

Northgate Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122428
Local Authority	City of Nottingham
Inspection number	327725
Inspection dates	2–3 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	232
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ruby Ul Haq
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Anderson
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Suez Street New Basford Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG7 7GB

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	2–3 June 2009
Inspection number	327725

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Age group 3–11

Inspection dates 2–3 June 2009

Inspection number 327725

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school in the suburbs of Nottingham. A much higher proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals than is the national average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average and there are slightly more at the early stages of learning English than the national picture. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is larger than that usually seen, with these pupils having a range of additional needs often related to speech and language. Mobility in and out of the school other than at the usual time is high. There is provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school holds Activemark Gold, Healthy Schools award and the Football Association Charter Standard.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that has made considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Key to this is the effectiveness of the headteacher in developing a whole-school culture to succeed. Several parents note with pleasure how the school works to involve them in the education of their children and the impact this has on family learning. One parent notes, 'My child loves the school and so do I!' Most inspection judgements match those of the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. This shows that the school recognises what is done well and identifies most of the areas for further improvement.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding that are often well below what is expected for their age. They make satisfactory overall progress and this helps them develop self-confidence. However, many enter Year 1 having not achieved all the targets for their age. In Years 1 to 6, most pupils make good progress and, while standards are slightly below national averages, assessment information shows that they make good overall progress. The majority of pupils, including those with additional needs, achieve well from a low starting point. While relatively few attain standards above the average, assessment data indicates this is improving.

The personal development of pupils is good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many enter school as timid and quiet children and leave as much more confident and enthusiastic young learners. This, coupled with improving basic skills, helps them prepare well for their future. The large majority enjoy school, behave well and want to succeed. Most understand how to keep themselves and others safe. Many enjoy physical exercise and understand the concept of healthy eating but don't always make the healthiest choices. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities within the school and local community, which helps them make a good contribution to the society in which they live.

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are good. The planning of most lessons is carefully considered, which ensures tasks are well-matched to the different abilities of the pupils. Staff are working successfully to ensure activities particularly in English and mathematics build on pupils' skills consistently and progressively. Pupils particularly enjoy and benefit from interesting 'theme' weeks, which enrich the curriculum. The care, guidance and support of pupils are good because the staff know and care for the pupils well. Staff have considerably improved the ways in which they check and track the progress pupils make so additional support can be targeted to their needs. The quality of academic and personal support is a strong feature of the school.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a very strong focus upon raising standards. The school's involvement in various projects has established a clear understanding of the main areas that work well and some areas that could be improved further. Therefore the school is well placed to continue to improve. The work of staff with specific responsibilities is effective in ensuring high-quality support. Governance is satisfactory. Nevertheless, there remains more to do to ensure that activities to monitor the work of the school are rigorously evaluative and identify all areas that could be improved further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and with some good elements. Effective pastoral care ensures that the children work in a safe environment where

their welfare and personal development are priorities. Parents are pleased with the quality of personal support that enables their children to settle happily. While there is a range of early skills and experiences, many enter Nursery with knowledge and understanding that are well below what is typical for their age, particularly in their ability to communicate with others. Several have a restricted vocabulary, which has a negative impact on early speaking, reading, writing and other areas. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are satisfactory overall. However, the planning of activities in the Nursery does not have a clear enough focus on tasks that specifically enable the children to develop and use a wider vocabulary. The learning environment lacks impact and vibrancy so that learning and communicating are not exciting. This affects the progress made and limits the achievement of all groups of children. Teaching assistants provide good support to groups of children and provision in Reception is good, which boosts overall progress. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory but there has not been rigorous enough monitoring of planning and provision to identify and address shortcomings.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the planning of activities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage focuses more clearly on encouraging the development of speaking, reading and writing skills.
- Check that the monitoring of the work of the school is rigorously evaluative in order to identify all areas for further improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

While pupils initially have low level skills, in Years 1 to 6 most make good progress. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are slightly below national averages, but the gap between attainment in this school and what is achieved nationally is closing. A growing number of pupils achieve the average levels. Also, while relatively few reach standards above the average, this too is changing as more is expected of pupils of all abilities. The school has been involved in numerous projects and has particularly benefited from improved planning and routines promoted by the Intensifying Support Programme. Key to this is the better use of assessment information to set tasks that challenge different groups equally well. The school has recognised that several pupils lack the skills and confidence to solve problems and carry out lines of investigation. This is now a priority and standards are rising, particularly in mathematics. A large proportion of pupils enter the school other than at the usual time, and, together with those at the early stages of learning English, they benefit from well-targeted support. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well-supported and make good overall progress towards their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most have positive attitudes to work and relate warmly to adults and each other. Pupils show initiative through the school council and are proud to talk about their part in making the school a better place. Their enjoyment of learning and their ability to work with and care for others is shown clearly during lessons along with their willingness to participate in after-school clubs. The knowledge and skills they gain through personal, social and health education activities helps increase their confidence and enables them to make a good contribution to the school and wider community. The school holds healthy lifestyle awards and pupils are encouraged to

