

# Northleach Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115641
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312010
<b>Inspection date</b>	7 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Kerly

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	152
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sheila Wills
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deb Harris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	Mill End Northleach Cheltenham GL54 3HJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01451 860274
<b>Fax number</b>	01451 860711

---

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection date</b>	7 May 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	312010

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 one Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues. • The achievement of pupils and the current progress made by pupils of all abilities following a decline in standards last year. • How the information gained from checks on the school's performance is used to improve the quality of provision. • Evidence of outstanding elements in pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support they receive. Evidence was gathered from observations around the school, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, and analyses of the school's working documents and the questionnaires completed by parents. Other aspects of the school were not inspected in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Although this school is smaller than average, numbers are rising and it recently moved from five to six classes. A substantial building programme, completed earlier this school year, provides a new hall and remodelled administrative and playground areas. Further building work has just begun for pre-school provision. Almost all pupils are White British. The attainment of children on entry fluctuates from year to year. This year it is broadly as expected for their age but most years it is above national expectations. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This good school serves its community well. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding with a number of exceptional features. Following a dip in standards in national tests last year, standards of pupils' work are once again substantially above average and pupils are making good progress. Parents are exceptionally positive about the school, with unanimous approval of almost all it does. One reflected the feelings of many others by writing, 'I am very, very happy with my child's education.' Another commented, 'The school instils a strong sense of community in the children, looking after and out for one another and building upon their individual strengths.' The school has good systems for checking its performance and an accurate view of areas for development. It responded robustly to introduce improved practices following the dip in standards last year. The school has improved considerably since the last inspection and, with the effective leadership provided by the headteacher, is well placed to improve further.

Pupils achieve well. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their first year in school although limited outdoor facilities constrain the range of activities and children's opportunities to make free choices. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. A period of consolidation in Years 3 and 4 is followed by a marked acceleration in progress in Years 5 and 6. Many pupils in Year 2 are on track to exceed their targets, especially in reading and mathematics. Year 6 pupils are also on track to reach or exceed their challenging targets, with a high standard of work in English and well above average standards in mathematics. The standards of work by pupils in Year 6 who find learning difficult are broadly average, reflecting the good progress they make, especially in reading and writing.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Assemblies in the new hall promote spiritual development very effectively and include high quality singing and music. Pupils' behaviour is excellent as is their understanding of fairness and right and wrong. Their attendance is good. Pupils clearly love being at school and struggle to think of ways it could be improved. They are justly very proud of the numerous ways in which they help run the school, signing up with enthusiasm for duties, such as manning the office. They describe serving as school captains and councillors or running charity collection events such as the pyjama day as 'a privilege'. Pupils are particularly thoughtful about one another and the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. Examples of this can be seen in the way they nominate peers for the weekly 'Freckles award' and by older pupils' exceptionally sensitive poetry related to Remembrance Day.

Procedures designed to safeguard pupils are implemented rigorously. Pupils feel very safe in school and are fully confident about approaching a member of staff if they have a problem. They show a very strong commitment to developing healthy lifestyles, and appreciate the 'huff 'n puff' initiative, along with the improved school dinners from the new school kitchen. Two national awards, Activemark and Healthy Schools, recognise the school's excellent work in these aspects. Good levels of study skills, including the use of computers, help prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education and adult life.

Teaching and learning have some strong elements but also a few inconsistencies. Teachers develop very effective relationships with pupils and establish a purposeful working atmosphere in lessons. They plan a wide range of stimulating activities within a broad and well balanced curriculum, which inspire and motivate the pupils to want to learn. A Leading Aspect award for the school's excellent work in external visits and an International Award recognise significant

strengths within the curriculum. Both awards reflect the quality of experiences, such as a residential visit to the urban area of Liverpool, described as 'phenomenal' by one pupil, numerous day visits and regular links with Africa, all of which strengthen pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. Teachers ensure pupils are clear about the intentions of the lesson, and in most classrooms, a good selection of prompts, key vocabulary and guidance related to concepts supports learning.

