

# Norton Primary Academy

Berkshire Road, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees TS20 2RD

## Inspection dates

29–30 November 2016

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	Require improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' and governors' actions have not secured teaching that is consistently good or better, across key stages and subjects.
- Leaders and governors have not addressed weaknesses in attendance and punctuality promptly enough. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is too high.
- Leaders record incidents of poor behaviour but do not review them carefully. This leads to a less than effectual management of behaviour.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Teachers do not challenge pupils, reliably. Pupils with typical starting points in particular do not reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not monitor the frequency and quality of pupils' reading, rigorously. Reading needs diligent attention across key stages.
- Additional adults are not deployed effectively by all teachers. Consequently valuable teaching and learning time is lost.
- Pupils do not produce work of a consistently high standard across subjects. Too often poor-quality handwriting and presentation is unchallenged by teachers.
- The governing body is new. Governors have not had sufficient time or opportunities to have a positive impact on improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The principal has established a varied, creative curriculum. Enrichment days and themes are enjoyed by pupils and parents.
- Pupils feel safe and are well looked after. All staff are well versed in their duties regarding the safety and protection of pupils.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are growing strengths of the school. Nursery children, in particular, make good progress from their starting points.
- The recently appointed vice-principal has undertaken to improve attendance. Fresh actions are beginning to make a difference.
- In 2016 the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 was well above the national average.
- Strengths in teaching in upper key stage 2 mean older pupils make more rapid progress. In 2016 pupils' progress was broadly in line with the national average across subjects.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - addressing inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment with rigour
  - holding leaders at all levels stringently to account for the difference their actions make to pupils' achievements
  - evaluating records of behaviour and attendance with improved focus
  - equipping governors with the information they need in order to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, precisely.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - teachers hold consistently high expectations of what all groups of pupils can do and achieve
  - teachers challenge pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable, particularly those with typical starting points
  - high-quality handwriting and presentation is sustained across subjects and classes
  - additional adults are deployed effectively by all teachers or leaders
  - all pupils frequently read high-quality texts matched to their needs, deepening understanding and developing skills of fluency.
- Reduce the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent or late.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have an overgenerous view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. While several areas of strength exist, particularly in Nursery and upper key stage 2, these are not consistent across subjects and year groups. The pace of improvement has been too variable.
- Leaders at all levels are involved in monitoring teaching and learning. Many checks take place and a wealth of information is gathered. Not all leaders use this information, effectively, however, to identify precisely the strengths and weaknesses in practice and provision. Leaders' actions have not secured consistently good teaching and learning.
- Leaders ensure that most incidents of poor behaviour are recorded. Leaders do not then examine this information carefully enough to identify particular patterns or trends. A lack of thoroughness means issues are not always tackled skilfully or reduced appropriately in terms of frequency.
- The recently appointed vice-principal is taking action to improve pupils' attendance. There are early signs of positive impact on rates of attendance for some pupils. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent, however, remains well above national averages. Too many pupils currently arrive late.
- Leaders have correctly identified reading as an area requiring robust attention. Several initiatives have been introduced. Each class now has a focus novel; new 'high-interest' books have been bought and guided reading sessions were re-introduced. The extent to which leaders' actions will improve teaching and learning is unknown. Currently, the frequency and quality of pupils' reading opportunities vary.
- Leaders' management of the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils has led to variable outcomes for this group over time. Differences in key stage 2 in 2016 between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally in reading, for example, remained wide. There is little evidence of governor involvement in overseeing the spending plan.
- Leaders use the special educational needs funding appropriately to provide additional support and resources for pupils. Staff have regular training opportunities to support them to meet the particular needs of pupils. A wide range of external specialists are consulted to secure further expertise and advice. Parents contribute to the shaping of individual educational plans. Inconsistencies in teaching, however, mean that outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities vary over time.
- The Northern Education Trust has supported and challenged leaders. In 2015 following the long-term absence of the previous vice-principal, for example, the trust arranged for an additional principal to support the school for two days a week. The trust also offers regular training opportunities for staff and governors. The trust's view of the school's current performance is too generous, however, and does not match inspection evidence.
- The principal has ensured that a creative curriculum affords pupils a wide range of opportunities. Themed activities aim to motivate pupils by building on their existing skills and experiences. Many pupils, for example, expressed a keen interest in art. Working in partnership with local craftspeople and experts, pupils produce artwork in

various media including glass, paint and textiles. Displays verify the high standards of work created. 'Enrichment' days offer pupils and parents a chance to share and celebrate such achievements.

