

# North Denes Primary School

Jellicoe Road, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 4HF

## Inspection dates

11–12 July 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Pupils, staff, parents and carers are justifiably complimentary about the work of the school. One parent said, 'My child has truly blossomed at the school.'
- The exceptional leadership of the headteacher and support of her team set a culture of high expectation and ambition for all pupils to be the best they can be. Outcomes are rising.
- Governors are committed and very knowledgeable about the school. They support and challenge the headteacher effectively and make a valuable contribution to the ongoing development of the school.
- The school provides a safe, nurturing and aspirational environment that supports pupils very well. Pupils' well-being is at the heart of all that leaders and teachers do. As a result, pupils are given excellent support to be successful learners.
- Pupils embody the school's motto to 'cooperate, achieve, respect and excel'. Pupils are warm and friendly. They respect each other and have strong relationships with their teachers. Pupils behave well.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is a strength. Leaders 'go the extra mile' to ensure that pupils have no barriers to their learning and, as a result, they make strong progress.
- The close checking of pupils' progress in their subjects means that leaders and teachers have a detailed understanding of how well pupils are doing.
- Leaders highly value workplace training and the impact of this is seen in the effective teaching. The consistency of approach in creating challenge for pupils helps them to make good progress.
- Standards have risen substantially in mathematics and at the end of key stage 2. They are above those seen nationally. Attainment in reading is also high.
- Disadvantaged pupils' attainment in writing is not as strong as their attainment in reading and mathematics. While disadvantaged pupils' progress in writing is good considering their typically low starting points, standards attained are below the national averages. Too few most-able disadvantaged pupils attain the higher standards in writing.
- The early years provision is led well. Children make good progress in all areas of learning in a stimulating and nurturing environment. The proportion who achieve a good level of development is above average and rising.
- Persistent absenteeism has reduced; however, attendance remains stubbornly below average.

## Full report

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

- Ensure that disadvantaged pupils, especially the most able disadvantaged, develop high-quality skills in writing so that they achieve the expected or higher standards in writing by:
  - improving key stage 1 pupils' accuracy with grammar and punctuation
  - developing authorial voice and style so that key stage 2 pupils demonstrate flair in their writing.
- Continue to work with the parents of pupils who are persistently absent from school to improve overall attendance.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher has set the bar high for all aspects of the school's work and is uncompromising in her pursuit of excellence. She responded to the findings of the last inspection with sharp focus and energy. A revamp of the mathematics curriculum, along with intensive professional development for teachers, has secured high outcomes in this area. High expectations of the most able pupils, and a consistent approach to teaching the most able, are helping the majority of them to achieve well. The morale of members of staff in all roles is high and their enthusiasm for their work is infectious.
- The headteacher and her senior leaders have managed the expansion to a primary school exceptionally well. Recently, the school has admitted a significant number of pupils from a neighbouring school that is closing. The focus upon helping new pupils to settle in quickly, by helping them understand routines and getting to know them well, has ensured that pupils' learning has been continuous.
- Every pupil's success is at the heart of all that the school does. Senior leaders have high expectations of learning and achievement, and provide exceptional care and welfare for pupils and their families. Leaders work well with outside agencies, such as the National Health Service, to improve pupils' well-being and mental health.
- Leaders and teachers check pupils' progress very carefully. They know the pupils very well. Teachers scrutinise pupils' performance information alongside leaders via pupil progress meetings. All pupils have personal support plans. These are readily adjusted to increase support when a pupil shows signs of underachieving.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. Their plans for further improvement are well judged. They are based on knowing the emotional needs of pupils well and on a precise analysis of pupils' progress.
- Teachers' performance is carefully monitored. Staff meet together to discuss pupils' progress and their emotional needs, check their exercise books and observe teaching. There is a culture of sharing good practice. All staff, including those who are new, have adopted the school's ethos and openly discuss their practice with their colleagues. For example, a new teacher to the school told inspectors that she shared best practice with other teachers regarding attaining higher standards in writing. In this way, she felt her contribution was valued. Another new member of staff commented that she felt well supported and that it is the 'best work place' she has worked in.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to support the individual needs of disadvantaged pupils. An extensive health and well-being programme, coupled with intensive academic support, ensures that pupils continue to grow in confidence and make good progress in their learning. Funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is also used well so that they make strong progress. For example, a grandparent spoke effusively about the speech therapy sessions which enabled her grandchild to make exceptional progress in her communication skills.
- Similarly, the physical education (PE) and sport premium is used very effectively to drive higher standards in PE and to ensure that pupils enjoy sport. Several pupils have also secured first or second places in a range of competitions as diverse as canoeing.

