



Northlands Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125576
LEA Warwickshire
Inspection number 281962
Inspection dates 16 November 2005 to 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Marianick Ellender-Gele HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Pinders Lane
School category	Community		Rugby
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Warwickshire CV21 2SS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01788 542440
Number on roll	248	Fax number	01788 542440
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Philip Ash
Date of previous inspection	4 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Joyce James

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Northlands is a primary school of average size. A high proportion of children are from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is low. Children start in the Nursery with low standards, particularly in language and communication. The proportion of pupils with special educational need is just above average. Teachers are involved in projects with other local schools to share models of good practice in using new technology. Recently, the Nursery and Reception classes have been brought together to form an early years' unit to provide better continuity for children through the Foundation Stage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school rightly judges that it provides its pupils with a good standard of education, giving good value for money. The great majority of parents and pupils have positive views of the school. Children make a good start in the early years' unit and achieve well, enjoying the interesting opportunities offered to them. Pupils make more rapid progress as they move through the school, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The progress of younger pupils is satisfactory. Progress in writing needs to be better.

Teaching is good. It is most effective when it builds precisely on what pupils already know because it moves their learning on. Expectations are sometimes not high enough. Provision for pupils' personal development is good and so they behave very well and are eager to learn. They develop their independence from an early age and have a clear understanding of healthy lifestyles. The curriculum is good and the school ensures that all subjects receive enough time and that pupils benefit from a broad range of experiences.

The provision for pupils' health and safety is good. Children trust the adults in the school and praise their teachers and teaching assistants for the good support that they provide. Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher and subject leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have successfully tackled issues identified in the previous inspection. Despite the large number of priorities in the school improvement plan, developments are managed efficiently and the school is well placed to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve standards in writing
- make accurate assessments of what children in the Foundation Stage understand, know and can do in order to build on their achievements more effectively and raise standards in Years 1 and 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Information provided by the school demonstrates that pupils make good progress and the inspection team agrees with this analysis. When children start in the early years' unit their skills are below what is typical for their age but evidence suggests that attainment on entry is gradually improving. This, coupled with improved provision, has resulted in standards which are much closer to national average on entry into Year 1. This improvement is gradually working its way through the school although it is too early yet to have had any significant effect on results at the end of Year 2. Because of the relatively small numbers in each year, there are often significant differences between year groups.

In Years 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress. Although good progress is made in reading, there still remains room for improvement in writing and mathematics. In other years pupils make good progress particularly in English. The most recent results

for Year 6 are much improved and now match national averages. The school's targets were met in 2005 and equally challenging targets have been set for 2006. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Pupils who are just beginning to learn English make very good progress thanks to the help that they receive from their friends in class, their teachers and support staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils demonstrate excellent enjoyment of school. They play and work happily and safely with their friends. They attend school regularly although too many are not always on time in the mornings. They have a good understanding of the customs and religions of people from different cultures and respect the views and values of others. The local community is a rich resource which contributes to pupils' good spiritual, moral and multicultural development. Pupils understand moral messages because they are based on children's everyday lives and experiences. The way children look after those who cannot yet speak English is outstanding. Pupils know right from wrong and behave well because they are expected to. There have been no exclusions for five years. The school is kept litter free by pupils who take great pride in their surroundings. The playground is an enjoyable place because pupils look out for each other and feel confident about telling adults if they have a problem. Pupils are aware of how to stay healthy and many enjoy the school's healthy menus at Breakfast Club and the fruit available at playtimes. Children understand the importance of regular exercise and join willingly a variety of clubs during or after school such as skipping, 'Huff and Puff' and trampolining. Pupils develop a good range of skills that they will eventually need in the work place, including information and communication technology (ICT) skills, understanding the cost of leisure activities and the value of the fund-raising events that they get involved in.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage because children are given many opportunities to discover and lead activities through play. As a result, children concentrate very well and show curiosity about the world around them. Because relationships throughout the school are good, lessons run smoothly. Teachers often use good techniques to encourage confidence and fluency in speaking. For example, pupils share thoughts with a partner in literacy and, in assembly, role play is used well to demonstrate the advantages of team work. Much effort has been put into improving the teaching of reading and this is bearing fruit. The teaching of writing is not yet consistently good across the school, leading to lower standards in this skill.

