primary School

Green Lane, Northgate, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 8DX

Inspection dates	3–4 November 2015
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good throughout the school.
- Teachers' expectations for the amount and variety of pupils' writing, and for pupils' handwriting and presentation, are too low. Teachers pay limited attention to pupils' individual reading.
- Teachers do not always plan the appropriate next steps for pupils, or check pupils' understanding in lessons well, limiting progress. Teachers' feedback to pupils on their work lacks guidance to help pupils improve.
- Different groups of pupils' progress varies, including that of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those from different ethnic groups, especially White British.
- Gaps are not closing rapidly between the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils entitled to free schools meals and looked after) and others.
- Leaders do not check different groups of pupils' progress well enough, over time from different starting points. Leaders do not examine closely pupils' progress during different phases of the school, or as a result of interventions.
- Leaders' evaluations of the school's performance, and school improvement plans, are not precise enough to support rapid improvement. The work of middle leaders is not sufficiently developed to ensure consistently effective support for good teaching and does not link well enough with the school's overall improvement planning.
- Some pupils are too ready to stop work when teaching does not engage them well. Some take too little pride in the presentation of written work.
- The governing body has limited capacity. This undermines governors' efforts to improve the way that they check the operation of the school and hold leaders to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Since joining a year ago, the headteacher has taken determined, effective action to improve teaching and leadership. Staff overwhelmingly support the changes being made.
- Parents value highly the effective care and commitment for pupils shown by all staff.
- Effective systems are in place to check and review the progress pupils make during the year.
- Pupils' progress is improving overall, especially in mathematics and phonics (letters and sounds), and for the most-able pupils, especially in English.
- Early years provision is a strength of the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to ensure good progress for all pupils, in all subjects, so that gaps between the achievement of different groups of pupils in the school, and with others nationally, close rapidly, especially for pupils supported by the pupil premium, White British pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use accurate assessment of pupils' developing knowledge and skills, to plan teaching and activities which engage pupils well and move pupils on securely through the necessary next steps in their learning – this includes through questioning pupils during teaching
 - ensuring that teachers raise their expectations for the amount and variety of writing that pupils can achieve and the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation
 - ensuring that teachers support pupils' individual book choices and personal reading carefully
 - ensuring that teachers provide guidance in their feedback to pupils about how pupils can improve their work, and ensure that pupils have opportunities to implement this.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders' overall evaluation of the school's performance refers specifically to the achievement of different groups of pupils, over time, and during the different phases of the school – this includes pupils supported by the pupil premium, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those from different ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language
 - the school's improvement plans identify specific aspects of pupils' achievement which require improvement, set out precise, relevant actions for staff to improve teaching, include well-considered timescales and details of how success will be measured, and show how governors will check the impact of the action taken on pupils' outcomes
 - middle leaders use information about the achievement of different groups of pupils to identify specific priorities for improvements in teaching, linking their work closely to the priorities of the school's overall improvement plan
 - the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) makes good use of assessment to measure the impact of interventions for individuals and groups
 - the governing body rapidly develops its capacity to undertake checks on the operation of the school, including reviewing routine reports relating to pupils' welfare, and to hold leaders to account for improvement.
- An external review of governance is recommended.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders' evaluation of pupils' achievement is too general. Leaders do not examine closely the progress that different groups of pupils make over time and through different phases of the school. This includes pupils supported by the pupil premium, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those from different ethnic groups, and those for whom English is an additional language.
- The school's improvement plans lack specific information about which aspects or phases of pupils' learning require improvement and how teaching will be improved to achieve this. Plans are also insufficiently clear about timescales, exactly how success will be measured, and how governors will check the impact of the action taken on pupils' outcomes.
- The effectiveness of middle leadership is in the early stages of development after the headteacher wisely expanded this team. Mathematics leaders have begun to have an impact on the quality of teaching, but developments in English leadership are more recent and not yet impacting on pupils' progress sufficiently, especially in writing. English and mathematics leaders have shown initiative by developing their own action plans, but these lack the necessary detail and are not well enough linked to the school's overall improvement plan.
- The headteacher has taken firm action to ensure that there is no inadequate teaching in the school. Despite high levels of staff turnover, a continuous cycle of activities to check teaching have been introduced. The headteacher uses this information well, to provide successful training and support for staff and when making recommendations to the governing body about teachers' pay.
- Leaders have successfully introduced a new assessment system relating to the revised National Curriculum. This information is used well by leaders to review pupils' current progress with class teachers. However, the information is not used well by leaders to check pupils' progress over time, including for different groups of pupils, or by the SENCO to review pupils' progress as a result of intervention programmes.
- The headteacher energetically promotes a positive, inclusive ethos in the school, which all staff support proudly. Responses to the Ofsted staff survey included frequent comments that staff feel privileged to work at the school. This strong morale extends to the most newly qualified teachers, who receive effective training and development which, the headteacher ensures, is well-tailored to their individual needs.
- The school provides a broad curriculum, which reflects the wide-ranging cultural backgrounds of pupils, staff, and the locality. Interesting topics are enriched with visits to places of worship and educational venues. Valuable opportunities are provided on site to promote pupils' learning and well-being through gardening, ecology, sport and active play. This, together with regular community events such as the annual lunch hosted by Muslim and Hindu staff members, international days, and a well-established link with a school in Africa, ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and pupils are well-prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders ensure that older pupils engage with the local council's programme to prevent the radicalisation of young people.
- Good use is made of additional government funding for sport. Staff skills for teaching physical education are enhanced through opportunities to work with a specialist teacher and pupils value the extra sporting activities, including multi-skills training, which are now provided. The school is enjoying increased success in local sports competitions, most recently in hockey and rounders.
- The school makes relevant, targeted use of pupil premium funding to provide additional support and teaching, mentoring and full participation in educational visits. However, due to inconsistencies in teaching, this support is not yet impacting rapidly to close gaps between the achievement of pupils supported by this funding and others.
- Safeguarding requirements are met. Training is in place, staff consistently apply the expected procedures and the headteacher makes ready referrals to social services when required. The care that staff show for pupils is exemplary and parents are rightly confident that their children are safe.
- The local authority raised the level of support provided to the school 18 months ago. Mathematics consultants have supported leaders in the school well, to establish a trend of continuing improvement. Advisers are currently working with the school to develop methods to check pupils' progress over time and to interpret accurately the complex picture of progress for different groups of pupils. The local authority has helpfully arranged support for leadership development from the headteacher of an outstanding school, although this is limited to a small number of days. The local authority's support for

