

Inspection of a good school: Norton Road Primary School

Norton Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 2NX

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 February 2023

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. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like attending Norton Road. They learn in well-organised classrooms where teachers expect them to behave well and get on with their work. Although lessons are often interesting, they are not all organised in a way that helps pupils build their skills from one year to the next. Most pupils learn to read fluently but the minority who struggle do not always get the support they need.

Pupils enjoy activities on the playground. Very occasionally, their play can become over-boisterous and lead to disagreements. Staff are always on hand and pupils say that this stops it going any further. Pupils know who they can turn to if they have worries or feel they are being bullied. They are also confident that staff will sort things out. This all helps keep pupils safe in school.

Pupils enjoy trips and visits to enhance their learning of the curriculum. The library is at the heart of the school building and pupils are keen to become library monitors. After-school clubs are mostly around sporting activities.

The new headteacher and her team know that improvements can be made to the school. New governors and officers from the local authority are helping to make the changes that are needed.

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

Every national curriculum subject is taught. Planning covers all statutory content, including in the early years. However, ideas and concepts are not always delivered in an effective way. Subject leaders have started to map out subjects such as history, geography and art as separate disciplines. Some year groups follow this plan. However, other year groups have continued teaching through cross-curricular projects. This

inconsistent approach means that important subject skills are sometimes diluted or missed. It also leads to assessments having a focus on the completion of activities, rather than on the demanding subject knowledge or skills pupils have learned. Some teachers ask pupils to repeat or correct their work if they get it wrong. However, this is not consistently the case across the school or in all subjects.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified. Strategies for those with education, health and care plans are detailed. Adaptation of work for other pupils with SEND is less considered. This is because of the variable focus on subject-specific skills and knowledge.

The school has a long-established phonics scheme in place, starting in Reception. Pupils can choose from a large selection of books, matched to the sounds they know, to take home for practice. Teachers and teaching assistants have been trained to deliver the scheme. For some, however, this was several years ago and before the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, not all staff remember to make full use of the scheme's resources. Most children learn to read and write competently by the end of Year 2. Those who struggle with reading receive additional support, but this is not as effective as it could be. The quality of reading intervention by adults sometimes lacks sharpness in helping pupils to decode words. This impacts on other areas such as mathematics. Here, the small number of pupils struggling to read in key stage 2 also find problem-solving difficult because of their limited verbal fluency.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They are attentive, keen to please, and form good working relationships with their teachers. This creates a positive and pleasant environment for teaching and learning. The school has a thorough programme for teaching pupils about important personal, health and relationships issues. Pupils revisit these issues in an age-appropriate way as they move through the school. In turn, this leads to them understanding important matters such as respect and consent.

Since September 2022, new leaders have successfully strengthened important aspects of safeguarding and provision for pupils' personal development. They have an accurate knowledge of the school's current situation and are honest about the work needed to bring about further improvements.

Staff are appreciative of senior leaders' consideration of their workload. Leaders provide regular training. Subject leaders participate in network meetings with other schools, but more training is needed around the core principles of curriculum design. Some subject development plans are not as focused as they could be or lack precise timescales. The governing body is undergoing change with a new chair, and additional governors with valuable educational expertise. The local authority is also supporting the school through this period of adjustment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out all required checks on adults working at the school. Staff training on safeguarding matters, along with termly updates and checks on their knowledge, ensures that staff have an accurate understanding. Staff know exactly to whom they should refer concerns. Leaders make appropriate referrals, including to external agencies where necessary. The most vulnerable are identified, tracked and reported. This includes those who go missing from education. Detailed records are kept in a timely way.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online or at threat from, for example, bullying or gangs.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have started to revise the sequence in which knowledge is taught for different curriculum subjects. However, this work is incomplete. Not all year teams are following the same approach. This sometimes dilutes the subject knowledge that pupils learn. Leaders should ensure that the new curriculum plans are completed and that all year teams follow these plans. This is so that pupils' cumulative subject knowledge and skills can be assessed accurately and built progressively as they move through the school.
- While most pupils learn to read fluently, a minority continue to struggle. This is because the quality of intervention is not consistently focused on helping them to decode words. Leaders should ensure that this support is of high quality, so that these pupils are better able to read and access learning across the curriculum.
- Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders' training focuses sharply on the principles of curriculum construction. This is to help produce more detailed planning, to more precise timescales. Similarly, senior leaders should consider refresher early reading training for all staff. This is to ensure that all staff make full use of the chosen reading scheme's resources and ensure that all intervention support is of high quality.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2012.

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	109548
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10211490
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	373
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dawn Winfield
Headteacher	Sughra Asghar
Website	www.nortonroadprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The new headteacher assumed her position in September 2022. The new chair of the governors took up post in December 2022.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspector met regularly with the headteacher. He also met with the deputy headteacher, including in her roles as designated safeguarding lead and special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.
- The inspector also discussed safeguarding with members of staff, looked at recruitment checks and records, and sampled other safeguarding documentation.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. Each deep dive included meeting with subject leaders, visiting lessons, speaking with teachers and pupils, and looking at pupils' work.

- The inspector also sampled plans from other areas of the curriculum, including French, music and computing. He also looked at pupils' workbooks in other subjects, including religious education, science and art.
- The inspector met with the chair of the governing body and one other governor, spoke to a third governor on the telephone, and met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector considered 16 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and seven responses to Ofsted's inspection survey for school staff.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experience of school and their learning, and he observed their behaviour in classrooms and on the playground.

Inspection team

Mark Phillips, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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