- The curriculum ensures that pupils have a range of different experiences that they might not otherwise have had. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to use the local area, such as the beach, to enhance their learning. The curriculum is enriched by regular trips, visitors to school, and extra-curricular activities such as drama, chess club and indoor athletics. As a result, pupils are becoming well-rounded individuals.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the promotion of British values, have a high priority in the school. The importance of being a good, caring citizen is evident through the way pupils engage and cooperate with each other. Adults constantly model respect and an appreciation of diversity, and, in turn, pupils demonstrate consideration for each other and the wider community. Pupils raise funds for charity. They spoke avidly about their collection of sugar for the homeless. Pupils are proud of the responsibility they have in school, such as being a school councillor, and can speak confidently about the skills they have gained to help them in future life.
- School leaders work closely with the local authority to monitor provision and to gain an external view of the school's work. Local partnerships with other schools are used effectively to enable staff to moderate pupils' work and enable them to engage in additional staff training.
- Parents appreciate the work of the school. They value the dedication of the headteacher and all staff in providing a community where their children achieve well, feel safe and are happy.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors know their school extremely well. They are articulate, passionate and are confident to ask appropriately challenging questions. They are committed to their role and regularly take part in evaluative activities. For example, governors take part in 'deep dive days', to evaluate priorities in the school improvement plan and check that the information they have received is accurate. Information is also checked against reports from external educational consultants.
- Governors hold the school to account. They undertake skills audits and appoint members to the governing body who can most help with their expertise. This has helped governors to gain a full understanding of how effectively funding for disadvantaged pupils and for those who have SEN and/or disabilities is used.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders carry out robust checks to make sure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Comprehensive training ensures that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Record-keeping is extremely efficient and support for individual pupils is very precise and detailed.
- Leaders go above and beyond that which would be expected of them to do all they can to keep pupils safe. Highly effective relationships with external agencies and good ties with families ensure that early help is put in place when it is required.
- The highly effective personal development programme helps pupils to understand risks, how to form healthy relationships and how to keep safe, including safe use of the internet.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is continually developed and sharpened to ensure that pupils are provided with interesting activities, topics and themes that engage them well in their learning. Teachers benefit greatly from their training, support and opportunities to work and plan together. Their agreed, consistent approach contributes positively to pupils' good progress.
- Throughout the school, teachers have a sharp focus on language to help pupils be articulate and precise in their learning. Pupils are encouraged to respond in full sentences when they answer questions and actively search for a 'bigger and better word'. This develops pupils' speaking skills, vocabulary and understanding. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils skilfully discussed mathematical concepts using mathematical language. The teacher was told by pupils, during her demonstration, the importance of partitioning correctly on her place value chart.
- Most-able pupils are challenged well. Teachers usually set challenging work in their lessons. This motivates pupils as they want to complete the challenging tasks. When pupils complete a high-quality piece of work, they receive a gold sticker and their work may be celebrated by being placed in the 'golden book' and shown in assembly. Pupils are proud when this happens.
- Teachers are explicitly teaching the skills needed to achieve the highest standards. Rising numbers of pupils are achieving greater depth at the end of key stage 2. High-quality work was clearly evident in pupils' exercise books. Pupils have regular opportunities to practise their reading skills of inference, deduction and comprehension. Pupils' independent reading is monitored closely, and teachers regularly encourage pupils to read more difficult texts.
- Support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is strong. Teachers regularly break large tasks down into smaller, manageable activities. They encourage pupils to practise their ideas first. This may be through jotting down notes or making drawings. This encourages pupils to try even if they are not sure. Pupils have very good relationships with teaching assistants, who are adept at using their good subject knowledge to support learning.
- The strategy of practising first is also used with writing. Pupils complete 'cold' writing tasks (planning their initial ideas) followed by 'hot' writing tasks (their finished, polished piece). This is helping to improve pupils' accuracy with grammar, punctuation and spelling. Leaders recognise that more work is needed to develop this further, and to enable pupils to develop greater style and flair in their writing.
- Pupils enjoy the variety of creative and engaging activities that are taught in other subjects. Year 3 pupils spoke enthusiastically about learning how the Egyptians embalmed bodies. Year 4 pupils proudly showed off their artwork which incorporated cooking spices.
- Homework is valued by pupils. They like the fact that they can choose their homework from a menu of tasks. The tasks help to reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding of their subjects, as well as encouraging their independent learning.