make healthy dietary choices. Most pupils respond well to a whole-school reward system and are clear about their 'must, should and could' targets. The 'weekly star' assembly gives teachers an opportunity to talk about individual good behaviour and this helps the others learn what is expected of them. Attendance is slightly below the national average but rising.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Staff manage pupils well so that lessons are conducted in a purposeful manner where most pupils are well focused and keen to succeed. This was illustrated in an interesting activity for the oldest more able mathematicians where they had to discuss, and draw up, plans for a theme park using specific costings and within a clear budget. Through the Intensifying Support Programme, the school has developed the planning of lessons well. Assessment information is used effectively to plan linked, but different, activities that are well-matched to the range of abilities. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support specific groups. However, occasionally pupils have to spend too long listening to adults at the expense of getting on with a specific task. Sometimes there is not a big enough focus on key vocabulary to extend pupils' speaking and writing skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Lessons are well-matched to pupils' needs. The curriculum is focused around activities designed to develop key skills and support personal, social and emotional development. Clear learning targets are used, which pupils understand and work towards. Most enjoy the variety of tasks they undertake in lessons and particularly enjoy practical activities. They like going on visits and having visitors to the school to enrich learning. Opportunities to be involved in 'themed' activities like recent Geography and History Weeks are talked about by pupils with great enthusiasm. The focus on reading in the school has made a significant impact along with activities to extend parental understanding of the teaching of phonics. Those who find learning difficult are supported well through the curriculum, and the successful inclusion of these children is the result of a coordinated, informed and skilled approach. However, some of the initiatives to improve the curriculum are at an early stage and not yet having a full impact on standards.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is high-level pastoral care offered to all resulting in the very strong caring ethos where staff know the pupils well and provide them with good support. Pupils trust the adults in school and know they will listen and support them if they have a difficulty. Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils and their welfare are firmly in place, as are procedures for child protection. Work in pupils' books is marked with encouraging comments which sometimes identify what the individual needs to do to improve. Verbal feedback to pupils is also given and most are clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The school has good links with a range of external agencies. Support staff work hard to ensure that pupils receive the help they need during lessons and those who find learning difficult are very well supported. The learning mentors provide additional support, including for those who learn English as an additional language. Parents appreciate the breakfast club and the newly

established role of the parent liaison worker. These initiatives support families' and pupils' learning and development well. However, at times mid-day staff miss opportunities to support the pupils more effectively and encourage good table manners. The school now has a good system to check and track the progress of pupils and uses this information well to set challenging targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has played a pivotal role in leading the school forward since the last inspection. Her 'no excuses' approach has been key to ensuring a really clear focus on standards and achievement. The head is well supported by the newly established senior management team. There is strong leadership in numeracy and literacy to ensure the curriculum meets everyone's needs. The work of the staff sharing responsibility for supporting pupils with learning difficulties is of high quality and enables these pupils to make considerable progress. Recently established roles, including the learning mentors and the parent liaison worker support different elements of the school's work well. This helps the school to work effectively in supporting the community. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Governance is also satisfactory. Several governors work in school and have a clear recognition of the strengths in provision. However, a not very extensive programme of focused governor visits makes it difficult for governors to ensure they act as a critical friend in school improvement planning. Whilst the monitoring of the work of the school is good some aspects including provision for the youngest pupils could be more rigorous in identifying areas for further improvement.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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

How good are 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	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

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

4 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northgate Primary and Nursery School, Nottingham, NG7 7GB

Thank you very much for looking after Mr Ellwood and me when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed speaking to several of you and meeting you in lessons, at lunchtime, in assembly and when we spoke to the school council.

These are some of the best things we found.

- Mrs Anderson leads your school well and has helped everyone to focus on raising standards.
- You all seem happy in school; most of you behave well and try hard with your work.
- All the grown ups are working enthusiastically to encourage you and your families to be even more involved in learning.
- There is a good system to check and track the progress you make so that most teachers know just how hard your work should be.
- There are some interesting things to do and you all really enjoy the recent 'theme' weeks.

Yours is now a good school. To help things to improve further we have asked that:

- planning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides more opportunities for them to improve their speaking, reading and writing skills
- staff check a bit more regularly what happens in lessons and by looking at your work so that they recognise a few things that still need to be improved.

To help your school to improve even further please remember to come to school regularly and encourage your parents and the school to help you make healthy choices in what you eat.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector