

## Northaw Church of England Primary School

### Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117569
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	290874
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Beale

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	95
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Graham Disbrey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ray Clarke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 November 2001
<b>School address</b>	Vineyards Road Northaw Potters Bar Hertfordshire EN6 4PB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01707 652869
<b>Fax number</b>	01707 660679

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small school in which free school meal eligibility is below average. Since its last inspection the school has opened new Foundation Stage accommodation called 'The Acorns' which includes a part-time nursery. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is similar to the national average, but varies considerably between year groups. Attainment on entry varies from year to year because of the small intake but is generally at the expected levels for three-year-olds. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The inspection agrees with staff and governors that the school's effectiveness is satisfactory; it also gives satisfactory value for money. The school has successfully tackled the main weakness from the last inspection by significantly improving provision for Foundation Stage children. This is now a major strength of the school. The headteacher and his experienced team of staff provide satisfactory leadership and management. They share a commitment, based on Christian values, to help pupils to share in all that the school offers, but are not always sharply focused through accurate self-evaluation on precisely what is needed to improve pupil achievement.

Parents are rightly pleased with the new Acorns class. The children have an excellent start here and feel happy and very secure in the care of the well led staff team. Teaching focuses very closely on developing the children's learning and their personal development in a rich and exciting learning environment. The children grow quickly in confidence and are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning. However this is not consistently built on rapidly enough in Years 1 to 6. Although teaching and learning are sound in these year groups, lessons do not always have sufficient pace. Assessment information is starting to guide lesson planning, but not always sharply enough. Achievement is satisfactory and standards are close to the national average by Year 6. Concerns over the pupils' development of writing skills has led to the successful implementation of initiatives to raise standards. These are starting to take effect with improved provisional test results and boys showing more interest in their writing.

The pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory although the behaviour of a small but significant number of older pupils is not good enough. While most parents are happy with the school, several have concerns about behaviour. This is also a worry for some of the pupils. Staff and governors have identified this problem, but the initiatives introduced have had limited impact in the short time they have been in place. Pupils mostly try hard and enjoy the activities provided to extend and enrich their experiences. The good curriculum helps them to understand the choices needed to adopt a healthy lifestyle and gives them plenty of opportunity to take part in physical activity and competitive sport. The pupils take responsibilities seriously and are looking forward to helping others at playtimes as playground 'buddies' from September.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Improved assessment procedures are helping to identify where pupils might need extra help with their learning. Individual targets are starting to give pupils a picture of how to improve, but these have not been in place for long and some inconsistencies in the quality of marking means that individual pupils do not always know the specific steps they need to take to improve their work.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 by bringing greater pace to lessons.
- Make better use of assessment to tailor lessons more closely to pupils' aptitudes and to help them to understand clearly the steps to take to improve.
- Introduce more effective processes for improving behaviour and helping pupils to take greater responsibility for their actions.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The youngest children make outstanding progress in the Foundation Stage. All of the current Reception group have reached, and more than half have exceeded, the expected goals as they move on to Year 1. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6. Low pupil numbers and variations in the make-up of each cohort lead to fluctuations in standards and test results from year to year. Year 2 results were average in reading and mathematics but very low in writing in 2006. There was a considerable difference between Year 6 test results in the three core subjects in 2006. Results were very high in mathematics, average in science but below average in English. In response, improving writing has been a key priority for the school. The emerging success of this is reflected in the improved provisional results in national tests in 2007. Writing results at Year 2 and English at Year 6 have risen, but not significantly in the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

The youngest children settle very quickly into school life in the Acorns class. They work and play together happily, develop independence and take responsibility for their learning. The same cannot be said consistently of pupils across the rest of the school. A small but significant number of older pupils are sometimes inconsiderate towards others and do not take sufficient responsibility for their behaviour. They can be boisterous, do not present good role models and are not always aware that this can be upsetting for younger pupils. Most pupils enjoy school and speak with much pleasure about their clubs, trips and visits. While the majority also enjoy lessons, a significant minority do not, particularly when teaching does not engage their attention. The pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have a voice in school development through their council and show initiative when raising funds for charity. These personal qualities and average basic skills give most pupils a secure base for success in the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is outstanding in the Acorns class and develops an enjoyment for learning in the children. Lessons are exciting and varied, with resources and the accommodation used imaginatively. Lessons are not always as vibrant in the rest of the school. There are times when lessons lack sufficient drive to engage pupils and move their learning forward at a pace. This can lead to a lack of concentration on the part of pupils who need regular reminders to pay attention. The use of assessment information to plan lessons that focus on the different ages and abilities in each class has improved recently, although there is still room for further improvement. Interactive whiteboards and other new technology are used well to interest pupils and help to put over new ideas. Teachers and support staff work well as a team. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support particular pupils in lessons or to work with withdrawal groups on specific programmes.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum for the youngest children is exciting and interesting. It covers all areas of their learning. A very good balance is struck between structured activities and those initiated by the children themselves. The use of the indoor and outdoor areas is linked very creatively to promote learning. The curriculum in the rest of the school currently has a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning and personal development. Skills of information and communication technology and numeracy are developed well in many subjects. Recent initiatives to improve writing are being implemented and are starting to raise achievement. There is a good focus on developing understanding in science through enquiry and investigation. Intervention and support programmes for pupils who have fallen behind or who have learning difficulties are having a positive impact on their achievement. The enrichment of the pupils' experiences through clubs, trips and visits is a much enjoyed feature. Links with specialist providers, including secondary schools, are utilised well to bring additional expertise such as in physical education and French.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils are cared for, and supported in a community where individual pupils and their particular circumstances are well known by all staff. The school's systems for child protection, health and safety and the welfare of the pupils are secure and understood by all. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Links with other organisations are used well to support pupils with learning difficulties. Systems to track the progress of pupils are much improved. Marking has become more thorough and helpful, but does not consistently help pupils understand how to improve their work. Action to improve behaviour is being taken, but a significant number of pupils and their parents are not happy that enough is being done so that all can work and play safely.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher and staff are a thoughtful team, sharing responsibilities and working together to bring about improvements. They are supported by a group of governors who are fully committed to the school. Governors support it in many ways, but do not give the school a clear strategic direction for its development. Staff and governors generally understand where action is needed to bring about improvement, although self-evaluation is slightly generous in its view of the school's qualities in key areas. Improvement planning is thus not tightly focused on key priorities to raise levels of pupil achievement. Where necessary, the school seeks external advice to improve the performance of staff and pupils. This has been successful this year in bringing about improvements in writing. The structures in place and the recent improvements mean the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	4
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

11 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northaw Church of England Primary School, Potters Bar, EN6 4PB

I am writing to thank you very much for the welcome you gave to me when I visited your school. You were kind and helpful and showed how proud you are of your school. I enjoyed talking with you and your teachers and watching you learn.

The youngest of you have an excellent start in the 'Acorns' and seem to thoroughly enjoy your work. The rest of you make satisfactory progress during your time at school. Most of you meet, and some of you exceed, the standards expected by the time you move on to secondary school. You have an interesting range of clubs, trips and visits to help you learn. The care and support you receive help to make the school feel like one big family. You have a good understanding of the importance of diet and exercise for a healthy lifestyle. You take your responsibilities seriously and make a good contribution to the life of the school and the village.

There is one area I would like you to reflect on and think how it can be improved. The behaviour of a small number of you is not good enough and can be upsetting to others. Some of you need to learn to be more considerate of others and take greater responsibility for behaving well. I also feel teachers could push your learning forward more rapidly and help you to understand the steps you need to take to improve the standard of your work. I am sure you and your teachers will work hard to make this all happen.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead inspector