

# Northfold Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119290
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313243
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ruth James HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	178
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Brian Eden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Alison Wilson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 April 2005
<b>School address</b>	Ringway Thornton-Cleveleys Lancashire FY5 2NL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01253 854193
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving a mixed community to the north of Blackpool. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is above average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin and none has a first language other than English. About an average percentage of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but there are more with statements of special educational need. Compared with other primary schools, more pupils join the school at a later stage than Reception. The school has the Basic Skills Quality mark, Investors in People Award, the Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Northfold is a good school with some outstanding features. It benefits from the strong support and respect of parents and pupils. One parent commented, 'this is a school where pupils come first' and 'its friendly atmosphere promotes learning and good behaviour'. Inspectors agree. The attractive indoor and outdoor learning environment has created a climate in which effective learning can take place. The care, guidance and support provided are outstanding and these successfully foster pupils' excellent personal development. Attendance, which was already above average, has improved further this year and is now outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They understand how to lead healthy lifestyles, making good use of the outdoor facilities at lunchtime, and the many sports opportunities. In lessons pupils display very good attitudes to learning, being attentive and hard working. The headteacher's very capable leadership fosters a sense of responsibility at all levels. Pupils develop into mature, responsible young people, confident about entering the next stage of their education.

Pupils leave the school with standards that are broadly average overall. They do better in mathematics than in English. Given their starting points this represents good achievement. This good progress is because teaching and learning are consistently good. Teachers know their pupils very well and plan interesting lessons with a good range of activities. Class management is highly effective creating a learning environment where no time is wasted. Work is set at different levels but occasionally more able pupils could achieve even more. There is scope to refine planning further, for example by clarifying objectives and expected outcomes for different groups of pupils.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Opportunities for music have been enhanced and themed weeks such as creative weeks enrich learning experiences along with trips, visits and visitors. Extra curricular provision is very good with lots of different opportunities for different ages and very good participation.

Team spirit is strong amongst all staff. The learning mentor plays an important role and has improved the support of children with additional learning needs. Teaching assistants provide valuable support in lessons. The school self evaluation is largely accurate in its judgements and the development plan focuses on appropriate priorities. Subject leaders are clear about their roles and a whole school approach to improvement is ensuring initiatives are effectively implemented by all staff under the headteacher's clear, enthusiastic leadership. Governors are supportive and closely involved in the life of the school. Capacity to improve further is good.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with average to below average skills and knowledge for their age. A number of children have speech and communication difficulties. Children make good progress as a result of well structured activities, caring relationships and good quality provision for their care and education. Thorough induction arrangements and a seamless transition to Year 1 ensure most children move into Key Stage 1 having reached the nationally expected standards. Children's physical development is a strength. The outside area is used well to complement children's learning and development. Children develop early reading, writing, numeracy and ICT skills. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is developed through a range of relevant first hand experiences. The classroom environment supports learning and celebrates

achievement. Children develop their self-esteem and confidence and learn to be creative and independent. They work and play well together. Early identification of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and effective liaison with parents, carers and a range of specialist agencies ensure their needs are met. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed by a team who are constantly seeking ways to improve provision further. Assessment is detailed and used well to monitor children's development and achievement.

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

- Continue the drive to raise standards, especially in English at Key Stage 2.
- Refine and develop the planning of teaching and learning so that the quality of lessons improves even further.
- Further increase the degree of challenge for the most able children so that their progress in all lessons matches that in the best.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are broadly average and overall achievement is good. Pupils enter Reception with skills and knowledge that are average to below the average expected for their age. In 2007, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was above average in mathematics, average in reading but below average in writing. Standards at Key Stage 2 have varied over the last three years and are now broadly average. In 2007 the proportion of eleven-year-olds achieving Level 4, the standard expected for their age, was below the national average in English but above the national average in mathematics. In science, more than half the pupils gained the higher level 5.

Progress made by pupils has varied over the last three years but is currently good. At both Key Stages progress is better in science than it is in mathematics and in English. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are currently making good progress. Underachievement is identified and steps are taken to address it through the use of appropriate intervention strategies and focused initiatives such as the boys' writing project. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress. Most pupils are currently on track to meet their targets in 2008.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Student's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Excellent relationships, high expectations and shared common values about respect, equality and fair play contribute well to pupils' personal development and well being. Pupils are very polite and friendly, and readily offer to help each other without prompting. They value being members of this happy school, where adults help them to learn, and they can make friends with others. They feel very confident that their views are taken into account. Pupils are actively involved in school decision making and a number of them undertake leadership activities within the school, for example as buddies or as members of the highly valued school council.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural development are good. The school places a strong emphasis on the social development of pupils and promotes opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas and work together. In a Key Stage 2 assembly based on the theme of 'generosity' pupils learned to understand the benefits gained from giving to others and reflected upon the way such actions

