



Norton Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 115642
Local Authority Gloucestershire
Inspection number 290287
Inspection date 23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Ruth Westbrook

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Norton
School category	Voluntary controlled		Gloucester
Age range of pupils	4-11		GL2 9LJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01452 730531
Number on roll (school)	105	Fax number	01452 739080
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Tony Crawshaw
		Headteacher	Tonwen Empson
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2002		

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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small village school serves the surrounding area of Norton which mainly consists of private housing. The number of children joining or leaving the school other than at the usual time is high because of the proximity of an RAF station and a Travellers' site. There are currently 30 Traveller learners. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average.

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's overall effectiveness is good. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning over recent years. As a result, standards have improved and pupils make good progress. Standards vary from year to year because of wide variations in intake, but in 2006, Year 6 pupils left school with above average standards, having joined with standards that were average. The good quality of teaching and learning is now sufficiently embedded in practice to sustain continuing improvement in standards and pupils' progress.

A clear set of Christian values underpins the school's caring and supportive environment. Good care, guidance and support ensure that within this diverse community, relationships are harmonious and all pupils feel valued members. The good curriculum provides a rich array of experiences to promote pupils' cultural awareness of self and society and other faith traditions. This promotes the high level of care and concern for others which is evident throughout the school.

The school is successful in fostering pupils' good personal development and well-being which contributes to their good achievement. Pupils enjoy the lively teaching which engages their interest. Though they 'have fun', they are very clear that 'they are here to learn'. This is shown in the responsible way in which they enter before school starts and 'Get Ready for Learning', and during a wet playtime when most initiate activities for themselves. Pupils are supported effectively to achieve. They receive very effective guidance in literacy on how to improve their work. This has led to marked improvements in pupils' progress. This practice is being developed in numeracy and is leading to improvement there. The most able pupils are not receiving sufficient guidance and challenge in numeracy to ensure that they make good progress.

The curriculum is balanced and stimulating, including all the required elements and a number of enriching additions like introductory work in French. The planning of opportunities for different age groups to use information and communication technology (ICT) skills across all subjects is inconsistent. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. It is well planned and organised to meet the needs of individual children through a wide range of activities including outdoor play.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and with staff she promotes an atmosphere where all involved with the school, including governors and parents, work very well together to meet pupils' needs and provide a good quality education. Parents are consulted well and they think highly of the school. The school's checking of its own performance is sound but there have been some inconsistencies. Checking progress of pupils in literacy has been rigorous, less so in numeracy. The school has a good awareness of its strengths and areas for development such that it has already identified the areas for improvement noted below. The school has made good progress since it was last inspected with the weaknesses in the curriculum and assessment having been dealt with particularly well. This, together with recent strengthening of the school's senior leadership, signals good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the monitoring of teaching and learning in numeracy to ensure that standards are improving.
- Ensure pupils of the highest ability are consistently challenged by their tasks in numeracy.
- Give pupils of all ages more opportunities to apply their ICT skills to their learning across all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's attainment on entry varies from year to year from average to below average. An emphasis on speaking and listening skills helps children to reach standards expected for their age and make good progress in the Foundation Stage.

In recent years, standards have fallen in Years 1 and 2 but in 2005, standards in reading and writing recovered. In 2006, standards improved again. Pupils made satisfactory progress in reading and mathematics and good progress in writing. The most able pupils are not challenged consistently in mathematics to ensure that pupils make good progress.

In Year 6 national tests in 2006, pupils reached standards which were above average in English and mathematics and high in science. Pupils made good progress in 2005 and 2006 and exceptionally good progress in science. All groups of pupils make good progress except a small number of Traveller learners whose progress is satisfactory because it is affected by periods of absence from school. All pupils are set challenging targets which motivate them to work hard.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well being are good because pupils respond well to the opportunities available to them. Pupils have been involved in initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles through the school council. As a result, they eat and drink healthily at playtime and understand the reasons why the rules have changed. There is an enthusiastic response from children to the range of physical activities in the curriculum including the daily 'Wake and Shake'. Pupils feel safe when in and around school. They do not feel that there is bullying but are clear about where they would seek help from if they had a problem. The new thought journals are helpful in this. Pupils feel that the sad and happy benches in the quiet area are effective in ensuring that all pupils are included. Pupils' attendance at school is satisfactory. It has improved in the last year in response to a number of strategies and the attendance of non-Traveller children is good.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' positive attitudes demonstrate how much they value being part of the school's diverse