the governing body has had limited impact.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Governors have a true, broad understanding of pupils' overall progress. However, governors do not regularly review sufficiently detailed reports from leaders about the achievement of different pupil groups, including those supported by the pupil premium, about pupils' welfare and attendance, or about progress in relation to the school's improvement plan. Some broad reports are provided by the headteacher, but governors do not question these rigorously.
- The governing body is under-subscribed and some members are unable to make the necessary commitment. The Chair of the Governing Body is actively seeking to recruit governors from local business and industry, but so far without success. Very recently, some governors have started to visit the school more frequently for discussions with leaders. It is too soon to see any outcome from this activity.
- Governors involved in recruitment of staff are suitably trained. An updated safeguarding policy, which meets requirements, was due to be ratified at the time of the inspection.
- Governors are well-informed about teachers' performance and make well-considered decisions about teachers' pay progression.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. As a result, pupils' progress varies over time and between groups of pupils.
- Teachers do not always plan teaching, or set work, at a suitable level for pupils. Teachers do not always use questions well during teaching, to check that pupils understand well enough before the lesson moves on. Pupils are sometimes given tasks for which they do not have the necessary skills, for example mathematics problems which pupils cannot read well, or writing freely without support to find the words they need. When work is too hard or too easy, some pupils disengage from their learning; they stop listening to the teacher or disturb other pupils, slowing progress.
- Some teachers provide pupils with too few opportunities to write at length. In some classes, pupils' experience of writing during English lessons is repetitive and limited, for instance largely to story writing, over extended periods of time. Generally, teachers' expectations for pupils' handwriting and presentation are low, with poor quality often passing without feedback from the teacher.
- To boost pupils' progress, teachers are implementing a novel approach to teaching writing and inspectors saw this enthuse Key Stage 2 pupils to develop their ideas. However, it is too soon to gauge impact on pupils' achievement.
- Most teachers check pupils' work frequently and teachers' marking generally identifies strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work clearly. However, with few exceptions, teachers' feedback to pupils about their work lacks sufficient guidance about how to improve.
- Phonics is taught well in Key Stage 1, including to pupils with hearing impairment. Lessons are well structured and capably led by both teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils respond well to the structure and pace of these sessions and proudly demonstrate increasing confidence.
- The school's increasingly systematic approach to teaching mathematics skills is accelerating pupils' progress. This is well supported by the school's clear expectations for mathematics learning and assessment in each year group.
- Well-taught guided reading sessions led by adults are popular with pupils and support them to make progress during lessons. However, inspectors found that pupils frequently choose their individual reading book without its suitability being checked by an adult, so pupils do not reliably access books which promote further good progress. Reading diaries include helpful tips for parents on reading at home and useful targets, but the frequency with which teachers support pupils' progress by checking this record, is variable.
- Good levels of care and expertise provided by specialist staff, including the skilled use of signing, ensure that pupils with hearing impairment, special educational needs and disabled pupils are fully included in the life of the school.
- Teaching assistants often provide skilled and helpful general support to pupils during lessons, following closely the guidance of the teacher and encouraging pupils to become successful independently.
- Specialist staff provide a helpful model to recently recruited colleagues who are keen to develop their skills. Teaching assistants support teachers well to maintain the good relationships and positive ethos which

