

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Northcote Primary School

Cavendish Drive, Walton, Liverpool, Merseyside L9 1HW

---

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 October 2024

## Outcome

Northcote Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, are happy and achieve well at this caring school. They benefit from a range of experiences. For example, pupils enjoy taking part in ukulele, water polo and board game clubs. The school provides pupils with a rich diet of wider opportunities such as sports competitions and educational visits. For instance, pupils spoke with enthusiasm about travelling by train to experience the city.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They follow well-established routines, listen carefully to staff and move around the school beautifully. The school's high expectations for pupils' positive behaviour start in the Nursery Year, where children learn to follow instructions and share toys with their friends.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), understand that staff expect them to be the very best that they can be. Pupils rise to these expectations. They work hard in lessons and produce high-quality work.

Pupils' well-being is a high priority. Staff form strong relationships with pupils and their families. Parents and carers appreciate the support that the school provides, for example coffee mornings that help parents receive guidance to help support their children at home, or signpost them to other agencies for advice.

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

The school's actions since the previous inspection have helped to maintain the positive standard of education that pupils receive. For example, the school has recently refreshed the curriculum. This has resulted in an improved clarity of what pupils should learn and when they should learn it. Governors offer effective support and challenge to the school.

The school knows pupils and their families extremely well. The school, including those responsible for governance, has responded well to changes in its context, such as an increase in the number of pupils with SEND. As a result, the school has continued to adapt its approaches to identifying and meeting pupils' needs appropriately.

The curriculum is ambitious and broad. The school has ensured that the knowledge that pupils will learn in most subjects is clearly identified. However, some aspects of the early years curriculum do not identify the knowledge that children will learn in sufficient detail. This hampers some children's preparation for future learning.

Teachers' checks on learning identify gaps in pupils' knowledge well. This helps teachers to provide pupils with opportunities to revisit missed or forgotten knowledge. Teachers provide pupils with useful feedback. However, errors in some pupils' spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting go unchecked. Consequently, some pupils continue to repeat these errors.

The school has embedded an effective, systematic approach to the teaching of phonics and early reading. Children learn to read from the Reception Year. Prior to this, children get off to a flying start in the Nursery Year, where they learn rhymes and develop their listening and attention skills. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind with the phonics programme are identified quickly and effectively. These pupils receive additional, targeted support from well-trained staff.

Pupils read widely and often. The school's work to enhance the curriculum has ensured that pupils encounter a wide range of high-quality texts. Where appropriate, these support pupils' learning in other subjects. Older pupils who continue to need support with their reading receive prompt and effective help. Most pupils become confident, fluent readers.

The school provides staff with detailed curriculum guidance, and useful resources. Staff appreciate how these shared resources help to reduce their workload. This also supports staff to deliver the curriculum effectively. As a result, pupils learn well in a broad range of subjects.

Pupils, including those with SEND, behave very well in lessons and at social times. The school ensures that pupils learn to conduct themselves responsibly. For example, pupils shake hands and celebrate sportsmanship at the end of competitive games.

Most pupils attend school regularly and on time. However, despite the school's steadfast approach to improving pupils' attendance, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remains stubbornly high. Many strategies, such as the use of home visits to check pupils are safe and the celebration of positive attendance, help to improve most pupils' rates of attendance over time.

Pupils learn how to stay safe and healthy. For example, older pupils understand the dangers of knife crime and a high proportion of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, learn to swim 25 metres confidently. Pupils learn about a range of faiths.

The school's personal, social, health and economic education programme meets the statutory requirements. For example, pupils learn how to stay safe online and how to make and maintain healthy relationships.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some parts of the early years curriculum do not identify the knowledge that children will learn in sufficient detail. At times, this slows some children's readiness for learning in Year 1 and beyond, in subjects other than English and mathematics. The school should further develop the curriculum so that the knowledge that children will learn is defined clearly.
- The school has not ensured that pupils' errors in handwriting, punctuation and spelling are identified and resolved consistently well. As a result, some pupils continue to repeat these errors over time. The school should ensure that staff identify and address errors in pupils' handwriting, punctuation and spelling quickly and effectively so that pupils write with increased accuracy and fluency across the curriculum.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104564
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	10347889
<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>	442
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Heather Harris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gary Anders
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.northcoteschool.com">www.northcoteschool.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	15 and 16 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been several changes to staff at the school since the previous inspection. These changes include the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into consideration in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, some subject leaders and other staff during the inspection. The inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also considered documents and spoke to some staff about the curriculum, the early years, SEND, attendance, safeguarding, personal development and behaviour. The inspector considered the responses to the staff survey and the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector spoke to pupils about their experiences of school.

### **Inspection team**

Adam Sproston, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024