made people feel. There is a strong cultural dimension to the life of the school and through this pupils learn to understand the diverseness of society. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils respond well to the range of reward systems in place. The school has a safe and calm atmosphere. Pupils feel very secure and understand how to deal with the rare instances of bullying or raise other concerns. Attendance is excellent. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and lunch-boxes and meal choices show good awareness of healthy options. Pupils are actively involved in charitable and community activities inside and outside school and develop the personal skills and qualities required for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good, and as a result pupils make good overall progress. The vast majority of lessons observed by inspectors were good, and none were less than satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge of the pupils ensures their diverse needs are effectively met. Explanations are clear, and lessons are interesting with a good range of activities. Teachers set work at different levels for pupils of different abilities. Relationships are very good. Older pupils especially are encouraged to think and to make decisions for themselves. For example, during inspection, one class was planning the manufacture, packaging and advertising of a bread product as part of the school's creative week. Class management is highly effective with teachers alert to even minor inattention. This helps foster the very good attitudes to learning displayed by pupils, which means all time is used productively for learning. Occasionally, more able pupils could be challenged to achieve even more rather than waiting for others to catch up, or while the teacher goes over something they have already grasped. Teachers' planning does not always make clear the lesson objectives or expected outcomes for different groups of pupils, which sometimes has an adverse impact on higher attainers.

Support for pupils with learning and/or behavioural difficulties is good and teaching assistants make a valuable contribution. Assessment is thorough and progress is tracked effectively. Pupils' work is in the main well presented. The marking of work is good overall, giving both praise and guidance about how to improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and meets all needs well. It is broad and balanced and there is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Recent developments include a focus on creative opportunities such as music and drama. Themed weeks, such as the creative week during the inspection, allow pupils to explore and develop imaginative ideas which bring lessons to life. ICT is used in many lessons to aid learning and understanding. Some opportunities to develop writing skills through other subjects are missed.

The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils of different ages which broaden their learning experiences. Trips, visits and visitors are all used well to enrich classroom learning. Links with other local schools are used effectively. For example, during the inspection one class spent a day in a local high school at a musical event which was greatly enjoyed.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils say staff are approachable, caring and friendly. Pupils are extremely well cared for and encouraged to be healthy and keep safe. Safeguarding, child protection, health and safety and risk assessment systems exist and are well managed. Effective liaison takes place with a number of external agencies involved in supporting pupils with a range of complex needs. The school actively promotes inclusion and equality. Vulnerable pupils are identified and are well supported through appropriate intervention programmes. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very effectively managed. The long established support systems for pupil welfare have been enhanced to provide a greater focus on improving standards and the provision of effective academic guidance. For example, a learning mentor works with pupils to remove barriers to learning. Pupils know their current assessment levels and the targets they are working towards. The school works very well with parents and carers to make them feel welcome and involve them in their child's education. Effective programmes for induction into Reception and transfer from Year 6 to high school are in place. The above average number of children who join the school at other than the usual time are very well supported. Provision of a friend in their class, careful monitoring and effective communication with parents, carers and support staff ensure that they settle in quickly.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is a capable leader who knows the school very well and has high aspirations for its success. She is well supported by her senior team. Every child matters and the school successfully strives to meet every need. Day-to-day management is highly effective and ensures a calm atmosphere prevails at all times. Teachers form a committed and hard working team who work together with enthusiastic support staff to provide good education and support. Subject leaders are clearly focused on raising achievement.

The school's evaluation of its own strengths and weaknesses is accurate and the development plan sets out a clear agenda for future improvement. The implementation of a whole school approach to assessment, tracking and progress is a significant factor in ensuring pupils make good progress. Improvements since the last inspection include outdoor facilities and developments in science which have led to improvements in achievement.

Governance is good. Governors are supportive and well informed. They monitor the performance of the school carefully. They have deployed the substantial reserves to maintain single year group classes this year. This means spending per pupil is relatively high and value for money satisfactory.

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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?	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	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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	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?	1

<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	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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northfold Community Primary School, Lancashire, FY5 2NL

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, and to the staff. We looked at questionnaires sent in by your parents. Almost all of them are very happy with the school. You attend a good school with some outstanding features. The school cares for you and supports you extremely well. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour. You were very polite, thoughtful and well mannered. Your excellent attendance shows how much you enjoy school and it was a pleasure to join you for some lessons. You pay attention and work hard.

The school's results are about average and you make good progress at school. This is because of the good teaching you receive. Teachers provide you with interesting activities and explain things well. They use the interactive whiteboards well to help you understand in some lessons. Those of you who have difficulties do well because of the care and support of teachers, teaching assistants and the learning mentor.

The school offers a wide range of clubs and gives you lots of opportunities to do different things. We were pleased to see you making good use of the outdoor facilities and eating healthy options at lunchtime. During the inspection some of you were enjoying the opportunity to use your creative talents in making a special bread, designing the packaging and advertising for it. Others enjoyed their day out at a local high school.

English results were not quite as good as usual in 2007 and we have asked the school to make sure you have all the help you need to do as well in English as you do in other subjects. We have asked the headteacher and staff to see if there are ways of making lessons even better by making sure that when you have grasped something you are given more tasks to challenge you. These things should help you do even better in the future.

We hope you continue to work hard, do your best and continue to show such high levels of care for each other and impeccable behaviour.

We wish you every success for your future!

Yours sincerely

Ruth James HMI