pervades the school. Assistants are prompt to intervene and resolve any personal or playground upsets.

- Teachers make full use of the school site to provide pupils with stimulating opportunities to extend their learning. Inspectors saw Key Stage 2 pupils enthusiastically working on performance poetry in the sensory garden. Skilled pre-teaching of pupils with special educational needs enabled them to take part fully in this activity. During the inspection, Reception Year children were enthusiastic to explore the sights and smells of autumn in the forest school area, where pupils valuably encounter nature at first hand.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. This is because governors do not review regular, detailed reports about behaviour and attendance, or check the quality of the school's record keeping.
- The school is a well-ordered, harmonious community. Adults model positive relationships and good communication for pupils. A warm welcome is extended to frequent new families joining the school, including by administrative staff, with practical support for any language or social barriers. Personal mentors and counselling is provided for pupils in difficulty. Ample supervision at social times, and the site manager's careful maintenance of the premises, keep children safe.
- The inclusive ethos and conspicuous care by all the staff ensure that pupils are safe and feel safe in school, including those from different ethnic groups, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils told inspectors how first aid is readily available and how adults support them well to resolve disagreements. Pupils are taught to take responsibility for their behaviour, and to remedy the consequences of any mistakes they may make. Exclusions are applied judiciously, with protocols followed assiduously.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying in the school. Pupils are confident that staff would resolve any issues which did occur promptly and parents who spoke with inspectors overwhelmingly shared this view. Pupils are well-informed about keeping safe online.
- Pupils are given valuable opportunities to contribute to the smooth running of the school, for example as members of the school council or as 'young interpreters'. In 2015, Year 6 left a lasting legacy in the school by creating the sensory garden.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Some pupils disengage too readily from their learning if teaching does not interest them enough, if they have to wait for help with their work, or if work is too easy. Pupils, in general, do not take enough pride in the presentation of written work.
- Most pupils behave well throughout lessons. They listen with interest to their teacher and are keen to get on with practical tasks, which they perform with enthusiasm. Inspectors saw this in Key Stage 2, where pupils enthusiastically tackled open-ended mathematical problems.
- Pupils are proud of their school, of the diversity of the community and of one another. Pupils wear their uniform with pride and show respect to the resources they use and one another. Inspectors noticed new equipment left all along the edge of a corridor, for pupils to return to later. This was completely undisturbed by pupils passing by at lunchtime.
- Pupils play well together. At lunchtime, they eat well and demonstrate good manners. Pupils readily tidy up after themselves and spontaneously rearrange rooms after activities. Key Stage 1 pupils who had to relocate from the library because the room was unexpectedly in use, quickly settled to learning phonics in the corridor instead.
- Pupils' attendance overall is slightly better than the national average. Some disabled pupils and those with special educational needs experience a high level of absence due to their medical needs. The headteacher monitors attendance closely and takes firm, prompt action to ensure that parents fulfil their responsibility for their children's full-time attendance. Penalty notices are issued and contact is made with external agencies when required.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Most, but not all, pupils have low starting points when they enter the school and some have very low starting points. Pupils do not make consistently good progress as they move through the school and the achievement of different groups of pupils varies. This includes pupils supported by the pupil premium, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and White British pupils.
- The gap between the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium and other pupils nationally is closing, but slowly, and not consistently in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2015, these pupils left Year 6 nearly a year behind other pupils nationally in mathematics, more than a year behind in reading and writing, and almost a year behind in spelling and grammar. The gap was smaller compared with pupils at the school: less than a term behind in mathematics, more than a term in reading and in writing, and over two terms in spelling and grammar.
- Pupils' progress is improving overall in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2015, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 who achieved the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics rose to meet the current government floor standard. In writing, the proportion of pupils overall who made the expected progress in Key Stage 2 improved to above the national figure. However, in reading and mathematics these proportions remained below the national figures.
- At the end of Year 2 in 2015, pupils' attainment overall reflected good progress from low starting points for most pupils. Nevertheless, gaps remained between the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium and others, and between different ethnic groups, especially for White British pupils.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups, and those who speak English as an additional language make variable progress. A proportion of these pupils are supported by the pupil premium and some are also disabled or have special educational needs. The most notable outcomes are that White British pupils consistently make the least progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make variable progress. Inspectors saw some individual pupils with special educational needs making rapid progress during some lessons, especially the hearing impaired or those with the most complex needs. However, overall, pupils in this group do not make good progress over time.
- The most-able pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress and attain the higher levels which are expected of them. In Key Stage 2, the most-able pupils also make good progress, especially in English.
- Year 1 pupils' achievement in phonics has improved consistently over the last three years, and faster than the national rate of improvement. The achievement of pupils supported by the pupil premium has improved at a rate which is faster still, so the gap between the achievement of these pupils in phonics and others is closing rapidly. Furthermore, although the overall standard reached in phonics by pupils at the school remained below the national average in 2015, this outcome was affected by low scores for pupils with complex special educational needs, who nevertheless achieved well from their very low starting points.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children enter Nursery and Reception Year with levels of learning which are below, and often well-below, those typical for their age. Overall, children make good progress so that by the end of the Reception Year, the proportion that reach a good level of development is approaching the national average. This prepares children well for the challenges and opportunities of Key Stage 1.
- Adults provide a wide range of purposeful activities indoors and out-of-doors, which engage the children well and develop their learning across all the areas of the early years curriculum. Adults teach phonics well during the Reception Year, setting a good foundation for the rising achievement now evident in Year 1.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. They interact effectively with the children to challenge and develop language skills, especially with those for whom English is an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Adults make frequent observations of individual children learning, to assess progress and inform next steps, but not always with a sharp focus on how well children are meeting expectations for their age.
- Children behave well. They are happy and relaxed, enjoy one another's company, and welcome the interaction of the adults. The children value very highly the wider school environment, with its field, forest and gardens. These experiences are particularly enriching for some children whose outdoor activities at home are limited.

