

Norris Bank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106065
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	287404
Inspection date	11 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Arthur Markham

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Hoy
Headteacher	Mr H Bousfield
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003
School address	Green Lane Heaton Norris Stockport Cheshire SK4 2NF
Telephone number	0161 4323944
Fax number	0161 975 5114

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves an area of mainly private housing. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is lower than that in most schools, as is the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are of White British background with only a small number from minority ethnic groups. There are very few pupils at an early stage of learning English. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark and has Healthy School status. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Norris Bank Primary provides a good education for its pupils. Close attention is given to the care and welfare of pupils. The school has a warm, welcoming atmosphere and pupils enjoy very good relationships with staff. Pupils consequently feel safe and secure and say that they are confident they could go to an adult for help if they had any concerns. Pupils appreciate the friendly approach that teachers show towards them and respond by behaving well. Their personal development is good. The close attention given to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully prepares pupils to be good citizens. They become increasingly mature as they progress through the school and are polite and courteous. Pupils get on well with each other and say that bullying is rare and is promptly dealt with. They play an active part in the life of the school and their views are sought through the work of the school council. A number of improvements have been made as a result, including the provision of new playground equipment, which fosters exercise. This, together with pupils' good awareness of a healthy diet, is reflected in the school's gaining of the Healthy School award. Pupils make a good contribution to the community and show their concern for others through their support of a number of charities.

Consistently good teaching and a good curriculum enable pupils to reach standards that are significantly above national averages. Children enter the Reception classes with skills that are above average overall, although slightly lower than average in aspects of language and number. They make a rapid start to their learning because they benefit from the lively teaching and stimulating activities provided. They consequently develop very good learning habits and reach standards that are above average by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils continue to do well in Years 1 and 2. Standards are above national averages and their achievement is good. By the end of Year 6 standards in national tests are again above national averages, although the performance of pupils in the 2006 tests indicated some underachievement in writing and mathematics. Improved arrangements for the process of setting targets are helping to remedy this and school data shows that the current pupils are doing better and their progress is improving, but pupils' achievement could be higher. The teachers' marking of pupils' work does not consistently relate to the targets pupils are set or make enough use of developmental comments to help them understand how to improve and support the raising of achievement.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has introduced a number of initiatives aimed at raising standards. Self-evaluation systems have been improved and accurately identify the school's strengths and areas needing to be improved. Tracking systems have been developed which closely monitor pupils' progress. A new management structure has been drawn up to support the development of a team approach among the staff. Most parents appreciate the need for these changes, rate the school highly and value the quality of education it provides for their children. Comments such as 'Norris Bank offers my child an excellent all-round education' typify the views of many parents. However, a number have been concerned at some of the changes and that communications with parents could be improved. The governors are committed and provide good support and challenge to the school. Finances are well managed and the school provides good value for money. Taking into account the strong leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher and the effective support provided by governors, there is a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 in order to raise standards.
- Ensure that teachers' marking of pupils' work gives them clear pointers for improvement.
- Develop effective communications with parents so that they are aware of the initiatives being introduced in the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage because the curriculum is stimulating and the teaching lively. As a result, virtually all achieve the goals expected by the end of Reception and some exceed them. This good progress continues through Years 1 and 2, so that by the end of Year 2 standards are above average. By the end of Year 6 standards continue to be above national averages and have been so over the last five years. In 2006 the progress made by pupils in writing and mathematics waned slightly when compared to their performance in Key Stage 1, indicating some underachievement. However, school data indicates that the action being taken to remedy this is having a positive impact. The progress being made by the current pupils throughout Key Stage 2 is good, although more remains to be done to raise standards to the level that pupils are capable of. Those pupils with additional learning needs and the few learning English as an additional language make very good progress because they are supported well in lessons and group situations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say that they enjoy school and like their teachers because they are friendly and make learning fun. They respond by behaving well. Attendance is good. They become sensible and mature young persons by the end of Year 6 because close attention is given to developing their self-esteem and confidence throughout the school. Pupils eagerly take on responsibilities and show a caring approach to others, older pupils taking care of the younger ones in the playground. Members of the school council carry out their roles well, clearly conveying the views of their peers so that changes can be made. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the extra playground equipment provided as a result of their efforts. Performances by the school's brass band and choir in the local area reflect the valued contribution pupils make to the community. Pupils enthusiastically participate in a range of sporting activities and have a good awareness of the need for healthy lifestyles. The attention given to developing their basic skills and ability to work with others in pairs and teams prepares them well for the next stage in their schooling.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children thrive in the Reception classes because teachers are very caring and activities are interesting. Throughout the school there is a pleasant atmosphere in classrooms and most lessons move at a fast pace. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to stimulate pupils. They explain tasks clearly and use questions well to ensure that pupils know what they have to do. Pupils are consequently eager to do well: they work

