

# Northwold Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100233
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hackney
<b>Inspection number</b>	307331
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graham Lee

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	408
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	46
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alex Shopov
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Alison Kriel (associate)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 June 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Northwold Road Clapton London E5 8RN
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8806 6352
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8806 6315

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large primary school serves an area of rich ethnic and cultural diversity. The largest minority groups are Black African, Black Caribbean and Indian. A majority of pupils speak English as an additional language and about one in three are at the early stages of learning English. Many come from disadvantaged backgrounds and the percentage entitled to free school meals is much higher than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also well above average. Most of these have literacy, speech and language or behavioural problems. The school has Early Years Foundation Provision (EYFS) for children between the ages of three and five years. The school operates an extended day with a breakfast club and after school provision run by The Hackney Learning Trust. The school has had considerable disruption to its leadership in recent times. The current associate headteacher was appointed in February 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Northwold provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. It is emerging from a period of uncertainty under the strong and purposeful leadership of the associate headteacher. She quickly identified what needed to be done and has put in place measures that are already leading to improvements. This is acknowledged by pupils, staff and many parents. Typical of the views expressed by parents was, 'The school has come a long way in the last year. This is all for the better and the future of Northwold looks good.' The whole school community is now focused on learning which is leading to better progress for pupils. Their academic achievement is now satisfactory but more needs to be done.

The school has a welcoming and nurturing atmosphere. The care and welfare of pupils and their families is at the heart of its work and the school has a close partnership with a range of outside agencies to meet their needs. For example, the school had identified the underachievement and disaffection of some Black Caribbean boys as an issue for concern. In response, the school has appointed several Black Caribbean role models to the staff and is working on a number of projects aimed at raising the achievement of this group of pupils. This work is already bearing fruit and is one of many examples of the school's good contribution to the cohesion of the local community. Warm relationships between adults and pupils are evident throughout the school. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure and generally enjoy everything the school has to offer. Most behave well in lessons and in the playground. Some pupils present challenging behaviour from time to time but these incidents are dealt with effectively by staff because of consistent procedures, which are understood by all members of the school community.

By the end of Year 6, standards are improving but below average overall. This represents satisfactory progress from pupils' below average starting points. In 2008, there was a marked improvement in pupils' attainment in mathematics because of effective strategies put in place to improve the teaching of the subject. Throughout the school, pupils' progress is accelerating because of more consistent teaching and increasingly robust systems for tracking their progress. These are being used effectively by leaders to set challenging targets for improvement and to provide extra help for pupils who are falling behind. Teachers manage their classes well and make the object of lessons clear to pupils, creating a purposeful environment for learning. Teachers set work to meet the varying needs of the pupils in their classes. Sometimes, this is not challenging enough, because not all teaching takes sufficient account of pupils' existing understanding and expectations are not always high enough. Support staff make a very important contribution to the quality of education, particularly for pupils experiencing difficulties. Consequently, these pupils make as much progress as their peers.

Pupils particularly enjoy the many opportunities they have to take part in sports activities. This aspect of the school's work has improved considerably since the last inspection and contributes to pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles. The school is undertaking a major review of the curriculum. Currently, there are not enough links between different subjects to make it as enjoyable and vibrant as it might be. The school has recently improved its provision for information and communications technology (ICT) but the subject is not yet exploited to the full to support pupils' learning in other subjects.

The headteacher, supported by her leadership team and governors have created a harmonious and dedicated team, committed to raising standards still further. The governing body is a relatively new team but are committed and enthusiastic and offer a good balance of support

and challenge to school leaders. Systems for checking on the quality of the school's work are rigorous and effective. Currently, much of this monitoring and evaluation is carried out by the headteacher, with the effective assistance of The Learning Trust and outside consultants. A number of middle managers are new to their posts. They are willing and enthusiastic but the roles of leaders at all levels in improving teaching and learning and raising achievement are underdeveloped. Much has been accomplished in a short space of time but it is too early to see the impact of some of these strategies. As many of the improvements are relatively recent and leadership is not yet sufficiently widely distributed, the school currently has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

The development of the EYFS has rightly been identified as a priority for development by the associate headteacher. Children enter the Nursery with skills and understanding well below those expected for their age and many speak little or no English. However, in recent years they have not been making sufficiently rapid progress in acquiring basic skills, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Consequently, in spite of broadly satisfactory progress, standards remain well below average by the time children enter Year 1. A new leader began work in September and has begun to transform provision. The EYFS provides a very welcoming environment and promotes children's welfare very successfully. As a result, they become confident and eager learners. Parents of children new to the Nursery are made to feel very welcome and a typical comment was, 'I feel very involved in helping my child to settle in.' The new leader has a clear focus on raising achievement and improving systems for monitoring progress. Teachers plan well for children's development in all areas of their learning and better use is being made of the rather limited outside areas. It is far too early in the year, however, to see the impact of this work on children's achievement.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise teachers' expectations by using the information they have about pupils to challenge them to achieve as well as they can.
- Develop links between subjects, including ICT, to make the curriculum more meaningful and enjoyable.
- Develop the capacity of leaders at all levels in improving teaching and learning and raising achievement.

