



Northgate Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133973
LEA West Sussex
Inspection number 282409
Inspection dates 21 March 2006 to 22 March 2006
Reporting inspector Sheila Browning AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Green Lane
School category	Community		Crawley
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		RH10 8DX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01293 526737
Number on roll	403	Fax number	01293 538086
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Craig Jackson
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Alison Wood

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Opened as a new school in September 2004 following an amalgamation of Northgate First and Middle Schools, Northgate is bigger than most other primary schools. Most pupils are from White British families, though over a third are from minority ethnic groups, the largest group being Pakistani. Nearly a quarter of pupils learn English as an additional language. Thirty-seven are at early stages of language acquisition. Nearly a quarter of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. A high proportion of pupils join or leave the school part way through their primary education. Children start school with well below expected skills and experience for their age. The school has a special support centre for the hearing impaired and currently 12 pupils attend. The school is part of a very good local authority intensifying support programme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school views its performance as satisfactory. Inspectors agree. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and is used effectively to drive improvement. In the short time since opening in 2004, the school has successfully established an ethos where pupils feel valued and, as a result, behave well and want to learn. Pupils' personal development and well-being are promoted effectively.

Through effective monitoring and support, the headteacher and senior staff have succeeded in improving teaching and learning so that pupils now make satisfactory progress in their work. Standards are well below average however, because many older pupils have not had enough time in the school to catch up on previously lost ground in their learning. The lost ground was outside the control of the school, which opened in 2004. A few inconsistencies in teaching and in the quality of marking remain but the individual targets given to pupils in English and mathematics are beginning to help raise standards.

Children entering the Foundation Stage are given a satisfactory start and make satisfactory progress. The special support centre (SSC) is a strength and is highly valued by parents. Links with other agencies and organisations are good.

The school judges its leadership and management as satisfactory, inspectors judge it to be good because of the strong impact it is having on improvements throughout the school. Northgate Primary School provides satisfactory value for money. It is improving quickly in important areas and the shared determination and drive for improvement led by the headteacher, demonstrate a secure capacity to move the school forward.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science throughout the school by sharpening the identification of strengths and weaknesses and taking effective action to make improvement.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching found across the school so that teaching is always stimulating and interesting, and develop more consistent approaches to marking that will help pupils understand what it is they need to do to improve further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards throughout the school are well below those seen nationally. However, given pupils' low starting points, this represents satisfactory achievement. The school sets realistic and challenging targets. The achievement of many pupils is held back by the learning difficulties they face, and the high turnover of pupils. Children enter school with low standards particularly in communication and literacy. When children start school they have weak language and literacy skills, often because they have little

experience of speaking English. Though pupils make satisfactory progress, standards remain much lower than nationally expected at the end of the Foundation Stage.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress, though many continue to have weak literacy skills, which slow their learning. In 2005, national tests at the end of Year 2 indicated well below average standards in reading and writing and broadly average standards in mathematics. However, school records indicate that the current Year 2 pupils are likely to reach average standards in their tests this year.

Pupils learning English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily because their work is planned carefully. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with a hearing impairment achieve as well as other pupils because they are given good quality support and guidance.

Whilst there is good evidence of improvement in the achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 there has been insufficient time to affect standards. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average in English, and are well below expectations in mathematics and science. Year 6 pupils made at least satisfactory progress during the short time spent in this school. However they had a lot of ground to make up because of earlier experiences. It is also evident that the current Year 6 pupils are achieving at similar levels to those last year because of the inconsistent progress they made earlier in their school careers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. The school is doing all that it can to improve the below national average attendance rates and they are improving well. Pupils enjoy school and many participate in out of school activities. The youngest children come in full of confidence and quickly involve themselves in their work. The vast majority of pupils behave well and the rate of exclusion has decreased significantly since the primary school opened.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong, respect one another and value the cultural diversity of their school. They agree strongly that this school does not tolerate racial discrimination. They show a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle by balancing a good diet with plenty of exercise. They have a keen awareness of keeping safe, and what to do when dealing with potential hazards. Pupils are given a genuine voice in the running of the school through the school council, such as involvement in developing school policies for behaviour and anti-bullying. They contribute well to the community through charitable works. Pupils' opinions are regularly sought, and they welcome the impact they have on school life.

