

Inspection of a good school: Northwood Primary School

Wyatts Lane, Northwood, Cowes, Isle of Wight PO31 8PU

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 November 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their friendly school. They talk about the 'no outsiders' sign at the front entrance and how it means their school is welcoming to all. Parents appreciate feeling part of the school family. As one parent said, 'It really is a magical place, and it is the hard work of everyone involved in the school that makes it such an incredible, safe, warm and enjoyable place to attend.'

Staff have high behaviour expectations. Pupils and parents are not worried about bullying and are rightly confident in leaders' ability to deal with it should it occur. Pupils feel that school is a safe and fair place for all. Pupils know the school rules, 'ready, respect and safe', and are clear that they are not just words but a way of life. As a result, pupils behave well, are keen to learn and achieve well in many subjects. However, this is not the case in all subjects, including reading.

Pupils enthuse about their regular forest school sessions. There is an air of excitement as they change into their waterproof clothing and wellington boots. Pupils understand how these sessions link with their science and environmental learning as well as developing their skills, such as resilience and independence.

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

Leaders have not acted with enough urgency to bring about improvement in the teaching of reading. As a result, pupils who are learning to read are not supported well enough with using their phonics strategies. They find their reading books difficult to read because they do not have enough knowledge about letter sounds and how to blend them together to read words. Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics scheme with linked reading books. They are still in the process of training staff and making sure parents know how to support their children. Staff help older pupils with their reading when they

need it. They successfully address the gaps that occur as a result of earlier inconsistent phonics teaching. This means that most pupils are able to read with confidence and fluency by the time they leave the school in year 6.

Strong leadership and teaching of the mathematics curriculum mean that pupils are confident mathematicians who achieve well. High expectations start from the Reception Year, where children are encouraged to use appropriate mathematical vocabulary. They are excited and confident to talk about their mathematics when the 'Challenge Cheetah' appears with a problem. Across the school, teachers are well supported in terms of their mathematical subject knowledge. Teachers are skilled at checking what pupils know and remember from their previous learning. They quickly address pupils' misconceptions to ensure that their knowledge and skills deepen as they move through the school. Many pupils describe mathematics as their favourite subject, and the leader's assertion that 'no pupil should be left behind' is highly evident.

However, across a few other subjects, teaching is not as effective. For example, in computing and French, some teachers lack the necessary subject knowledge. This means that pupils are not given the opportunity to build their knowledge and skills. Leaders in these areas are supporting staff to bring about the necessary improvements, but this is still in its early stages.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well across the curriculum. Teachers accurately identify these pupils and tailor the curriculum appropriately. This includes additional input before and after lessons to support pupils' learning. There is a school-wide emphasis on inclusion.

Pupils' wider development is carefully considered by leaders, who create aspirational and engaging theme days and curriculum content. These include the popular forest school sessions, an 'older me' careers event and inviting visitors into the school to promote scientific careers. Pupils enjoy the clubs available to them and are looking forward to the resumption of a greater number of school trips.

Pupils are taught to appreciate and value diversity. They are accepting in their outlook about difference. As one pupil said, when talking about relationships, 'Love doesn't mind what gender you are - it's the same feeling.' Pupils enjoy leadership roles, which include being democratically elected to the school council or acting as class ambassadors. They take these responsibilities seriously and show great pride in representing their peers.

The governing body and academy members understand what their respective responsibilities are. They support school leaders to bring about improvement through the setting and checking of the school's development priorities. Staff appreciate the consideration which is given to their well-being and workload. They are keen to engage with professional development opportunities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Their actions, which include regular training, ensure that all staff know how to identify and report any concerns. Leaders are diligent in reporting these concerns to other agencies to ensure families receive the support they need. Leaders do not always fully collate or record their actions or any resulting support. This means that they do not always have oversight about overall safeguarding themes. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to identify risk and keep themselves safe, including online. The governing body routinely examine the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures, including checks involved in staff recruitment.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils are not supported well enough when they are learning how to read. They do not have secure phonics strategies to draw on and their reading books do not match the sounds they are learning. Leaders should continue to train staff and ensure that there is consistency in phonics teaching.
- Teachers do not have strong subject knowledge in a few foundation subjects. This means that, in these subjects, pupils are not receiving the curriculum as leaders intend and are therefore not accumulating the necessary knowledge and skills. Leaders need to continue to support teachers in developing their subject knowledge, ensure that the intended curriculum is delivered and ensure that pupils are learning it.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

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.

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	139454
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	10227913
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Dean Thistlewood
Headteacher	Sarah Hussey
Website	www.northwoodpri.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of a single-academy trust. This is the Northwood Primary School Academy Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. To do this, she met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Pupils across the school were observed reading to a familiar adult by the inspector.
- The inspector took account of parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View and parents' written comments. She also talked with groups of parents on the morning of the second day of inspection.

- The inspector met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's confidential staff questionnaire.
- During the inspection, the inspection met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times. She also took account of pupils' responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body and academy members. She also had a call with a representative from the local authority.
- To check the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies, procedures and records. She met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed examples of the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The inspector spoke to pupils and checked staff's understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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