- Senior leaders use the additional funding for physical education and sport wisely. Several extra-curricular sports clubs have been established both during and after school hours; for example, tennis and football. Levels of participation have risen and pupils of all ages have increased opportunities to take part in competitions. Children in the early years benefit from extra support to develop their physical skills, coordination and movement.
- Leaders demonstrate due regard for the moral, personal and social rights of children. There exists a shared belief that 'by understanding their own rights children learn to respect and uphold the rights of others'. Pupils willingly undertake duties and responsibilities such as 'pastoral peers', 'playground-activity leaders' and 'academy councillors'. This develops confidence and self-belief and encourages pupils to value the contributions of their peers. Pupils' grasp of some of the sensitive and complex issues faced by others in modern Britain such as racism, cultural stereotyping or homophobia is less well developed.
- Leaders have ensured that newly qualified teachers feel well supported. Induction procedures are effective and the programme of professional development is fitting and tailored to individuals' needs.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors accept that the rate of improvement in the school has been too slow.
- Governors now have a clear vision for the school and bring a broad range of relevant skills and experience to bear on its improvement. The structure of governance has, however, very recently changed. Governors at Norton Primary Academy are new to their roles and responsibilities and are still getting to know the detail and extent of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors' impact on performance at the present time is therefore untried.
- Plans are in place for governors across the multi-academy trust to work together in a more focused manner. Governors are seeking opportunities to share best practice, develop consistency of practice and learn from each other. This restructuring and vision for moving forward is indicative of governors' desire for advancement.
- The chair of the governing body is experienced in driving school improvement. He quickly implemented an audit of governors' skills before appointing new governors and assigning particular roles. In this way, the chair of governors shows diligence and commitment to meeting the needs of the school and its pupils.
- Governors are keen to improve their own performance and have already begun to attend and earmark appropriate training opportunities.
- Governors have a secure understanding of the link between teachers' performance and pay progression.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The principal ensures that the appropriate employment checks are in place. Safer recruitment, safeguarding and child protection training equip staff with the skills needed to protect and care for pupils effectively. The principal ensures that such training is updated regularly.

