

Norbury School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102222
Local Authority	Harrow
Inspection number	307940
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Nicola Davies

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	3–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	490
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Helena Tucker
Headteacher	Ms Julia Drozdowskij
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2004
School address	Welldon Crescent Harrow HA1 1QQ
Telephone number	020 8863 8769
Fax number	020 8861 5235

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a two form entry, multilingual and multiethnic school, with a Foundation Stage educating pupils up to Year 7. Pupils come from a very wide range of ethnic heritages, the larger groups being Afghani, Indian, Somali and Sri Lankan Tamil. Around 70% of pupils are bilingual and 40% are at early stages of learning English when they join the school, often from overseas. The number of pupils who join and leave the school other than at normal times is very high, including a significant group of pupils from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds. Nearly half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. A significant proportion of these have emotional, behavioural and social difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Norbury School provides a good education for its pupils. Staff are proud to educate 'the world in a school' and are determined that they should offer their pupils the highest possible quality of environment, teaching and care. They are united in their commitment to bringing out the best in their pupils and work together well to create the happy and harmonious atmosphere in which children from all backgrounds thrive. As a result, pupils, parents and the wider community have great confidence in the school, its staff and its work and, quite rightfully, hold it in high esteem. As one parent wrote, 'The school has an excellent ethos and a warm and caring atmosphere alongside a positive and encouraging attitude towards good performance'.

Overall, pupils make good academic progress to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6 and this continues in Year 7. This good progress is due to the good teaching pupils receive, the wonderfully exciting curriculum and the excellent care and support. Alongside this good academic progress, all pupils make outstanding gains in their personal development. Those with difficulties managing their emotions and behaviour make excellent progress. This is the result of the unflinching support of staff, the excellent liaison with specialists and the exciting but purposeful atmosphere of the school. By the time they leave school, pupils are confident of their individual abilities, skills and talents and have a very clear sense of their responsibilities to themselves and to others.

This well led and managed school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and shares these openly and directly. However, it does not yet make good use of regular monitoring to make sure that its plans are being consistently implemented in all classrooms nor to share some of the excellent practice that exists. This results in variability. For example, the school has recognised that standards and progress in mathematics are not as high as they could be for older pupils whilst younger pupils make good progress in the subject.

The school's strengths and popularity are a reflection of the passionate and persuasive leadership of the outstanding headteacher. She has enriched the environment for pupils, developed an excellent range of partnerships, promoted areas of real innovation and expertise and continued to enhance systems for the care, guidance and support of pupils. The school's many successes, combined with the overall strengths of the education it provides, amply demonstrate its good capacity to go from strength to strength.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school's outstanding links with parents help children to settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes. Many children join the Foundation Stage with little experience of English and overall children's skills are well below those normally expected for their age. Staff rightly focus on developing children's language, mathematical, personal and social skills. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage, children have made good progress to achieve in line with national expectations in nearly all areas. Although they are not yet reaching national expectations in reading and some aspects of mathematics, these areas are improving as a result of the school's recent work.

Staff plan a good balance of activities led by the adults and those chosen by children themselves. These provide valuable opportunities to help children become more independent. A wide range of stimulating activities is a feature of all classrooms but opportunities are missed to extend

their learning in the accessible outdoor areas. The school has rightly planned to enhance the outdoor facilities and extend the outdoor curriculum before the beginning of the next academic year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning through closer monitoring and evaluation.
- Improve standards and progress in mathematics for older pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well overall, given their below average starting points. In the 2007 national tests at the end of Year 6, most pupils attained at expected levels; around a third of pupils exceeded these. Staff have worked successfully over the past two years to develop speaking, listening and writing. The result of this can be seen in the steady improvements being made to pupils' attainment in English. Within the picture of average standards, mathematics is a weaker area, particularly for older pupils and standards are a little below average. Staff are now rightly focussing on mathematics and pupils in Year 7 have already made impressive gains in their learning in the subject this year.

Pupils achieve well irrespective of ethnicity, language, ability and gender or the length of time they attend the school. For example, pupils who join the school at early stages of learning English are helped to make rapid progress and achieve as well as their peers. Pupils who need extra support with learning to read and write also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

