



# North Crescent Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115242  
**LEA** ESSEX LEA  
**Inspection number** 279553  
**Inspection dates** 15 May 2006 to 16 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs. Sandra Tweddell LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	North Crescent
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		SS12 9AP
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 765905
<b>Number on roll</b>	245	<b>Fax number</b>	01268 570234
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs. Pam Petts
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Angela Savill

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

North Crescent Primary School is an average size school, situated in Wickford. It takes children from a wide mix of social backgrounds. A number of children come from two Travellers' sites. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is broadly average. A small number of pupils are at early stages of learning English and there are fewer children from minority ethnic backgrounds than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion of children with a statement of special educational need. The school population changes frequently and over the past two years there has been a high number of staffing changes. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

Inspectors agree with the school that it gives pupils a satisfactory education and provides sound value for money. It is an improving school because of determined leadership by the headteacher. The overall leadership and management are satisfactory as subject leaders do not yet monitor the quality of provision. The school's self-evaluation is highly accurate and the headteacher is aware that the school has come a long way but has more to do. Children enter the school with attainment that is well below average overall and low in literacy and numeracy. They make good progress in the Reception class as the provision is good, so standards improve. Progress in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory and standards have risen over the past three years. At the end of Year 2 standards are below average. The improvements have yet to be seen at the end of Year 6 where standards in English, mathematics and science are well below average, although some more able pupils have made satisfactory progress. Boys do less well than girls. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some inconsistencies. The headteacher uses data from assessment well to set priorities for development, but the use of assessment in classrooms is too variable. The majority of pupils behave well and have positive attitudes. Many governors are new and are still coming to grips with their role. However, they work hard and are eager to learn quickly. Parents are very positive about the school and are included in school improvement planning. There are good links with external agencies to support pupils' well-being. Most of the areas for improvement from the last inspection have been tackled satisfactorily, although the subsequent improvement in standards has not been maintained. The strong leadership of the headteacher and the commitment of all staff and governors mean that the school is well placed to improve further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to raise standards in English and mathematics by implementing all the planned initiatives, particularly raising the achievement of boys and the consistency of teaching.
- Develop consistent use of assessment, including marking, in all classes.
- Strengthen the monitoring role of the curriculum leaders.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards in the school have risen over the past three years but there is a legacy of underachievement that is still affecting standards at the end of Year 6, which are well below average. Standards are also affected by the high mobility of pupils and the high number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school did not meet its targets for English and mathematics last year and is unlikely to meet them this year. However, more able pupils have achieved satisfactorily this year. The progress of all groups of pupils in the school is now satisfactory. Standards in Years 1 to 5, although below average, are higher than in Year 6. Boys in particular have underachieved but this is now being tackled well.

