

Inspection of Northgate Primary School

Northgate, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 3EU

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and proud to be part of this school. The school has grown quickly in a short time. Many pupils were already part-way through their primary education when they joined the school. Leaders made their high expectations clear from the start. As a result, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the school. Most pupils behave well and enjoy their learning.

Leaders expand pupils' horizons. This starts in the Nursery, where children go on 'welly walks' in the local area. Older pupils build confidence through adventurous activities, such as caving. They are excited about a forthcoming trip to London. Leaders use links with local universities to raise pupils' aspirations. In addition, clubs and activities are open to pupils all year round.

Senior and specialist staff support both vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils and their families effectively. Many parents recognise and appreciate this support.

The majority of pupils feel safe when they attend the school. However, a few of the older pupils told inspectors that they do experience bullying, or disrespectful behaviour. They do not always report this to staff. When it is reported, pupils say that staff resolve it successfully.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have worked closely with staff to establish a good standard of education. There is a well-designed curriculum in place to support early reading. This ensures that pupils get off to a strong start. Throughout the school, everyone has a role in fostering a love of reading among pupils. Children in the Nursery enjoy quiet moments reading with an adult. In the rest of the school, teachers read to each class every day.

Pupils in the early stages of reading pay careful attention when learning the phonics curriculum. Leaders help parents to understand how they can help children who are learning to read. Each pupil takes a book home to read which is carefully matched to their knowledge of phonics. Occasionally, there are exceptions to this. Leaders have recognised that pupils build their fluency best when they can read all the sounds in the books they are given. Therefore, they are working to eliminate any inconsistencies which make reading more difficult for pupils.

From the Reception Year, pupils follow a carefully constructed mathematics curriculum. The curriculum is taught well. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn successfully. Teachers and teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge. This helps them to identify and address any gaps that pupils have in their knowledge.

Pupils with SEND learn the wider curriculum well. Teachers use detailed and well-focused support plans effectively. Skilled teaching assistants support pupils with

SEND in class. Nursery staff identify children who experience difficulties with their speech and language. These pupils access timely support from external services. The school supports pupils with their communication skills and confidence throughout the early years.

The school benefits from committed and enthusiastic curriculum leaders in many subjects. Senior staff, including those from the multi-academy trust, provide helpful training and support to teachers leading the different subject areas. Leaders are working together to develop the curriculum so that pupils gain knowledge in the early years which they can build on in Year 1 and beyond. They have set out the vocabulary that pupils should learn at each stage.

Leaders have developed a system of assessment that teachers use across the curriculum. However, the approach to assessment does not help teachers to check whether pupils have gained the essential knowledge that they need. As a result, some pupils move on through the curriculum without having secured important knowledge.

Pupils enjoy a programme of cultural activities which support their personal development. For example, pupils visit the theatre and have visits from authors. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to develop leadership skills. Some have responsibilities in the playground, ensuring that pupils play well together. Others join the school council and work to improve the school for everyone.

The majority of pupils behave well and treat each other with respect. For the most part, pupils participate keenly and concentrate on their learning without disruption. However, pupils told inspectors that the behaviour of some older pupils is not as good as it could be when considering sensitive curriculum content, such as relationships, sex and health education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are alert to the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. They keep detailed, written records of any concerns.

Leaders take the right actions to keep pupils safe. Leaders help pupils and families to access help from the services they need. They are tenacious advocates for pupils.

Leaders have responded robustly to Ofsted's review of sexual abuse and harassment in schools. They have increased the awareness and vigilance of staff. They are working with pupils to ensure that all such incidents are reported.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, assessment does not help teachers to identify precisely what it is that pupils do not know. As a result, pupils move on before they fully understand the important concepts that they need to know. Leaders should refine their assessment practices to check that pupils have learned the most important knowledge in each subject.
- A minority of pupils in upper key stage 2 do not behave respectfully towards others. This makes some pupils feel uncomfortable. Leaders should ensure that relationships among pupils in key stage 2 reflect the otherwise positive and respectful school culture.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	144757
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10212163
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alister Christopher
Headteacher	Katie Penny
Website	www.northgateprimaryschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Clevedon Learning Trust, which comprises 11 primary and two secondary schools.
- There is nursery provision on site. This is part of the school. Children attend the nursery from ages two to four.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, other senior staff, trust leaders and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders from other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school, met with the designated safeguarding leader, held discussions with staff and pupils and observed pupils around the site.
- Inspectors visited the nursery provision and held discussions with leaders to evaluate the quality of provision in the early years.

Inspection team

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