Teachers make good use of the much improved assessment information to plan work for pupils of different abilities, helping to promote good learning by all. In many lessons, expectations are high, and the most able are suitably challenged. However, occasionally, for example towards the end of lessons when reviewing work, the pace slows. At these times, not all pupils remain engaged and some are not fully extended. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully, celebrating successes and frequently explaining how they can improve, which helps pupils' learning.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good, with exceptional levels of care and support for vulnerable pupils and those with problems. Although mainly good, particularly for pupils in Years 5 and 6, academic guidance is less well developed in the middle years, with some pupils unclear about their short-term targets or the next steps in their learning and how to improve.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and constantly works to improve it. This is a major feature of the good leadership and management. Her commitment to meet the needs of all individuals is obvious. One parent wrote of the 'exemplary support' for her child who has special educational needs. The headteacher successfully encourages other members of staff to carry out roles, such as leading developments in a particular subject, which they do well, but none has formal leadership responsibilities. This results in an unusually heavy reliance on the headteacher. Governors are aware of this. They fulfil their roles well, and are fully involved in the key decision-making processes. They have strengthened their procedures for being informed about the work of the school. Since the dip in standards, the school has introduced much better systems for tracking pupils' progress and this has enabled earlier intervention where needed. Teachers are increasingly involved in analysing assessment information and the school uses this well to set challenging yet realistic targets, which are helping to raise standards. There is careful monitoring of provision in the classrooms and helpful discussion thereafter. However, sometimes the findings are not formally recorded and feedback is not sufficiently clear or direct, reducing its impact on minimising inconsistencies or weaknesses in practice.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children quickly settle into school following a sensitive induction programme. Children of all abilities make good progress in a stimulating indoor environment. Last year, as in most years, almost all had reached the learning goals expected for their age by the end of the year, and a larger proportion than average exceeded them in all areas of learning. Children this year are also progressing well, but from a lower starting point, and standards are closer to the national average. The teacher and her assistants plan a balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities and carefully assess their progress. Despite direct access to the outside, insufficient use is made of this area as it lacks resources. This restricts the opportunities for children to learn through independent play. Long-standing plans to develop the outdoor area, having been partially delayed, now form part of a new building project with a view to improving provision by the beginning of the next school year.

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

- Provide teachers with clearer guidance on the areas they need to improve to raise the quality of teaching further.
- Allocate formal leadership responsibilities to more staff to support the headteacher.
- Improve the outdoor provision in the Foundation Stage to provide children with a wider range of experiences and more opportunities to play independently.

**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](http://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?	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?	2
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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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	1
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	2

### 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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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>	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 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

9 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Northleach Church of England Primary School, Northleach GL54 3HJ

Thank you for the way you all made me feel very welcome when I visited your school. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to some of you, including some school captains and councillors, visiting your classrooms and seeing some of your work. I was particularly impressed by the way you all behave and how keen so many of you are to contribute to the running of the school. It has won lots of awards and you were right to tell me that Northleach is a good school. Here are some more of the highlights I found during my visit.

- You are all extremely thoughtful and caring towards one another.
- You enjoy school very much, and seem to have a lot of fun; you are very lucky to be able to go on so many really interesting visits, such as to The Wilderness, Liverpool, and Bristol Zoo.
- Teachers plan interesting things for you to do in class; you work hard in lessons and make good progress.
- Everyone who works in the school takes good care of you and makes sure you are safe; there is always someone on hand to help you if you have a problem.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are always thinking of ways to make the school even better.
- The new hall is a great place for assemblies and school performances and I know you have some interesting ideas for markings on the new playground.
- Your parents are very pleased indeed that you go to this school.
- I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on three things to make the school even better.
- Make sure teachers are clearer about things they could do in their classrooms to make lessons even better than they are now.
- Think of more ways for the staff to share the main responsibilities for leading the school.
- Develop the area outside Class 1 so the reception children have more things they can do and more opportunities to play independently.

I know you will want to help the headteacher and may well have your own ideas about how to improve the school further. Good luck for the rest of this summer term.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly Lead inspector