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. There is a strong commitment to supporting pupils' emotional well-being. Staff know the individual needs of pupils well and are focused on ensuring that all of them are happy in their care.
- Exceptionally positive attitudes to learning, engendered by the school's determination that every learner will succeed, characterises learning in every class. As one older pupil stated: 'I like learning as I am really curious about things.'
- Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the school. They are proud to represent the school in local sporting competitions and speak enthusiastically about the array of extra-curricular opportunities they are given. Year 6 pupils say that, although they are ready for secondary school, they will be sad to leave. Pupils excitedly show visitors how well they have achieved. They are supportive of each other when they receive an accolade, such as being allowed to wear the coveted gold tie for being a good role model.
- Pupils are well versed in their knowledge of diversity, learning about the background, beliefs and traditions of others. They have a very well-developed understanding of how to support their peers who have particular social, emotional and physical needs.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying and the distress and harm it may cause. They say that bullying in school is rare and is always dealt with well by staff. As a result, pupils say they trust staff to help them if they have any concerns. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Parents who spoke to inspectors and who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree with them.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and are quick to lend a hand. Pupils work and play together well. The school is calm and orderly during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Pupils and staff are in no doubt about the high standards of behaviour that leaders expect. Teachers are quick to acknowledge good behaviour, provide gentle reminders when needed and put in place additional interventions for the few pupils who struggle to regulate their conduct. Teaching assistants' approach with pupils who may be having a bad day helps them to engage and want to learn. For example, kind questions, such as 'How might we make this better for you today?' put a smile on the face of upset pupils.
- The new behaviour policy is working well. Pupils say they like this new approach as the rules for conduct are clear. As a result, incidents of inappropriate behaviour have significantly reduced.
- Although persistent absenteeism has reduced, it is still too high. Attendance stubbornly remains below the national average despite leaders' efforts to encourage pupils to attend school more often.

## Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders have taken swift and decisive action to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching in mathematics. Consequently, current pupils have made stronger progress than previous cohorts. Pupils performed much better in the national tests in 2018, with most pupils performing at expected or higher standards.
- Improvements to the teaching of phonics mean that most pupils meet expectations by the end of Year 1. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who did not achieve this in 2017 have improved their scores substantially with several now meeting the threshold a year later.
- Reading is promoted well. Inviting reading corners and attractive displays encourage pupils to pick up a book. Teachers' focus on inference and retrieval skills in reading is ensuring that pupils make good, and in some cases excellent, progress. Almost half of the pupils in Year 6 in 2018 reached the greater depth standard in their national reading tests.
- Pupils who have SEN and/ or disabilities make strong progress from their varying starting points. This is because they enjoy their lessons, are supported well and receive carefully targeted intervention. Well-targeted support with writing means that pupils are able to manipulate complex, descriptive sentences for effect. For example, a Year 5 boy showed good control of his craft, describing the fairground as a 'kaleidoscope of colours flashing brightly'.
- Effective use of the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils enables them to make good progress across their subjects. However, standards in writing are not as strong for these pupils as they are in reading and mathematics. A few pupils in key stage 1 did not meet the expected standard in writing due to their inconsistent use of capital letters and full stops. While disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 are improving their accuracy and their use of vocabulary, pupils' writing tends to follow a set pattern every time. This is particularly the case with the writing of most-able disadvantaged pupils. Teachers are focusing on developing authorial voice and style so that pupils can write with flair and reach the higher standards in writing.
- Teachers plan carefully to develop the specific knowledge, skills and understanding that relate to the full range of other subjects. As they learn through their topics, pupils progress well. Over time, good progress is seen in other subjects too.

## Early years provision

Good

- During the inspection, early years staff welcomed new parents and their children with a fun open day to help their children settle into Nursery. There was much laughter and enjoyment, with several children wanting to stay longer than their allocated session. This is indicative of the good provision of the early years, which is warm, welcoming and well resourced.
- Early years leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement. They have made good use of external reviews and support from the local authority to ensure that children benefit from well-planned and well-resourced teaching that stimulates their curiosity. For example, a group of Reception children thoroughly

enjoyed making mud pies and measuring quantities of mud to get the mixture right. A boy was truly delighted when he realised too much mud meant rather a lot of spillage!

- A sharper focus on the learning of mathematics has helped children to achieve their early learning goal in shape, space and measure. This has been an area of weakness with previous cohorts. This is no longer the case. Teaching assistants help to reinforce children's learning of mathematics. They model frequently number formation and ask helpful questions to reinforce counting. For example, as a child was drawing a grasshopper, a teaching assistant asked: 'If he has six legs but you have five, how many more do you need to draw?'
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen in recent years, with an above average proportion of children now ready for Year 1. The school's performance information shows that children are making good progress from their starting points. A focus on teaching the skills needed is helping children to exceed age-related expectations in mathematics and reading.
- Leaders pay careful attention to children's personal development. Children quickly develop their social skills to play with others and to take turns. They behave well. Children promptly learn the routines of being at school. They grow in confidence, start to look after their own needs, share equipment and move around the school environment safely. For example, children shared well their paints when completing their artwork on animals.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. Appropriate levels of supervision, up-to-date staff training, and high levels of vigilance ensure that all children are kept safe.



## School details

Unique reference number	120973
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10046524

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacqui Ridpath
Headteacher	Debra Whiting
Telephone number	01493 842 063
Website	<a href="http://www.northdenesprimary.co.uk">www.northdenesprimary.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@northdenes.norfolk.sch.uk">office@northdenes.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	27–28 March 2014

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, North Denes Junior School has become a primary school, with pupils entering from the age of three. From September 2018, the school will also take two-year-olds.
- The school is currently in the process of admitting pupils from another local primary school that is closing. A new school building is planned for 2020.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education. Leaders are part of a school improvement group made up of eight other schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils amounts to almost half the school population. A large proportion are pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above average.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2017. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons across a range of subjects in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. Some observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their work to find out more about how well they are learning.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector discussed the school's effectiveness with a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions were also held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the pupil premium champion, the coordinator for the most able, the PE and sports premium coordinator, the early years leader, staff with responsibility for safeguarding, teaching assistants and new members of staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Inspectors met formally with three groups of pupils and spoke informally to pupils in the playground.
- Inspectors read with five pupils from a range of year groups (Year 3 through to Year 6).
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation. This included policies, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school's improvement plans, safeguarding records and information about pupils' attendance, attainment and progress.
- Inspectors considered 51 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey, 58 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and 15 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents when they dropped their children off at school at the start of the day.

## Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Warboys	Ofsted Inspector
Lynsey Holzer	Ofsted Inspector

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