Standards on entry to the Reception classes are particularly low in literacy and numeracy but the good provision in the classes enables children to make up some of the ground they have lost. By the end of Reception, standards in personal, mathematical and physical development are broadly average and in language and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world are below average. Weak standards of literacy affect the progress that pupils make from Years 1 to 6, but this is improving because of better opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of spoken language.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and children in the Reception classes settle in quickly. However, despite much work by school staff, attendance rates are below average because of holidays taken by families in term time and the often regular absence of pupils from Traveller communities. Behaviour has been a focus for improvement and both this and pupils' attitudes are good. Parents are pleased with the school's approach to personal development. Pupils' social conscience is developing well. They collaborate well in class, discuss their work sensibly, and of particular note is the way the Year 6 pupils initiated and organised their own fund-raising for the victims of the Asian tsunami. Most pupils talk happily and politely to adults and visitors. Pupils have a good awareness of the diversity of cultures and faiths. Visitors with a range of occupations give pupils a good insight into the world of work. Improving standards in literacy and numeracy are starting to give pupils a better chance in life beyond school. Pupils are clear about how to lead a healthy life and know how to keep themselves safe.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has worked on ensuring a consistent quality of teaching and this can be seen in good planning of lessons and good use of resources to maintain motivation. Raising the attainment of boys has been a priority and new approaches are beginning to have an effect. One example was in a Year 4/5 class where, following a lively discussion and role play, a large number of boys wrote enthusiastically about people and animals who work in the circus. There are still inconsistencies in teaching. Most teachers know their pupils well, particularly those with learning difficulties or disabilities, those who are cared for and children from Traveller communities. The needs of these pupils are usually met appropriately although there is some variation in Years 3 to 6. In a few classes, pupils rely too readily on the teacher. A relatively new approach to assessment is in operation and as yet, its use in classrooms ranges from poor to good and is inadequate overall. The quality of marking, although satisfactory, is also very variable with insufficient reference to the targets that are set for pupils to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's curriculum is satisfactory. The full range of the National Curriculum is covered, and the school is developing effective links between different subjects. Pupils enjoy singing, which is of a high quality, and art. Plans are well advanced to introduce Spanish in Years 3 to 6. There is an appropriate programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils learn about sex and relationships and the misuse of drugs. The curriculum is enriched by themed weeks, such as a Creative Arts week. There is also a range of clubs, mostly for sporting activities but also for art, and there are regular visits to places of interest, such as Chatham Dockyard. Older pupils take part in a residential visit. As a result of this range of activities, the vast majority of pupils enjoy school and learn the basic skills necessary for their future well-being.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Teachers know pupils well, so that pupils feel safe in school and have confidence that there is someone they can talk to if they are in difficulty. The school carries out risk assessments where they are necessary. Child protection procedures are in place and all staff are familiar with them. Pupils from vulnerable groups are monitored carefully and supported appropriately, and the school works well with other agencies to ensure their safety. The school's system of assessment is developing, but has not reached the stage where all pupils have individual targets which they know and to which they can work. There is satisfactory support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Those at an early stage of learning English benefit from thoughtful approaches, for example, the person who supports them learning some key vocabulary of the pupils' home languages. The school works well with parents to help these pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The overall quality of the leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher provides strong leadership, and parents speak highly of her, describing her as 'firm but fair' and very approachable. She knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school well through her own monitoring and evaluation, and this has contributed significantly to the school's realistic self-evaluation, which is also informed by pupil and parent questionnaires. There has been a high turnover of teaching staff in recent years and responsibilities for different areas of the curriculum have been redistributed. Staff in these roles have analysed the outcome of tests but have not yet monitored and evaluated the provision in their areas to ensure high standards. Although standards are improving, targets for pupils' performance in Year 6 have not been met. The governing body has also undergone recent changes and has had difficulty filling some posts. It is beginning to exercise a more critical role. The school generally makes satisfactory use of the resources at its disposal, but had a considerable amount in

reserve in its budget last year, which it was not aware of. Systems are now in place to ensure that this situation does not arise again. The school's accommodation has been modified to make teaching more effective. Given the commitment of all who work in the school and the improvements over the past two years, the school is well placed to make further improvement.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to let you know what we found out about your school when we visited you a few weeks ago. Please would you pass on our thanks to your fellow pupils who looked after us so well. We found that most of you enjoy school and many of you said that you like the sports and art lessons. You are very polite to adults, for example, holding open doors and often asking if help is needed. The behaviour of most of you is good and if you have problems you know who to turn to for help. Most of you work hard and make the progress that you should. You have become better at this recently as you went through a time when this was not the case. Your headteacher is a good leader who, with the other adults in the school, is working hard to make it a place where you can do as well as you possibly can. To make sure that this happens, we have made the following suggestions. - The work that has been done on raising standards of work, especially in English and mathematics needs to continue. - You need to know your targets and, more importantly, how you can reach them. You can help by keeping an eye on your targets to see how well you are doing. - The teachers who are responsible for subjects need to focus on how you are doing in their subjects, so that you all achieve high standards in all you do. Once again, thank you for all your help during the inspection. We wish you every success in the future.