- Safeguarding is very effective. Arrival and departure times are closely supervised by the staff, the outdoor area is secure and well maintained, the ratio of adults to children is good, and the health and safety of the children is ensured through the thoughtful care and attention of the staff. Staff, including the most recently recruited, are all familiar with the required procedures and apply these rigorously.
- Parents and carers are pleased with the way children are inducted into the school. Parents feel well informed about their children's progress and well-being at school, and are confident that they can approach staff at any time with questions or concerns. Some parents especially value the help staff provide to assist them in supporting their child's learning at home.

School details

Unique reference number	133973
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10000452

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	528
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Gascoigne
Headteacher	Georgina Beaven
Telephone number	01293 526737
Website	www.northgate.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@northgate.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 May 2012

Information about this school

- Northgate is a larger-than-average sized primary school. The school includes specially resourced provision for up to 16 pupils with hearing impairment. There are currently 12 hearing impaired pupils on roll.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for which the school receives additional funding (pupil premium), is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receiving school support is below average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan, is well above average. Additional pupils with hearing impairment are on the roll of mainstream classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils attend the Nursery part time, and Reception Year full time.
- The school receives leadership support from the headteacher of Birchwood Grove Primary School.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching including specialist provision in 31 lessons, heard pupils read and looked at pupils' work in their books and on display.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, observed playtime and lunchtime and talked with pupils and staff around the school.
- Inspectors talked with parents at the start of the day. There were too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) for these to be considered. Sixty-two responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were analysed.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including: plans for what pupils will learn, leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, the school's improvement plans, information relating to the school's use of government sports funding and the pupil premium, governing body records and local authority reports.
- Checks were made of arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, and behaviour and incident logs. Inspectors scrutinised leaders' analysis of pupils' progress and records of the quality of teaching.

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