

Inspection of Northbrook Primary Academy

Bannister Drive, Leyland, Lancashire PR25 2GB

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected

The headteacher of this school is Mark Cunniffe. This school is part of Endeavour Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), David Clayton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Dicker.

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone is made to feel welcome at this caring school. Pupils are taught about the importance of treating others with respect. They value the supportive relationships that they have with staff.

The school has raised its expectations of how well pupils should behave. Pupils walk sensibly around school and behave well in lessons. They enjoy the roles of responsibility provided to them, such as being part of different school leadership teams.

Pupils are happy in school. They value the opportunities provided to them to develop their talents and interests. Pupils attend a range of clubs. They enjoy belonging to various groups, including the ecological team and the school choir. Older pupils support children in the Reception class to help them to settle into school and to develop their social skills and confidence.

The school is ambitious for all pupils to achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, due to weaknesses in the previous curriculum, a number of pupils, including those with SEND, have gaps in their learning that have not been fully addressed. This means that these pupils do not achieve as well as they should in a range of subjects, including reading and mathematics.

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

The school has renewed its curriculum in recent years. It is ambitious. The curriculum clearly sets out what pupils should learn, and in what order, from the early years to Year 6. The school has taken effective action to improve how the curriculum is delivered in some subjects, including reading and mathematics. However, due to weaknesses in the previous curriculum, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This means that they do not have a secure foundation on which to build when new learning is introduced. As a result, some children in the early years, and pupils in key stages 1 and 2, do not achieve as well as they should.

The school places a high priority on teaching pupils to read. Books are widely available for all pupils. Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure at every opportunity, including social times. The school's exciting reading areas entice pupils to pick up a book.

Children start to learn to read as soon as they begin in the Reception class. Staff are well trained in the school's chosen phonics programme. However, at times, staff in the early years miss opportunities to reinforce or extend children's reading knowledge and vocabulary. As a result, some children are not as equipped as they should be to embrace the challenges of the Year 1 curriculum. In addition, some pupils in key stage 1 do not read books that are closely matched to the sounds that they know. These pupils receive insufficient support to develop into fluent and

confident readers. This hinders how well they are able to access the full breadth of the curriculum.

Leaders have brought about swift improvements to the school's provision for pupils with SEND. The school has a clear process to identify the additional needs of these pupils. Teachers get the right information about pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils with SEND receive the support that they need so that they can access the full curriculum. Pupils with SEND take a full and active part in the wider life of the school.

Pupils are polite and helpful. Behaviour across the school is positive and learning is rarely interrupted. Children in the early years learn cooperatively alongside one another and engage positively with adults. Pupils enjoy their learning and the opportunities that staff provide to them to develop their skills and interests. For example, pupils can participate in drama, track and field events or be part of an art or sports club.

The school prioritises pupils' attendance. Well-developed attendance systems, and procedures to support pupils who are persistently absent, allow the school to work with families whose children do not attend as regularly as they should.

Pupils have many opportunities to develop their work in the community. For example, they have successfully lobbied the local council to pass a rule that prevents environmental damage from festive lanterns. Pupils learn to value and respect others, including those that are different to themselves. They are taught how to develop and maintain healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe online.

Pupils do have the opportunity to learn about different religions and cultures, and how to eat healthily and the consequences of not doing so. However, they struggle to recall their learning. This is because their knowledge of these concepts is not sufficiently developed.

Leaders are considerate of the workload and well-being of staff. Staff value the opportunities that they receive to develop their own expertise by visiting other schools in the trust. Trust leaders and members of the local governing body have an accurate understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. Their actions to help the school improve the quality of education on offer are realistic.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some children in the early years, and pupils across key stage 1, who find reading difficult do not receive the support that they need to catch up. Some pupils read

books that do not match the sounds that they know. This hinders their reading fluency and accuracy and hampers them from accessing the full curriculum. The school should ensure that staff are well equipped to offer support that enables pupils to read with confidence.

- Weaknesses in the previous curriculum mean that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This makes it difficult for them to build on what they know when they learn from the newly refined subject curriculums. The school should ensure that staff have the expertise to identify and address these gaps so that pupils are equipped with the knowledge that they need to approach subsequent learning with confidence.
- Some pupils struggle to recall what they have learned about different religions and cultures and how to maintain a healthy diet. This is because their knowledge of these concepts is not sufficiently developed. The school should ensure that pupils have greater opportunities to learn about these aspects so that they are fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148039
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10336885
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Dicker
CEO of the trust	David Clayton
Headteacher	Mark Cunniffe
Website	www.northbrookpa.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Northbrook Primary Academy converted to become an academy school in July 2020. When its predecessor school, Northbrook Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate.
- The school is part of Endeavour Learning Trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to subject leaders of other subjects.
- Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult. They also met with groups of pupils from across the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and teachers.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO, trustees and the director of primary education from the trust. He also met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms and social times. They spoke to teachers and pupils throughout the inspection about behaviour in school.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also spoke with groups of staff and considered responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Thomas Fay, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Davidson	Ofsted Inspector

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