

Northend Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101418
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	298518
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Ann Sydney

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Pat Tullett
Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Beckley
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2006
School address	Peareswood Road Erith DA8 3PR
Telephone number	01322 332 379
Fax number	01322 330 933

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2007
Inspection number	298518

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Northend is an average sized primary school with a Nursery. It serves a community with very high levels of deprivation. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage but approximately one in ten pupils speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than average. A large number of pupils join and leave the school during the year. With a 1.33 form entry, there are a number of mixed age classes. The school has a Learning Support Unit run by Learning Mentors to help pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Northend Primary School was given a Notice to Improve in April 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Northend now provides a satisfactory quality of education with good features. Many new systems and structures have been put in place with help from the local authority and other consultants. The good teamwork of staff, and the strong leadership of the headteacher, deputy head and governors mean that the school has good capacity to sustain this improvement.

At the previous inspection one year ago, the key issues were to

- raise standards by improving the quality of teaching,
- use assessment data better to match work to pupils' needs,
- improve tracking so that underachievement could be identified, and
- develop the role of subject leaders.

The school is close to achieving these fully. The headteacher and governors have an accurate picture of the school and the priorities for improvement. Overall the quality of teaching has improved and is now satisfactory. There is now a wealth of data and the expertise to interpret it, to identify underachievement and to plan individually for pupils. This is being carried out effectively, especially in Year 6, and is leading to a rise in standards and achievement. The staff are now working very hard to make sure it is consistent throughout the rest of the school.

Standards on entry are extremely low. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress because of good teaching. There is now more emphasis on speech and language as basic building blocks of learning. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 to 6. By Year 6, standards have risen to be below average. They are rising in numeracy, because of improvements in teaching and management. Literacy and numeracy leaders have developed their strategic and monitoring roles, and are now supporting other subject leaders to do the same.

The school is a warm, caring, harmonious community where pupils' personal development and well-being are good because of the excellent pastoral care and good social, moral, spiritual and cultural curriculum. However, academic guidance is not consistent and is satisfactory. Marking is inconsistent across the school and does not always tell pupils how well they are doing or how they can improve. The curriculum has improved and is now good. Throughout the school learning has improved because pupils are more involved and teachers have a consistent approach to behaviour. The work of staff in the Learning Support Unit has led to a drop in the number of exclusions. The headteacher has made it a priority to improve relationships with parents and to involve them in their children's learning. There is a healthy take-up for the family learning classes and more parents are being involved in the school at every level. With standards on entry being so low, this is indicative of the school's vision for improving the life chances of its pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards by using the wealth of assessment data collected by the school to help all teachers to consistently plan work to match pupils' ability.
- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching, particularly marking, in order to improve achievement.
- Make improvements in the management of other subjects in the way that has been done already in English and mathematics.

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

Achievement throughout the school is now satisfactory. When they enter school, children have very low skills. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, especially with their social and language skills, due to good teaching, extra support and pastoral care. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. Nonetheless, by the end of Year 2 standards are still about a year behind the national average. Standards in writing are particularly low. Between Years 3 and 6 pupils make satisfactory progress. However, those who have been in the school since Year 3 show good progress by Year 6. Year 6 pupils exceed their challenging targets and reach standards that are below average, representing satisfactory progress overall from their starting points.

Pupils with additional difficulties and disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English progress as well as other pupils because of the clear guidance to teachers and the extra help pupils receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good because the school nurtures these areas from the time children start school. Pupils' personal and social skills improve so that from a very low starting point they become keen to learn and work co-operatively. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They learn to understand their own feelings and develop a respect for others through assemblies and lessons. Because the school places strong emphasis on good behaviour, pupils are aware of what is expected and respect sanctions. They behave well during playtimes and in lessons as a result. Pupils value their friends and enjoy what the school offers. One pupil commented, 'It makes me feel at home, as if they are all from my family.' Thanks to the school's efforts attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. Pupils play an important part in the school community through their roles of responsibility, such as involvement with the School Council. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to speak to if they have a problem. They are aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and like to share it with others. However, low standards hold back pupils' prospects for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but there is still variation in its quality. In classes where there is consistently good teaching this is bringing about a rise in standards as well as achievement. Planning in most lessons ensures that work is matched to pupils' ability but this is not always the case in some mixed-age classes or in information and communications technology (ICT) lessons. A typical lesson now starts with the learning objectives being shared so that pupils are clear about what the teacher's expectations are. Pupils enjoy lessons and listen carefully. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and check pupils' learning frequently. On occasions effective use is made of interactive white boards, as in a Year 5