- All staff demonstrate a clear knowledge and understanding of the most recent guidance and information, including the government’s strategy to protect pupils from extremism and radicalisation. Adults working with pupils understand how to report any concerns they may have. Staff are therefore well informed and vigilant.
- Adults’ work to protect vulnerable families and pupils is evident. Reaching out to the local community, the school works with the fire service, police and other agencies to help pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Parents would welcome further information about the manner in which the school addresses bullying and issues of poor behaviour.
- Governors are also vigilant in terms of pupils’ safety. They understand clearly the guiding principles behind recent legislation and the role of the governing body in protecting pupils from risk of harm.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, while improving, is not consistent across the school. Skills of questioning, clarity of explanations, timely intervention and the addressing of pupils’ misconceptions, vary from class to class and across subjects. Consequently, the rate at which current pupils are making progress is too unreliable.
- Teachers do not offer enough challenge for groups of pupils from different starting points. This is because not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. Teachers’ assessment of pupils’ existing skills is not reliably accurate. Pupils with average and above average prior attainment, in particular, are not sufficiently challenged to reach the higher standards of which they are capable across subjects.
- Teachers are committed to raising the profile of reading. Teachers’ skills in developing pupils’ reading abilities and fostering depths of understanding are variable. Checks on the quality and frequency of pupils’ reading opportunities by teachers are also inconsistent. This leads to the most able pupils reading books that are too easy or lower-ability pupils reading books that are too hard. This impedes the development of pupils’ fluency, understanding and skills.
- Some teachers make excellent use of additional adults, making sure that every minute is firmly focused on pupils’ learning and progress. This is not currently a dependable feature of practice across classes.
- Teachers and additional adults in upper key stage 2 have high expectations of pupils and the work that pupils produce. The quality of writing in pupils’ books, for example, is sustained across subjects. Poor presentation or untidy handwriting is challenged. These high expectations and standards are not upheld in all classes and year groups.
- The teaching of phonics in Year 1 has gone from strength to strength over time. Teachers articulate sounds clearly and challenge pupils to do the same. This strong start in terms of reading is not fully capitalised on in subsequent year groups to enable pupils to reach the standards that should be expected of them.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils have a suitable understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are knowledgeable about potential online risks and the dangers of roads and fire.
- Adults across key stages are vigilant and protective of pupils, including those pupils with particular vulnerabilities. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and mutually respectful. Pupils say bullying happens at times but the majority agree that adults deal with it promptly. A number of parents expressed concerns about bullying. Parents would welcome further information about the school's approach to behaviour and its anti-bullying strategies.
- Pupils say they feel happy and are confident that adults will listen to them if they have worries. Pupils know that their views matter. Staff make sure that they gather the opinions of pupils through 'share boxes', questionnaires and in discussion. Adults use pupils' suggestions to make changes and organise events. Pupils were especially pleased with their involvement in the 'peace garden' improvements.
- Pupils are very proud of the various responsibilities and roles they hold. 'Door monitors' and 'academy councillors' alike revel in the opportunity to contribute to the smooth running of the school. Pupils' self-worth and confidence are developed as they enjoy feeling useful and valued.
- Older pupils, in particular, have ambition. Pupils said teachers encourage them to 'never give up'. In this way aspirations are developed effectively and self-belief is fostered.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The proportion of pupils who are regularly late or absent from school is too high. Leaders recognise the need to secure improvements regarding attendance to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities of access to education. Leaders have begun to address pertinent issues.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. The majority conduct themselves well in and around the school. Pupils are clear about rules, rewards and sanctions. All aspire to achieve 'shooting stars', for example, or profit from 'gem powers'. These school-wide incentives support pupils to develop skills of self-discipline.
- Pupils say that most of their peers behave well, most of the time. Leaders' analysis of poor behaviour to determine precisely why, where and how often incidents happen, however, remains an area requiring attention.
- Pupils' learning behaviours vary. Where teachers have high expectations and set tasks that capture pupils' interests and meet their needs, pupils concentrate well and work hard. Self-discipline and application diminish where this is not the case.
- Pupils play well together at breaktimes. Many pupils said friends and playtimes are their favourite things. Pupils said 'everyone is friendly', they have a real 'bond with each other' and are 'all different but also the same'. A sociable, cheerful atmosphere is

evident.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Require improvement

- The progress of pupils across subjects is improving. Due to variability in the quality of teaching, however, inconsistencies remain. This means that not all pupils are making good progress from their different starting points. Work produced by current pupils confirms this variable picture.
- In key stage 1, attainment has been significantly below national averages over time. In 2016, though, the proportion of pupils reaching an expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with others nationally. Lower-ability pupils caught up particularly well. Pupils with typical skills, abilities and dispositions on entry to key stage 1, including disadvantaged pupils, however, did not make the progress they were capable of. Too few reached a greater depth of learning.
- Pupils' progress in key stage 2 has been broadly average, over time. Even so, differences between groups persist. In 2016 girls achieved particularly well. In most subjects girls did better at expected and higher standards than others nationally. Boys fared less well. Only 39% of boys, compared to 71% of girls in the school and 53% of pupils nationally, reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are variable over time. In reading, the progress of key stage 2 disadvantaged pupils with average and above average prior attainment was weak compared to national averages in 2016. Differences in key stage 2, therefore, while narrowing recently in writing and mathematics, remained wide in reading. Key stage 1 outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are similarly inconsistent.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in reading in both key stages are too variable. In key stage 1 in 2016, too few reached a greater depth of learning in reading. In key stage 2 in 2015 progress for boys and lower-ability pupils was significantly below the national average. In 2016 the proportions of key stage 2 pupils reaching expected and greater depths in reading were lower than national averages.
- A high proportion of pupils in the school receive additional support to meet their learning needs. Inconsistencies in teaching and the deployment of support assistants mean that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make variable progress from their different starting points over time. This is shown by work in pupils' books.
- Pupils in key stage 2 in 2016 reached expected standards in writing and in English grammar, spelling and punctuation. The proportion reaching a depth in each of these subjects was also equal to or better than others nationally. Most groups, including disadvantaged pupils, made strong progress from their different starting points. Work in books in upper key stage 2 shows that current pupils are matching this picture of success.

