

Northfield Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132770
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	316012
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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	274
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Woodcock
Headteacher	Ms Julia Jenkins
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2003
School address	Cox's Lane Mansfield Woodhouse Mansfield Nottinghamshire NG19 8PG
Telephone number	01623 625589
Fax number	01623 650700

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school serving an area of Mansfield Woodhouse, near Mansfield. The number of pupils entitled to claim free school meals is similar to that found nationally though indicators suggest that the school's catchment may contain an area of social and economic deprivation. Most pupils are White British and none are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with a learning difficulty and/or a disability is similar to that in most schools. There are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school where there are clear signs of improvement since the last inspection and aspects of its work that are good. School leaders recognise there are areas where more development is needed. Everyone is sharply focused on achieving their stated mission 'to develop children mentally, spiritually and physically in preparation for the experiences, opportunities and responsibilities of life.' Rapid improvements have been made in the Foundation Stage where provision and the progress children make is good.

The school provides satisfactory care and guidance for pupils but meets their pastoral needs particularly well. Consequently, their personal development, including their behaviour, is good. They make safe and healthy lifestyle choices and contribute well to the life of the school by taking on roles that benefit others. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Rigorous systems check how well pupils are doing but pupils are not always clear enough about how to achieve the next steps in their learning. Evidence in school confirms standards are currently below average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 2 and 6 but this represents satisfactory progress for these pupils by the time they leave the school. Evidence also confirms that standards are beginning to rise and pupil progress is quickening in some areas. Pupils with specific learning needs are supported suitably to make similar progress to their peers.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It promotes good personal development and offers good enrichment. A new model is being introduced. Conversations with pupils about their work suggest they are excited by this new approach. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some good lessons were seen which challenged all pupils whatever their ability, and these resulted in good progress. Where this is not the case, learning slows and progress is only satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders make a strong contribution to school improvement. Because of their work, self-evaluation is accurate and focussed actions for improvement have led for example, to underachievement being tackled and increasingly challenging targets being set and met. Leadership is shared, though the roles of curriculum leaders are evolving as the new curriculum is introduced and some have yet to play their full role in ensuring that all pupils do as well as they can in all subjects. However, the commitment to further improvement, and the developments made since the last inspection, shows a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly into the lively Foundation Unit where adults use their good understanding of how children learn to plan enjoyable activities that engage them. Topic themes give children opportunities to practise what they have learnt in different ways. There is a good balance of teacher led and meaningful child-initiated activities with good use being made of the pleasant outside area to extend all areas of learning. Good teaching ensures good academic progress and for the first time, children are on target to achieve the levels expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Teachers have been particularly successful in accelerating the progress children make in developing their language skills. Leaders are not complacent and are looking forward to further developing the rigour of systems to monitor how well children are doing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring the best features seen, become quickly and consistently embedded across the school so that all groups of learners make the same good progress.
- Ensure that all pupils are clear about the next steps of their learning; how to achieve them and how to evaluate their own success.
- Establish clear arrangements for the leadership and management of the new curriculum model so that its impact on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in all subjects can be effectively measured.

