



Northgate St Andrews First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120981
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291934
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector John Messer

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

Type of school	First	School address	Northgate Street
School category	Community		Great Yarmouth
Age range of pupils	4–8		Norfolk NR30 1BP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01493856515
Number on roll (school)	264	Fax number	01493745477
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Sandra Downing
		Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Cannings
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2000		

Age group 4–8	Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006	Inspection number 291934
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This first school is of average size. It is due to be reorganised as an infant school in 2008. A large proportion of pupils come from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number are from minority ethnic families and several speak languages other than English. The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school at various times during the year is above average. Children's attainment on entry to the school varies widely but overall is below average, especially in communication, language and literacy.

The school is part of an 'Excellence Cluster' which has been set up to support schools in the area that face challenging circumstances.

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 judges its overall effectiveness as satisfactory and inspection findings agree. Within this overall picture there are significant strengths. The school has established a 'Nurture Group' with ten places for pupils who have great difficulty in coping with larger groups. This provision is outstanding and, after a period, pupils are successfully reintroduced to their classes. The school has worked hard on improving pupils' behaviour and has achieved a great deal of success. Behaviour is mostly good. Pupils' personal development is good. They are confident and self-possessed. This contributes well to the sound foundations that are laid for them to enter the next stage of schooling and prepare them for adult life. Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and stay safe. A particularly good feature of the school is the keep fit sessions at the start of each day. This short routine sharpens pupils' awareness and prepares them well for learning. The class councils and the school council support pupils' understanding of their responsibilities to the community well.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan and prepare lessons thoroughly and relationships between teachers and pupils are good. The highly skilled team of classroom assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils, especially the more able, and insufficient attention is paid to identifying weaknesses in pupils' basic writing skills, such as holding pencils properly and forming letters correctly. Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception classes but, as so many start from a low base, standards are below average by the end of the reception year. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 but standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain below average. The results of statutory assessments for pupils in Year 2 confirm that standards are below average. They also show that the number of pupils who exceed the national target of Level 2 and reach the higher Level 3 standard is below average.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and the issues raised in the last report have been successfully resolved. It has proved difficult to recruit school governors, with the result that the governing body is not functioning as well as it should. Governors monitor the work of the school well but there are sometimes too few governors to carry out all the required duties. The subject coordinators create action plans designed to raise standards but these do not always include precise, measurable targets against which to evaluate how successful new initiatives have been. Pupils enjoy school and the overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with the education provided for their children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations of the rate of progress and the standards that pupils, especially boys and the faster learners, are capable of achieving in literacy and numeracy and identify weaknesses in pupils' basic writing skills.

- Include precise, measurable targets in subject coordinators' action plans so that the success of initiatives designed to raise standards can be measured more accurately.
- Redouble efforts to recruit more governors.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The achievement of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who speak languages other than English, is satisfactory. Children settle happily in the Reception classes and make satisfactory progress. There is a strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills. The communication, language and literacy skills of a significant number of children, especially boys, are poorly developed and this impedes the progress they are able to make in reading and writing.

Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. Achievement in literacy and numeracy is not always as rapid as it should be because teachers do not always demand enough, especially of the faster learners. The results of national assessments in Year 2 confirm that standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT) have improved significantly since the last inspection, when standards were too low.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and try hard with their work. They develop as confident learners. They are well behaved. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' moral and social development is good and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to support those in need by raising money for charities. They have a good understanding of how to maintain healthy life styles. They love helping and taking on responsibilities. The school council established 'school diddy dinner helpers' where older pupils assist the younger ones. The school has identified the need to broaden pupils' cultural awareness, particularly in music.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good features. Lessons are generally well planned and, in the best ones, teachers use a range of methods and resources to help the pupils to enjoy learning. New interactive whiteboards are used well to make lessons come alive. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. In some classes teachers expect much and pupils rise to the demanding challenges set so that they all make good progress. However, teachers' expectations