mathematics lesson where a voice suddenly said 'Oh, I get it now!' Pupils co-operate and discuss their ideas with their learning partners. Teaching assistants give good support to all pupils and not just those with additional needs. Some teachers mark books very well, so that pupils are encouraged and shown the next step in their learning. However, marking does not always show how well pupils are doing against their own targets or national standards, or how they can improve. The whole school is a fresh, attractive, colourful learning environment with exciting displays of pupils' work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A broad and balanced curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to work together, allowing them to help and learn from each other. Pupils with specific needs or for whom English is an additional language are well supported. The Foundation Stage curriculum offers children purposeful and engaging activities which prepare them well for the next stage of learning. A strong focus on literacy and numeracy through the school means progress towards acquiring basic skills is improving. Pupils also enjoy a range of experiences, from music to gardening. One of the strengths of the curriculum is the creative way in which links are made across subjects. For example, younger pupils' knowledge of 'The Three Little Pigs' story was linked to a science investigation of different materials. Links between subjects and ICT are often made. Pupils' talents and interests are further extended by a good range of after school clubs and visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff expertise and external agencies are used well to support pupils with specific needs. Success is celebrated in each classroom as well as in assemblies. Clear and well structured policies nurture good behaviour, tolerance and harmony. The calm, skilled approach of staff in the Learning Support Unit has cut the number of exclusions and given valuable short-term help to enable pupils to return to class. Individual pupils can be referred for help with their work and behaviour by Learning Mentors. Regular checks are carried out to ensure pupils remain safe. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle, influencing the choices pupils make. Good arrangements exist in the Nursery and Reception classes for children starting school and strong links with secondary schools prepare older pupils for the next stage of learning. Good systems are in place to check how well pupils are doing and decide where support is most needed. However, this information is not used consistently by teachers to match work to pupils' different abilities. Targets are set in mathematics and literacy, and older pupils are aware of their own levels and are sometimes involved in judging how well they are doing for themselves.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, resulting in major improvements since the last inspection. The leadership team and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have agreed priorities for improvement. They have changed the ethos of the school, not just for the pupils but for the staff and parents. Improved support and coaching for staff have led to lower staff turnover and an improvement in the quality of teaching and

learning. Good use of data and better identification of pupils' needs have led to better targeting of support. Staff now work as a team, and ideas for improvement can come from anyone. Although there are still inconsistencies in practice, for example in the quality and experience of middle managers, weaker practice has been identified and help given. Governors are well-informed and they offer an excellent mixture of support and challenge to the headteacher. Since the previous inspection, governors have forged better links with parents and parent-governors have become more involved. This shared commitment by the whole school has already led to a rise in achievement in the past year.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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	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?	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.

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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

10 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northend Primary School, Erith, DA8 3PR

We really enjoyed being in your school, talking to you and seeing the interesting things that you are doing. Your school has improved a lot since last year and is now satisfactory because of the very hard work of the headteacher and all the adults and children in the school. You are making better progress, especially in numeracy, since last year and the school was able to show us that from their records. The school takes good care of you and you behave well. You told us you enjoy lots of things about Northend Primary including numeracy, assemblies, science investigations in class and the clubs after school. The headteacher, the teachers who manage the school and the governors are all doing a good job.

Of course, there is still more to do. We expect you to improve even more, and we think you will. To help your headteacher we would like you to try even harder in all your lessons to improve on your own personal best. We have asked your teachers to continue to look carefully at how they plan your lessons and if your work is too easy you need to tell them. You need to look carefully at what your teachers say when they mark your books so that you can improve your work next time. We have also asked your teachers to improve their marking and to check that all your subjects are taught as well as literacy and numeracy are. We noticed that your attendance has improved a little since last year but we feel you can make that extra effort to make this even better. After all, your school is a very nice place to be.

Kind regards,

Ann Sydney Lead inspector