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

Children enter with levels of knowledge and skills below those expected with aspects of their literacy and numeracy being particularly low. Until this year, they have remained low on entry to Year 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been below average showing that pupils have made satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. Evidence in school confirms that progress is quickening, particularly in reading and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, standards have been below average in English and science and maintained close to national average in mathematics in recent years. Pupils are on target to achieve standards closer to national in English, mathematics and science this year, still representing satisfactory progress overall for these pupils from Years 3 to 6. This masks a variation in progress between years and subjects. Progress has been slower in Years 3 and 4 and quickened considerably in the last years of the school, where it is good and sometimes better. Boys have not done as well as their peers and pupils that are more able have not been challenged to do their best. The school is beginning to close these gaps. Pupils who find their learning more difficult are supported suitably to make similar progress to their peers. School leaders recognise that there is more to be done to ensure that all pupils make the same good progress in all subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy school and are engaged well by their work. They are motivated to learn, work hard and collaborate effectively with each other in lessons. Attendance is good and pupils strive not to miss a day to achieve their class target. Pupils willingly respond to the school's high expectations and adhere to the rules. As a result, their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Bullying is rare and pupils act responsibly, keeping themselves and others safe. These positive attitudes include showing respect and concern for each other, as exemplified by pupils who are peer mediators helping to resolve any problems between pupils. Pupils contribute well here and in many other valuable ways, including raising money for good causes. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy; they tuck in to healthy school lunches and enjoy being physically active. Pupils' good personal development adds significantly to their otherwise sound preparation for future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers promote positive relationships and good attitudes so that pupils behave well and work hard. Teachers plan conscientiously, structure lessons well and place a good focus on collaborative working which successfully promotes pupils' personal development. Some good and lively teaching was seen which challenged pupils, whatever their abilities, so that learning proceeded at a good pace. Practical and problem solving tasks supplemented by skilful questioning engaged pupils, helped them to explore their ideas and make thoughtful contributions. This good practice is not consistently applied throughout school. Occasionally teachers talk for too long, are not as confident in their subject knowledge and do not challenge pupils of all abilities to do as well as they can. As a result the pace of learning slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is very new, having recently been revised to be more creative and build more effectively on pupils' skills. Themed topics, often supported by information and communication technology, go beyond the basic subjects are reinforcing pupils' skills and enlivening learning. Pupils are beginning to be imaginatively involved in curriculum development, for example, through 'The Hidden Talent Team', which gives boys a real voice. The new curriculum has yet to be further developed and embedded across school and its impact measured. There is much enrichment through visitors and trips to places of interest, including a residential visit. A range of creative arts and sporting opportunities within and beyond the curriculum add to the quality of learning. Strong partnerships with other schools and agencies bring additional experiences and resources. A programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education is successful in promoting good personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff get to know pupils well and the positive relationships promoted throughout the school provide pupils with the care and reassurance to build their confidence and self-esteem. Good attention is paid to removing barriers to learning, for example through individual or group play therapy or bereavement counselling. Pupils' views are valued by the school and their positive attitudes are encouraged with rewards and incentives. The school has well established procedures for promoting good attendance and high expectations have made considerable inroads into improving this. Strengthening partnership with parents has helped reduce absences and is also having a positive impact on pupils adopting a healthy lifestyle. The procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust, ensuring they are protected and stay safe. Senior leaders have a secure process for assessing pupils, checking on their progress and setting and revising targets in English and mathematics. Though many pupils have an awareness of these, not all are confident about how to achieve them or how to measure their own success.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, supported by other senior leaders, has set a clear strategic direction for school improvement. Systems for checking how well pupils are progressing have ensured that increasingly challenging targets are set and met. Leaders recognise that as the school moves in to its next phase of development and with the introduction of the new curriculum model, the role of some curriculum leaders is still emerging and they are not yet able to make their full contribution to quickening the pace of school improvement. Governors are supportive and looking forward to further developing their contribution to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. All adults go the extra mile to involve parents in school life. An impressive learning centre has been established in order to further promote partnerships with parents in the interests of pupils. The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire are supportive of the school's work. One said 'I am very happy with Northfield Primary School. I feel my children are educated and cared for well. I find all members of staff approachable, friendly and professional.'

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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?	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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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	3
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

19 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northfield Primary School, Mansfield Woodhouse, NG19 8PG.

We were pleased to meet you and all the staff recently and enjoyed the time we spent with you. Thank you for making us feel so welcome, talking to us, and helping us to find out about you and your school. We especially enjoyed seeing you play and work together cooperatively; hearing you sing in assembly and watching you politely carry out your jobs that help to make your school a pleasant place.

Your school is satisfactory. Those who lead the school, the teachers and all the other grown-ups do their best to look after and care for you well. Your good behaviour in class helps you to learn. It is clear that you are happy at school. Your teachers and your friends help you to feel important and safe there.

The school is keen to find ways to help you do as well as you can. So we have asked those who lead the school to make sure that:

- all your lessons are as good as the best ones we saw so that you all make good progress in all your subjects
- you are all clear about your next steps in learning, how to get there and how to measure your own success
- those who lead the school keep a close check how well the new curriculum is helping you to progress in your learning in all of your subjects

We are sure that Ms Jenkins and all the other adults will continue to do all they can to help you. You can play your part by continuing to work hard, behaving well and by coming to school every day.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Joanne Harvey

Lead inspector