

# Inspection of a good school: North Primary School and Nursery

John Harper Street, Colchester, Essex CO1 1RP

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Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

## **Outcome**

North Primary School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

North Primary School and Nursery is a friendly school. Pupils achieve well in many subjects. This is because leaders and teachers have high expectations in place. Pupils access an ambitious and effective curriculum. The school's values underpin all that pupils do in school, and pupils learn to be part of a community that shows care and respect for themselves and others.

The overwhelming majority of pupils behave well in lessons and on the playground. When there is occasional low-level disruption, staff provide effective support to the pupils who need it. When unkind behaviour happens, pupils say that staff take prompt action to make it stop.

Pupils are given opportunities to develop their interests through extra-curricular clubs. These include circus skills, choir and a variety of sports. Pupils readily take on leadership roles, such as school councillors and sports ambassadors. The school's 'Free for All' charity ensures that every pupil can, for example, learn a musical instrument.

Parents are highly supportive of the school's work. Comments such as 'My child has made excellent progress at North and has been extremely happy throughout their time here' are typical to describe pupils' school experiences.

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

Leaders have worked on developing the school's curriculum over the past few years. It is highly ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The curriculum is well planned, and pupils build upon prior learning at an age-appropriate

stage in their understanding. Teachers know what skills and knowledge they should teach within each phase of the school. As a result, pupils are developing a secure understanding of what they have been taught. For example, in history, pupils have a good understanding of different religions and periods of time, such as the Stone Age and the Romans.

The revised curriculum is relatively new and is therefore not securely embedded across the school. Leaders are aware of this, particularly issues pertaining to the school's assessment systems in subjects other than English and mathematics. For example, in art and history, assessment systems are not providing subject curriculum teams with sufficient information to inform them of the impact of their curriculum plans.

Pupils enjoy reading. They learn to read as soon as they start to attend, in Nursery. A well-structured phonics programme is followed daily by staff. This is in place in early years and key stage 1 for as long as pupils need it. When necessary, staff provide effective catch-up sessions. All staff have been trained in how to teach phonics so that targeted teaching can continue into key stage 2, if needed. Once pupils have mastered phonics, staff introduce them to a wide range of books and do much to promote a love of reading. Consequently, pupils love reading and have an extensive knowledge of different authors and genres.

The mathematics curriculum is recently introduced. It is having a positive impact on pupil outcomes. Pupils have regular opportunities to use their problem-solving skills and provide detailed explanations that support teachers to check the progress pupils are making.

Children are quick to settle into the early years. Teachers work closely with parents. Staff understand the needs of each child, starting in Nursery. The curriculum is well designed to ensure that children make strong progress. Staff weave learning throughout regular routines. Leaders plan activities that build on children's previous learning. Children are well prepared, socially and academically, when they start in key stage 1.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. Leaders have a robust system for identifying pupils' needs. Leaders ensure that teachers are supported to precisely plan for the specific needs of pupils with SEND. This contributes towards pupils with SEND accessing the same ambitious curriculum as their peers and, consequently, achieving well.

Pupils' attitudes towards education are consistently positive. Leaders and staff make the most of this by setting out clear and fair expectations for behaviour and learning in lessons. This allows everyone to learn without interruption. Pupils are extremely confident and are keen to share their work.

Governors know the school well. They hold leaders to account by monitoring the school's priorities and making effective use of the expertise across the school. Governors offer support and robust challenge to leaders. Governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about leaders. Leaders work hard to ensure that staff workload is manageable. Staff say that they feel valued by leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that pupil's safety is a priority. Leaders have established robust routines for making sure staff know how to spot concerns and what to do in response. Leaders manage concerns swiftly so that pupils receive the support that they need as quickly as possible. This includes leaders quickly sharing information with other professionals when necessary.

Leaders ensure that meticulous checks are made on all new members of staff.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe in the local community. They learn how to stay safe online and are taught a range of strategies to do this.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Opportunities for teachers to share assessment information in subjects such as history and art are not consistently in place throughout the whole school. As a result, subject curriculum teams do not have a thorough enough understanding of the impact of their curriculum plans and the outcomes that pupils are achieving. Leaders should refine assessment systems in order to maximise outcomes for pupils so that subject curriculum teams know the impact of the curriculum they have designed.

## **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 September 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114709
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268469
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	451
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jan Blackwell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Garnett
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.northschool.org.uk/">www.northschool.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- North Primary School and Nursery does not use alternative provision.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club.

## 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector reviewed documents on the school's website.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, the curriculum subject teams and governors, including the chair of the governing body. They also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with the subject curriculum team,

spoke to teachers, visited lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead. Pupils' records were reviewed. The single central record of the checks on staff's suitability to work with children was scrutinised.
- The inspector met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about how safe they feel in school and how they learn to keep themselves safe.
- The inspector considered the 64 responses to Ofsted Parent View, 26 responses to the staff survey and 76 responses to the pupil questionnaires.

### **Inspection team**

Joseph Figg, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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