hard and most make good progress. Teachers carefully assess pupils' progress, with the result that the tasks they set pupils are usually suitably challenging, although this is not always the case in writing and mathematics. They mark pupils' work diligently, but do not use development points consistently to help them understand how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good quality curriculum pays equal attention to all subjects, but particularly the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The school is working hard with some success to develop a skills-based curriculum to meet the differing learning styles of pupils and develop their independent learning skills. Provision for information and communication technology has improved and pupils' computing skills are being developed well, although the use of computers across the curriculum is not yet well developed. Pupils enjoy the developing emphasis placed on creativity and the wide range of visits, including a residential visit, which enrich learning well. The high emphasis given to personal, social, health and citizenship education impacts strongly on pupils' personal development. An impressive range of after-school activities make a strong contribution to pupils' enjoyment and achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are cared for well. Good quality relationships ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. Parents value the care taken of their children and say they find staff approachable. Child protection procedures are in place, and regular health and safety checks are carried out. Effective links are in place with external agencies to provide support for pupils when this is required. Arrangements for the induction of children into the Reception classes are very well organised and Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education. Careful monitoring of pupils' progress ensures that intervention can be planned effectively for any who may be in need of additional support. Recently developed procedures for the setting of targets give pupils guidance as to how they can improve, although the process is yet to be fully developed in some subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well as a team and provide strong leadership. They have a clear educational vision and, with the support of the leadership team, are successfully giving a strong lead on initiatives to improve the work of the school. Efforts have been made to develop a stronger team approach among the staff and a structure has been drawn up to foster this. However, this is yet to be fully effective because at the moment middle managers do not have enough impact on the work of the school in their areas of responsibility.

The school has an accurate view of the areas needing development, and school improvement planning is well organised and focused on these. Performance management is used effectively to support the school improvement process. The spending of funds is closely monitored in order to get best value. Good links with the local community and other schools successfully enhance the learning opportunities presented to pupils. Links with parents are generally good. The majority of parents appreciate the changes that are being made, but a number express

some concerns and would have liked more information prior to the changes being implemented. Governors are committed and knowledgeable. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are supportive yet challenging.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Norris Bank Primary School, Stockport SK4 2NF

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and getting your views of your school. Many of you said it was a good school and I agree.

I particularly liked the warm and friendly atmosphere and the way the staff take good care of you so that you feel safe and happy. They work hard to make learning interesting for you so you do well. The wide range of activities that they plan for you impressed me and it was clear that this helps you to really enjoy school. Many of you told me this, and how much you like your teachers. The way you work hard for your teachers is the main reason that you make good progress and achieve well. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school was good. I was pleased to see that you understand the need for a healthy diet and how to keep fit and healthy. This was clearly evident when I talked to some of you at lunchtime.

There are many good features in your school, but I have asked the headteacher and staff to do three things. I want them to help those of you in Years 3 to 6 to achieve as highly as you are capable of in writing and mathematics. I have also asked the teachers to ensure that they give you clear guidance on how you can improve when they mark your work. The headteacher and governors should also ensure that parents are fully aware of all the changes that are being carried out to help make Norris Bank Primary an even better school. You can help in this by continuing to work hard and doing your best.

Thank you for helping me so much with the inspection of your school. I wish you all well in the future.