The best teaching builds rapidly on pupils' skills and knowledge by providing stimulating tasks. For example, pupils in Year 6 investigated how to compose a newspaper article choosing language that might attract readers. The school is developing links across subjects to make work more interesting for pupils. For example, ICT is used in music and art so that pupils can apply their ICT skills in real contexts. In a few cases activities do not build sufficiently on pupils' high level of knowledge. For example, in mathematics work set for a high ability group was not demanding enough. Consequently, pupils did not learn sufficiently and marked time. The use of targets is much improved and teachers often indicate what pupils need to do to get even better. The assessment of younger children is not always sufficiently precise to help them meet the high expectations that the school has of them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets statutory requirements. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is effective in improving pupils' understanding of broader issues in life. Pupils find that PSHE sessions are relevant and interesting. In the Foundation Stage a good balance is struck between different activities. In other years time is used well to ensure that all subjects receive enough attention. This is particularly good in physical education where the school ensures that children have many opportunities to exercise. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities receive very good support to ensure that they have full access to the curriculum. There is a good range of educational visits to places of interest, and visitors to the school provide valuable specialist knowledge, for example, about the range of faiths represented in the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The high level of attention that teachers give to every child is a strength of the school. Staff look after pupils and care for them very well. The headteacher and governors give a strong lead in this, ensuring that all pupils are included equally. The school has outstanding relationships with a range of agencies, such as the health service, the special educational needs team, and the minority ethnic support staff. Parents have access to a range of professionals to call upon for help and advice. Parents work with the school as a team and appreciate the fact that the headteacher is readily available to talk over any concerns. Pupils with learning, physical or medical difficulties are fully integrated into school life and successfully supported by adults and children alike. The same applies for children who are just beginning to learn English. An extended school day with provision of breakfast and after school clubs is available for pupils who need to be looked after beyond school hours. Child protection procedures are fully in place and understood by all staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and governors are focused on raising standards. The main strengths of the school are the deep understanding of its community and the excellent team work to ensure that all pupils succeed.

Governance is good. The governors are hard working and use their good understanding of the school effectively to hold it to account. The methods for evaluating the school's work, the effectiveness of decisions, and the areas to be improved are rigorous.

Consequently, the school knows itself well. Subject leaders provide good advice and guidance to colleagues.

Through the analysis of test results the school has an accurate view of the relative strength of subjects. The evaluation of lessons, conducted by the headteacher and subject leaders, gives a good view of the quality of teaching, with points given for improvement and support provided where weaknesses are found. The strategies employed to raise standards in mathematics and science had the desired effect on the 2005 results. The English subject leader provides good direction and has had success in improving reading throughout the school. The initiatives to improve writing need to be applied with more consistency to raise standards in this skill.

The number of priorities in the improvement plan is fairly large but these initiatives are managed well. Northlands Primary School has a good track record of improvements including the upgrading of accommodation and resources. The inspectors agree with the school that the leadership and management have good capacity to improve further.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed visiting the school and seeing you at work and play. You gave us lots of helpful comments that helped us to form a true picture of your school. This is what we found out:

- your teachers and other adults in the school help you to learn well but you could do even better in your writing
- you behave very well in lessons and in the playground and you know how to tell right from wrong
- you clearly enjoy coming to school because there are lots of interesting activities for you to take part in and your teachers are very enthusiastic
- although you come to school regularly, some of you need to make sure that you get to school on time every day
- we were impressed that the school is helping you to stay healthy by encouraging you to eat healthy foods and take regular exercise
- most of all we liked the way that you get on well together, support each other and care for one another.

There are two main things we have asked the school to do to make it even better:

- we think that some of you do not write as well as you could. We are asking your teachers to help you to make your writing better
- we have also asked your teachers to keep a careful check on how the youngest children are getting on so that they do even better in Years 1 and 2.

We think that your school is a good one and it is working towards becoming even better. With your help we are confident that the school will improve still further.

Good luck to you all in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marianick Ellender-Gelé Lead inspector (on behalf of all the inspectors)