## Early years provision

Good

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development in the early years has improved year on year. Outcomes in 2016 were broadly in line with other early years children nationally. Children are now better prepared, therefore, to meet the demands of the Year 1 curriculum.
- Children who enter Nursery with skills and abilities lower than those typical for their age make good progress, catching up quickly with others. Children settle well into Nursery and their emotional, social and learning needs are met effectively by adults through well-established routines.
- Children enjoy their time in the early years and are happy. They use both the indoor and outdoor environment confidently. Smiles abound because relationships with staff are warm and enabling.
- The early years leader has created an environment that offers a rich variety of good-quality resources. Provision capitalises on children's interests, meaning that they learn to persevere and sustain attention. During the inspection, many children were immersed in painting. This is one example which illustrates children developing fine motor skills and practising early writing skills, happily.
- Parents were highly positive about the provision made for children. They appreciated the approachability of staff and valued the 'extra mile' that staff will go to in addressing any concerns or questions they have. The time offered to families as staff visit individual children in their own homes prior to starting Nursery was highly valued.
- Adults are watchful and diligent in their duties to protect and care for children. All staff have appropriate training and understand their responsibilities. This means that the welfare and safety needs of children are well met.
- Early years staff ask insightful questions, intervening in children's learning and play, effectively. They encourage children to think carefully about tasks and 'what ifs'. Speech and talk are modelled well to children. Staff demonstrate longer sentences verbally, replacing single-word responses from children. In this way vocabulary is built and understanding of the English language is developed.
- Some of the most able children, and a portion of those with typical skills, lack challenge. Progress in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics slows for some of these children as they enter Reception. Skills developed in the Nursery are not built on effectively by every adult.



## School details

Unique reference number	140519
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10019679

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	422
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	John Taylor
Principal	Susan Dawson
Telephone number	01642 356 091
Website	<a href="http://www.nortonacademy.org">www.nortonacademy.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:nortonpri.school@stockton.gov.uk">nortonpri.school@stockton.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about sport premium funding on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- In January 2014, the school became part of the Northern Education multi-academy trust. Norton Primary Academy is bigger than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who receive additional support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than national averages. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is lower than national.

- Just over half of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is considerably higher than average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school met the floor standards in 2015. These are the minimum expectations of pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics set out by the government.
- The school provides a breakfast club and a number of extra-curricular clubs for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Teaching and learning were observed across classes and key stages. During day one of the inspection observations were conducted jointly by the lead inspector and the principal.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior, phase and subject leaders, as well as governors, including the chair of the governing body and a representative of Northern Education Trust.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, scrutinised their work and talked informally with pupils during breaktimes. The views of pupils were also considered during more formal discussions with inspectors. The 21 responses made by pupils to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire were taken into account.
- A wide range of the school's own information and documentation was studied, including the self-evaluation, improvement plans and records of the checks made on teaching and learning. Information about the performance management of staff and safeguarding practices was also examined, alongside policy documentation.
- The opinions of staff were taken into account via 20 responses made to Ofsted's questionnaire and through formal and informal discussions.
- The 14 views expressed by parents in the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. Parents' comments communicated via free text and in face-to-face discussions during the inspection were also examined.

## Inspection team

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