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

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards at the end of Year 2 had been in decline for a number of years and were exceptionally low for the three years up to 2007. More focused teaching, better strategies to support pupils who were struggling and improved systems for tracking progress led to dramatic improvements in reading, writing and mathematics in 2008. These historically low standards have left a legacy of underachievement in the juniors, which is being addressed through accelerating progress. Pupils beginning the current Year 6, for example, are on track to meet challenging targets by the end of the year. At the end of Year 6, the picture has been more mixed. In 2007, standards

improved in English, mathematics and science but were below average overall. Pupils did particularly well in English although their progress from Year 2 in mathematics and science had been very slow. In 2008, there has been further slight improvement in attainment levels overall, largely because of the improvements in mathematics. Pupils' progress from Year 2 was broadly satisfactory. They are not doing as well in science and writing as they are in reading and mathematics.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including the social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects, is a strength of the school. Pupils from many different backgrounds get on well together and value the diversity of the school population. Pupils generally enjoy their learning because 'most teachers are a lot of fun.' This is not as apparent when lessons are slower and they have fewer opportunities to participate. Attendance is below average, principally because of holidays taken in term time, but the school has robust procedures in place to remind parents of their obligations in this area. Pupils take their responsibilities as school councillors and 'playground friends', for example, very seriously. They make a good contribution to the wider community and raise money for a variety of charities. Pupils feel safe in school and, whilst they recognise that not all pupils behave well all the time, they are clear that there is little bullying or racism. Whilst pupils develop good attitudes to learning, their below average basic skills means that their preparation for secondary school and the world beyond is currently satisfactory.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher's monitoring shows that teaching has become much more consistent in recent months. Most of the teaching is satisfactory with increasing examples of good practice throughout the school. Teachers plan well together and there are some very effective examples of team teaching in mathematics, where lower ability groups are taught by two teachers. In Years 3 and 6, for example, this resulted in dynamic teaching where pupils were fully engaged in the learning through a variety of activities. They enjoyed the lessons and made good progress as a result. Sometimes teachers talk for too long and do not allow pupils enough opportunities to discuss ideas and put their thoughts into words. As a result, the momentum of learning slows and some pupils become distracted. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Marking is a consistent feature of teaching and generally gives pupils a clear idea of how to improve their work. Specialist teaching in physical education and ICT is helping to improve the quality of education in these areas.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Northwold offers a good range of enrichment activities, which are greatly enjoyed by pupils. Teachers' commitment is illustrated through their work in the Saturday school where 'we do fun stuff and it helps with school work', as one pupil put it. There is also good provision for the pupils' personal development, which is helping them to become reflective learners and caring young people. The curriculum for basic skills is improving. A particular development is the better provision for pupils who are learning English and for those with a wide range of

learning difficulties, particularly in speech and language. A good range of strategies is being used to provide additional support for these pupils and for others who are in danger of falling behind. This support is reviewed regularly to prevent pupils 'slipping through the net.' The teaching of science is not as effective at the moment, principally because the skills of investigation and enquiry are not embedded in the curriculum. The development of ICT was a key issue identified at the last inspection, but progress has been relatively slow. The subject has a higher profile but more needs to be done before computer technology is used as an effective tool in all subjects. Similarly, some good links exist between subjects but these are not yet systematic enough for pupils to see how different parts of their learning fit together.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Pastoral support and guidance are good. Vulnerable pupils, in particular, are supported very effectively. Those in danger of exclusion, for example, are helped to manage their emotions through the work of learning mentors and counsellors. Pupils who are new to the school and, in many cases, to the English language are helped by an increasing number of bilingual assistants who speak a variety of languages. Academic guidance is weaker but improving. Robust systems to track every pupil's progress have been established but this work has been hampered by missing and inaccurate data. Teachers are not always confident with the data to set challenging targets for improvement. Individual target setting is very new and some pupils are unclear about their targets or have difficulties interpreting the language used.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher's high expectations and decisive leadership have driven the rapid improvements in the school, within a caring and supportive framework. For example, behaviour is much better and higher standards have been achieved by the end of Year 2 and in mathematics across the school. Governors acknowledge that a key aspect of the school's further development is the wider distribution of leadership. A good start has been made and the headteacher has recently implemented a restructuring of middle management. A very able deputy headteacher has taken on responsibility for developing teaching and learning and for coaching middle managers in the skills of monitoring and evaluating. The other experienced deputy headteacher is leading work on inclusion in a very positive way. The headteacher has an accurate and realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is putting in place effective measures to secure improvements where they are needed. School leaders are rightly concerned not to tackle too many things at once and, in consequence, it is too early to assess the impact of some of its plans. The headteacher and governing body inherited a large surplus, which has now been allocated to improving the environment and the quality of resources. For example, provision for ICT has improved significantly but it is too early to assess the impact of this investment on the pupils' achievement and the quality of education.





## Annex A

## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

06 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northwold Primary School, London, E5 8RN

You may remember that I visited your school earlier this week with two other inspectors. I am writing to thank you for being so polite and friendly. You helped us a lot and we really enjoyed our two days at Northwold. I thought you would like to know what we found out.

Your school has been through some difficult times because of a lot of changes in leadership recently. Now under the very good leadership of your new headteacher it is improving quickly, and gives you a satisfactory education. There are a number of good things about your school.

Most of you told us that you enjoy school and particularly like the many sports activities you have to do. These are helping you to stay fit and healthy. Most of you try hard in lessons and we were impressed with your politeness and behaviour. Well done! You told us that you feel safe and there is little bullying or racism.

Most of you are doing better with your work because of the changes that have been made. You tell us that you like your teachers and they are working hard to help you to do even better. By the time you leave, you are reaching higher standards, which will help when you get to secondary school. There is still more to do though.

Your headteacher, other staff and governors are determined to make things even better for you. We have asked them to do a few things that we think might help.

- We want the teachers to expect more of you in some lessons and to give you work that really makes you think.
- The school is planning to make lessons even more interesting. We have asked teachers to make more links between subjects to help make learning more exciting. We have also asked them to make even better use of the new ICT facilities to help you.
- Finally, we want all the teachers who are in charge of different things in the school to help the headteacher to check that the teaching gets even better and helps you to improve even more.

Yours sincerely

Graham Lee

Lead Inspector