



Norton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111623
Local Authority Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number 289004
Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Wendy Ripley HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Norton Primary School
School category	Community		Berkshire Road, Norton
Age range of pupils	3–11		Stockton-on-Tees, TS20 2RD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01642 356091
Number on roll (school)	312	Fax number	01642 356090
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Mary Griksaitis
		Headteacher	Mrs Jacqui Davison
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	31 January –1 February 2007	289004

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Norton is a slightly larger than average primary school, although numbers have fallen in recent years. The area served includes a wide socio-economic mix. Most children enter the school with levels of skills lower than those expected for their age. Pupils are mainly of White British background and there are currently no children with English as an additional language, or who are looked after. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of children who are entitled to free school meals is 30%, which is significantly higher than the national and local authority average.

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 provides a warm, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all pupils and parents. It works well with local authority services and other partners to provide a wide range of activities which contribute hugely in ensuring that pupils are well behaved, confident and courteous young people, who make an important contribution to their school and the wider community. As a result, pupils' personal development is good and this is a strength of the school. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. All groups of pupils feel cared for and secure. Pupils know about the importance of keeping safe. Their understanding of what is required to live a healthy life is well developed. Pupils have a very clear sense of care, support and respect for others. They demonstrate their enjoyment of school through their attentiveness and hard work in lessons and their positive attitudes to learning. The school manages the small number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties effectively so that there is minimum disruption to the learning of others. Children are safeguarded well and the school meets national requirements in this respect. Attendance rates remain slightly below the national average. The school monitors this carefully and has recently employed a learning mentor who is working well across the school and with a range of support services to address this.

The Nursery gives a good start across all areas of learning and children make good progress from low starting points. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 1. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, standards are average overall. Progress in Key Stage 2 varies considerably and many pupils do not make as much progress as they might. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and they make progress similar to other pupils. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some examples of good practice in all key stages. However, in Key Stage 2, teachers do not make enough use of assessment information to establish individual targets and to match the level of work to the pupils' abilities. The curriculum is broad and balanced. A good range of additional activities enriches the curriculum and makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

School leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership, know their school well and have established a clear direction for the school. Recent staff changes and the restructuring of responsibilities mean that the wider leadership team is relatively new and a coordinator for information and communication technology (ICT) has not yet been appointed. This extended leadership team is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of provision by monitoring school performance effectively. However, the school acknowledges that the assessment of pupils' performance is not yet as rigorous and consistent as it might be, particularly throughout Key Stage 2.

The school has satisfactorily addressed the areas for improvement which were made at the last inspection. It provides satisfactory value for money and has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure greater consistency of practice and expectation in: setting individual targets; tracking pupils' progress; ensuring that pupils know what they need to do next to improve; and involving pupils more in monitoring their own progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

On entry to the nursery, children have skills lower than those expected for their age, particularly in relation to their communication and creative skills. Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children make good progress in all areas of their learning. Many reach the targets expected for their age by the beginning of Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 1. Results in national tests in 2006 showed that standards in Key Stage 1 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in Key Stage 2 are average overall. The results of the national tests in 2006 show a rise in standards in English but a fall in standards in mathematics and science. Whilst overall there has been an improving trend in standards over the last three years, the school recognises that further improvements are required to raise standards in all subjects. Despite extensive work being done to improve this across the school, pupils' progress varies considerably across Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and they make progress similar to the rest of the pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good and is a strength of the school. This is because of the wide range of opportunities the school provides for pupils to develop their personal skills and the positive ethos it promotes. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils is also good. Pupils develop a very clear sense of care, support and respect for others. The result is a warm and welcoming atmosphere throughout the school, good behaviour both in and outside of lessons and very good relationships between all members of the school community. Pupils' enjoyment of school is demonstrated by their positive attitudes towards learning. They are attentive in lessons and they work hard.

From an early age, pupils know about the importance of keeping safe and they are aware of the dangers of talking to strangers. The pupils' understanding of what is required to live a healthy life is well developed, and they put their learning into practice in their enjoyment of physical exercise and their choices of healthy food.

Pupils make a positive contribution to the school by taking on specific roles and responsibilities. Pupils in Year 6, for example, are appointed and trained as playground friends. In this way, they act as role models and games organisers for the pupils in Years 1 and 2. They enjoy this work and it helps their self-confidence and self-esteem

as well as preparing them well for skills they will need in later life. Pupils are developing into mature, well balanced and responsible young people and this is to be seen particularly in their participation in the work of the school council, as well as in their involvement with reception and door duty.