As pupils explained with characteristic pride and maturity, 'It is fun to come to school. It helps us to become mature adults and makes us global citizens'. Pupils' outstanding enjoyment of school is not fully reflected in their attendance as, each year, a number are absent because of very difficult family circumstances. These pupils are well supported through homework and attendance is good overall. Relationships between adults and pupils are mutually respectful and pupils know that they can talk to adults if they have any concerns. Pupils feel exceptionally safe in the school and have many opportunities to discuss the consequences of bullying. Behaviour is outstanding. Friendships across ethnic, gender and cultural groups are very strong and pupils work amicably in lessons and play harmoniously during break times.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have many opportunities to learn about working with those who are different from themselves as was seen in an excellent spiritually uplifting assembly. Pupils' understanding of global issues is excellent and is enhanced through their links with pupils in Uganda. 'Team Norbury' is influential in making things better for pupils. They are proud of the farm they have helped to create, are keen to look after their chickens and diligently weed and water their crops. Such activities also help pupils develop their good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Their commitment to healthy eating is an area the school plans to develop further. Pupils' excellent personal development, strong information and communication technology (ICT) skills and effective links with the business community equip them very well for the next steps in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils progress well because of the good teaching they receive. Pupils enjoy their learning and work collaboratively with peers. Teachers use ICT creatively and make strong links between subjects to reinforce and promote learning. For example, scientific knowledge was used to make hypotheses on the weight of food in a mathematics lesson. Teachers promote new vocabulary very well and provide a range of good opportunities for pupil discussions. Consequently, pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed across the school. Support from teaching assistants is of a high quality and contributes to pupils' good progress. Teacher's planning is good and matches work to pupil's ability. However, in some lessons the level of challenge and pace are not as high and this slows learning. Assessment is increasingly used to help teachers plan pupils' next steps although marking does not always tell pupils how to improve. The school is working to ensure that the sharing of targets and the quality of marking is consistent so that pupils always know what they have to do next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's commitment to, and celebration of, its diverse community is reflected in the stimulating, inspiring curriculum. Bringing the real world into the classroom is one of the school's great strengths and can be seen, for example, in their work on improving the local environment. These activities enthuse pupils and enhance their understanding of the wider world.

Links between subjects are made wherever possible to develop new skills whilst consolidating and extending pupils' knowledge of basic skills. This is particularly evident in the high level of speaking and listening across the curriculum and is very helpful in ensuring that pupils who are unfamiliar with English when join the school quickly become bilingual.

Pupils use ICT very effectively in their studies. For example, younger pupils make good use of the school's video equipment to record their thoughts and observations whilst older pupils make full use of an online area to discuss and plan their work. Similarly, art and music are strengths of the school and the school orchestra enhances all pupils' awareness of musical traditions. The excellent range of clubs support their ambitions for the future and add to their enjoyment of school. The quality of pupils' work in home-learning books is excellent. Home and family learning and stimulating extra curricular activities have a strong impact on the learning which goes on in school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

A parent who reflected the views of many others remarked, 'The care of the children is outstanding'. The inspection findings echo this. Staff know the pupils very well as individuals and do all they can to help them thrive. The result, as another parent commented, is that, 'Children enjoy this school so much, and they feel so comfortable that they learn so well'. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and all aspects of health and safety are very thorough. Risk assessments are rigorous and pupils feel very secure in the school. The school's systems for tracking individual pupils' progress in English and mathematics are used effectively to provide extra support and guidance to further raise standards. This has a good impact on pupils,

including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils who have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties make outstanding progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The relatively new team of senior managers work well together and share high expectations of themselves and others. Targets set for pupils reflect these high expectations. Managers and other teachers with specific areas of expertise are not always fully involved in monitoring and evaluation. This means that the impact of their initiatives and hard work is not yet consistent.

Staff, governors, pupils and parents are involved well in the work of the school and the contribution of each is valued and promoted. For example, the much improved environment at the school reflects: the commitment of the headteacher to securing a first class environment for pupils; the good financial management of governors; the hard work of caretaking staff; and the concern and pride which teachers, pupils and parents have in the school's surroundings.

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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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	1
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 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

02 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Norbury School, Harrow, HA1 1QQ

Thank you for helping us to get to know your school. You spoke with such enthusiasm about all the exciting things at school we are not surprised that you have had so many important visitors lately. Nor that you have impressed them so much that they have told their friends to visit you! The school helps you work hard, develops your talents in so many areas and you mature exceptionally well. These are some of the reasons we have judged that your behaviour and personal development are outstanding. Well done to all of you!

Like you and your teachers, your parents are also very enthusiastic about your school. They appreciate how hard all the adults at the school work to make sure you are safe, happy and love learning. You make good progress in your studies whatever your strengths, challenges or backgrounds. This is in part due to all the different and exciting opportunities you have to learn - in lessons, through home learning, and through all the clubs and extra activities the school arranges for you.

Norbury is a good school and everyone wants it to carry on getting better and better. Your teachers talk about what they want to improve next very clearly. We have asked them to keep checking up on changes they make so they can see where these are working well and where they might need a bit more work. We have also asked them to keep on working to help you do really well in mathematics as you get older.

Thank you again for your help during our visit. Please pass on our thanks to your parents and all the staff at the school for their time and help too. Like you, we really enjoyed our time at Norbury, learnt a lot and had fun at the same time!

Yours sincerely

Nicola Davies

Lead Inspector