of pupils' performance, especially of the faster learners, are not always high enough and so they do not achieve as well as they could. Insufficient attention is paid to training pupils in basic skills, such as correct letter formation. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities receive good support so that they make steady progress towards their individual learning targets. Those children for whom English is not the first language receive satisfactory support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. The school provides a good range of activities to help pupils learn. The provision for science and ICT has improved and ICT is used increasingly to enhance learning. The Foundation Stage curriculum offers a satisfactory range of interesting learning activities. Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' personal and social development so that they become self-assured, confident learners. There are many educational visits to support pupils' learning. A good range of visitors to school add further interest to learning. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in a sports club, an ICT club and to learn Latin. These make a good contribution to pupils' learning and enjoyment. The school has identified a few pupils who have special gifts and talents and organises activities to challenge these pupils further by providing opportunities to develop their skills in music, for example.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, support and guidance arrangements are good and give impetus to the enjoyment of learning and pupils' general well-being. The procedures for child protection and safeguarding pupils' welfare are thorough and effective. The needs of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties or disabilities are catered for well. The 'nurture group' provision is outstanding and is proving successful in reintegrating potentially wayward pupils into the classroom. Staff work hard to build trusting relationships with pupils. Pupils approach staff confidently if they need help. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school. Pupils receive good guidance. Targets for different ability groups are displayed clearly on classroom walls and teachers refer to them frequently during lessons. However, the targets for faster learners are not always sufficiently challenging. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and the best marking shows pupils exactly what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has focused strongly on improving behaviour and the quality of care provided for pupils. Initiatives have been successful and a good climate for learning has been established. The school is paying closer attention to measuring pupils' progress, so that it can identify precisely where improvements are needed in order to

raise standards. A good, clear system has been introduced that sets ambitious annual targets for each pupil and is reviewed each term to check on progress. The scheme is in its infancy and so it is too early to judge its success in raising standards. Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Curriculum coordinators have a strong commitment to raising standards in their subjects. They contribute detailed action plans that underpin the school improvement plan but these do not always include details of how improvements in standards will be measured. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve further. Governors work hard on behalf of the school and support it well, but there is a shortage of governors and sometimes there is no quorum at meetings, so that policies cannot be ratified and decisions have to be deferred. The school has tried hard to engage parents and encourage them to take a more active part in their children's learning. This has been an uphill struggle and lack of effective learning support from home impedes the amount of progress that some pupils are able to make.

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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?	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	3
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

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?	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?	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

3 November 2006

Dear Children

Northgate St Andrew's Primary School, Northgate Street, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR30 1BP

We enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for being so helpful and for telling us all about the school.

There are some particularly good things about the school. You talk sensibly about your work and you are eager to learn more about the world. We liked your self-confidence and cheerfulness. You like taking on responsibility for helping around the school. In the class and school councils you think hard about how to improve the school. All staff are very keen to help you and they work hard to make sure that you are safe and happy. The new interactive white boards are great and are helping you with your learning. We loved visiting 'Cosmic Corner', which we think is excellent. The energetic morning keep fit sessions certainly set you up for the day. You know how to stay safe and keep healthy. You told us that you enjoy school. You said there is no real bullying, just some rough games at times that get a bit out of hand. You like the teachers and don't mind them being a bit strict. You say that the work is quite hard sometimes but, "It should be a bit 'pushy' so that you can get better at doing things."

We think that there are several things that the school should do to help you to reach higher standards in your work. We think that sometimes work in literacy and numeracy is a bit too easy for some of you, especially the faster learners. We think that you should all make absolutely sure that you have good writing habits, such as holding pencils properly. The school tries lots of new things to improve your work and we think that teachers should have a clearer way of knowing exactly how much the new ideas help you. More governors are needed to help manage the school. It's quite a responsibility. Perhaps you know some people who could give some of their time to help with running the school?

We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Messer

(Lead inspector)