community. The house system enables younger and older pupils to mix socially and work together on a range of activities. By taking part in these and other activities, pupils show good development of skills for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A significant feature of the good teaching across the school and the Foundation Stage is the development of strong staff teamwork through the charter, which has helped to develop consistent practice. Teaching has a good pace and arouses pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning. Resources including whiteboards are used well to provide a stimulating environment in which to learn. Good relationships between adults and pupils help to boost confidence. In lessons, teachers expect pupils to behave well and work hard. Pupils respond well to these expectations and rise to challenges. The work of teaching assistants with small groups and individuals is good. They know pupils' needs well and the targeted support given to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities enables them to make good progress. Effective support enables Traveller learners to catch up when they return to school after periods away.

Improvement to the quality of teaching has had a particular focus on reading and writing in recent years. For example, in literacy, the practice of giving pupils precise targets for improving their work and sharing very specific criteria on how to improve is proving very effective. As a result, this has led to significant improvement in progress. Numeracy lessons are planned carefully and teachers share lesson objectives with pupils and involve them in evaluating their own progress. The planning does not always take sufficient account of the different starting points of pupils so it is not always clear to pupils of different ability levels and ages what they personally are expected to achieve. This has a particular impact on the most able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The balance of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The school now offers a broad curriculum which is enriched by a variety of additional activities. There is an emphasis on developing self-confidence and personal and social skills. Citizenship themes and those promoting safe and healthy lifestyles are well planned. In the Foundation Stage, those pupils with below average language and communication skills are supported effectively through role-play. Their personal needs, including recognition of cultural traditions, are supported well in play, creative work and the day-to-day attention of staff. The development of the school's library as a resource has been highly valued by pupils and has had a significant impact on improving their standards in reading. Information and communication technology resources have been improved but are not being used widely across all subjects and ages so younger pupils have fewer opportunities to practise their skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Academic guidance has improved since the last inspection. Good systems are in place to set targets and track the progress of pupils towards them across all years and subjects. Assessment and recording in the Foundation Stage helps children to make good progress and be well prepared for Year 1. Marking and other feedback is often very helpful, particularly in written assessments. It is less detailed in numeracy. Traveller learners receive good support through effective induction into Reception and other classes. This helps them to settle quickly and there is strong and productive liaison with support agencies and other schools. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and included in the school's activities. Health and safety routines ensure a safe, healthy and protective environment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides clear leadership to the school including the Foundation Stage. As a result, all staff are determined to provide an education that enables all members of the school community to progress well. The headteacher and governors have an accurate view of standards and provision which allows them to identify areas for development clearly. Data is used well to inform this view. There has been good monitoring and evaluation of the school's work in literacy over recent years. As a result, the school's leadership has taken effective action which has improved the standards and progress of pupils. Although progress in numeracy has been effectively evaluated and areas for improvement identified, there has been a less sharp focus on monitoring lessons and pupils' work. This is now being addressed in the school's planning and standards are starting to improve.

Governors know the school well. Their views and the views they seek from parents form an important part of the school's evaluation. Governors are developing strong links with subject co-ordinators to support this. Although accommodation is tight, resources are well managed in the school. Spending is well planned and directly linked to the school's improvement planning. For example, the improvements to the school library and increase in the number of teaching assistants have had a considerable impact on raising standards.

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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	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	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.

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	3
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

You may remember that we visited your school recently. Thank you for the help you gave us during the inspection.

You might like to know what we think about the school and how we think it can be made even better.

- It is a good school where you make good progress.
- Your headteacher and all other staff look after you well and make sure that you learn how to be healthy and safe.
- You behave well and care for each other very well. Older pupils look after younger ones. The happy and sad benches are good ideas to help you do this.
- You enjoy school a great deal because of the wide variety of lessons and activities that you have. You show enthusiasm for learning and like a challenge.
- Most of you are making good progress in your lessons, but some of you could achieve even more challenging targets and make better progress, particularly in numeracy. We would like the school to do more checking here to make sure that is happening.
- Many of you are good at using computers but we would like to see children of all ages using them in all subjects.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to look at our suggestions. We hope that you will help them to put them into place and make your school an even better place in which to learn.