Pupils have good opportunities to work together. This provides them with important skills to do well in later life. However, raising standards in literacy and numeracy would help them to do even better.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is at least satisfactory and assessment provides an accurate picture of children's attainment. Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan carefully for most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils with severe hearing impairment are very well supported and integrated. The many pupils who are learning English as an additional language are taught effectively. The level of challenge is generally sufficient for pupils of different abilities. Relationships are good and this helps pupils to be well motivated and keen to learn.

Lessons generally have a good pace, with varied activities, enabling most pupils to complete their work soundly. Teachers use resources well. In an effective Year 6 science lesson pupils enjoyed exploring sound using a vacuum bell jar, video and an interactive whiteboard. Where teaching is less effective, pupils spend too long listening to the teacher and become restless and fidgety. Marking is inconsistent in the guidance it gives pupils about how to improve their work. However, pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own and each other's work, thereby helping to give them a clearer understanding of how well they are doing. The school works closely with parents and helpers so that they can support learners effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is adapted well to meet the needs of the pupils. A firm emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills in order to meet the needs of pupils who lack confidence in expressing themselves and those learning English as an additional language. By linking subjects together, teachers cover topics or 'learning journeys' in greater depth, which benefits pupils' achievement. Pupils proudly share 'learning journey' books with visitors and use them well to reflect on their learning. This, and the use of interactive whiteboards, helps make learning interesting and fun. The Foundation Stage provides visually rich experiences for learning.

Pupils benefit from a good range of themed days and trips that enrich learning and they take part in many extra-curricular clubs. Education for safety and health is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' care, guidance and support are good and are reflected in the high level of care and commitment of staff for pupils. All pupils are safeguarded well and risk assessments are rigorous. Arrangements for child protection and for giving first aid are good. Links with and transfer arrangements to local secondary schools are good.

Pupils are particularly helped to improve when teachers use marking to give them good quality feedback and clear guidance about the next steps to work towards. However, the quality of this feedback is not yet consistent across all classes. All pupils have individual targets in English and mathematics and most know them thoroughly. The tracking of pupils' progress against such targets is beginning to have an impact in raising standards.

A new system for recording pupils' developing skills has been introduced. Systems for monitoring the progress of children in the Foundation Stage show sound improvement. Records to confirm the skills of the older pupils and identify gaps in their knowledge are not entirely complete.

Parents learn about their children's targets at parents' evening but there is no system in place to keep them routinely informed when new targets are set. Parents of children with learning difficulties and disabilities are regularly kept well informed about their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good because there is clear vision, good team building and a strong focus on pupils' personal development. Because of effective leadership that is bringing positive improvement, Northgate makes a difference for its pupils, many of whom have particular learning needs or social and emotional difficulties.

The headteacher has successfully developed the aims of the new school and its priorities for improvement. The school is working well with the local authority on an intensifying support programme to raise achievement. Leadership and management of the Special Support Centre (SSC) are most effective. Weaknesses across the school have been identified quickly and are tackled energetically and successfully.

The school successfully meets the needs of pupils from all backgrounds, and is working to improve its provision for pupils learning English as an additional language. The school is developing good systems for checking on the quality of its work. Extensive lesson observations and careful scrutiny of pupils' work are used well to improve the match of teaching to pupil's individual needs. Improvements in assessment and the analysis of information have given the school a realistic view of pupils' progress. Leaders' high expectations have led to the school assessing teaching as inadequate, when it is in fact satisfactory. The school evaluation does not take full account of the current, improved situation. The school gives questionnaires to pupils and parents to gauge their views and this has led to positive changes. Parents raised concerns about providing a quiet place for homework. The school responded by organising a homework club. However, leadership acknowledges that work for improvement has to continue.

Governors have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses. They are supportive, and ask critical questions about the school's performance. Together with the vision and determination of the staff, this demonstrates that the school has a secure capacity to improve further. Finances are managed carefully and funds have been spent on

significant improvements to the building and grounds. The school achieves satisfactory and improving value for money.

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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?	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	3	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	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	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

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	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	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	2	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

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

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work and seeing your lessons.

These are the things that we are most pleased about:

You are kind, thoughtful, behave well and get on well with other children and adults.

You are very friendly and helpful, and enjoy school.

The adults in school take good care of you.

The headteacher and senior staff run your school well.

We know everyone wants to do better and we have suggested three things for improvement:

Some of you could do even better in your reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Teachers need to tell you more about how you can improve your work in ways that you can understand.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that all your lessons are enjoyable and interesting.