Pupils also welcome opportunities which enable them to make a contribution to the life of the community. This is exemplified by enthusiastic involvement in the intergenerational project. This has brought the pupils into close contact with the community and has developed their appreciation of the needs of others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Inspectors' judgements about teaching match the school's. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some examples of good teaching in some lessons in all key stages. Where learning is most effective, teachers explain things well so that pupils appreciate why tasks are important. Well structured discussions and the probing use of questions help to develop pupils' understanding. Pupils show commitment and apply themselves well to their learning. They particularly enjoy opportunities for practical work and cooperating with others in group tasks. Classroom assistants are used appropriately to support learning. There is a positive atmosphere in each classroom.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good because adults have high expectations and match the work to pupils' needs. However, in Key Stage 2, teachers do not make enough use of assessment information to help them match the level of work to the pupils' abilities so that all are sufficiently challenged and have their needs met. As a result, too many pupils do not make the progress they should. The effective use of individual pupil targets to focus both staff and pupils on key learning priorities is too inconsistent. On many occasions, the targets set are too general and do not support teachers in planning effectively, nor do they help pupils understand what they need to do to improve further. Teaching has been disrupted by staff absence during the last year, which has adversely affected pupils' progress in Years 5 and 6.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum provision is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced and caters well for pupils' personal development. Teachers ensure that pupils experience the full range of subjects. Statutory requirements are met and teachers are making increasingly effective use of national guidance to help them plan lessons.

The school provides a good range and variety of visits, visitors and additional activities that enrich the curriculum. This is evident in activities such as the residential visit to Robinwood and the wide range of after-school clubs. Planned visits to the local mosque and synagogue effectively promote pupils' understanding of other cultures.

Pupils in the Foundation Stage benefit from a well-planned curriculum that is based on observational assessment of children's learning. The school building is a bright, well equipped place and there are high quality displays throughout which support learning and personal development. The open-plan classrooms are managed very effectively so that disruption from activities such as singing is kept to a minimum.

The sensitive support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make progress similar to the rest of pupils. More able pupils are not always given sufficient challenge in lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care and support is good. A major reason why pupils are happy at school is because they feel safe and trust the adults. There are close links with community health services and other agencies. The quality of these partnerships helps to provide effectively for pupils' needs. Arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection and checking the suitability of adults who come in contact with pupils, are satisfactory. Transition arrangements from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 are of good quality, and the school works closely with the local high school to achieve a smooth transition to secondary education. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils and they are fully included in all that the school offers. They are well supported by skilled teaching assistants.

The school does not yet provide sufficient academic guidance for pupils. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Where it is good, teachers provide guidance which help pupils understand how to improve. However, teachers too often restrict their comments to praising pupils' efforts. Pupils do not as yet receive sufficient detail about how to improve their work, and are not involved enough in evaluating their own work.

The school is seen by parents as accessible and they are surveyed regularly to check their views. The parental response to the inspection questionnaire indicates a high level of support for the school's work and demonstrates confidence in the personal and social care provided for their children by the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and deputy headteacher know the school well and provide strong focused leadership. They are held in high regard by parents and within the local community. They have worked hard to steer the school through a difficult period and have implemented a number of policies and strategies to ensure there is a coherent approach to raising standards and improving the quality of provision. They have been well supported in this by link advisors and other local authority consultants and services.

Leadership and management of the school overall is improving as a result of recent revisions to the leadership team. The learning mentor is having a very positive impact on the personal development and well-being of pupils and is working well with the

behaviour support service to improve attendance. The newly appointed core skills subject leaders for literacy and numeracy are positive about their roles and are beginning to monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their own areas. An ICT coordinator has yet to be appointed.

Much has been done in recent months to ensure clear systems are in place to set targets, track pupils' progress and monitor and evaluate the school's overall performance. However, these are not fully embedded at class level. Teachers do not yet routinely use the information available to them on a regular and consistent basis in order to set targets and monitor and assess progress at individual pupil level.

Close partnerships with other agencies such as the behaviour support service and art development service ensure that the school includes all children in the full range of provision and activities. The needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well addressed.

The governing body, recently up to full complement, contributes regularly to the life of the school. Governors participate in school activities such as assemblies, themed weeks and hobby clubs. There are good working relationships between the governors and the senior leadership team. Financial management is secure and resource deployment is satisfactory. The school offers satisfactory value for money and demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve.

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?	3
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	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	3
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	3

The quality of provision

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

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.

Leadership and management

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

Norton Primary School

Berkshire Road

Norton

Stockton-on-Tees

TS20 2RD

31 January 2007

Dear Children

As you know, inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you to you all for helping us and making us feel so welcome. We enjoyed meeting you and were very interested to hear about the things you do and what you think about your school. You told us that you enjoy learning, you like your teachers and your school and you feel happy and safe when you are there. Here are some of the other things that we found out from our visit:

- your behaviour in lessons and around the school is really good and you try hard to do your best. You all deserve a big round of applause for that!
- you are considerate, polite and take good care of each other
- you like to help around the school and take on responsibility, for example, by being playground friends and doing door and reception duty
- you know how important it is to have healthy lifestyles and to keep yourself safe
- you enjoy 'going for goals' and you really like activities such as Robinwood, 'take one picture' and hobby club.

We also found some things that can be better in your school and we have asked the headteacher and the staff to think about these. These are the things they need to do:

- make sure you all do as well as you can, especially those of you in the junior classes
- make sure you each have your own individual learning targets
- give you more information about how you are doing, letting you know why you have done things well and what you can do next to improve
- talk and listen to you more about how you think you are doing.

You can help by continuing to behave as well and working as hard as you were when we saw you. The main thing is to keep on enjoying going to school, learning as much as you can and being proud of yourselves for working so hard and being special. Thank you again for being so friendly. We liked you all a lot. You deserve to do well and we know that you can.

Best wishes

Wendy Ripley

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools