

# Northbourne Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123221
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327869
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Pritiben Patel

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	265
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	38
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alan Wilson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Mary Burr
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Cockcroft Road Didcot OX11 8LJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01235 817744
<b>Fax number</b>	01235 811768

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 October 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The majority of pupils who attend Northbourne are of White British backgrounds, and a small number are from other White backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, including those whose first language is believed to be other than English. Three pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with moderate learning difficulties is in line with the national picture. The percentage of pupils with a statement of specific need is below average. The school has attained the Healthy Schools award, International Schools award and Basic Skills Mark. It has provision for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) including a Pre-school. The majority of the children, who attend the Pre-school, then go on to join the main school. The school also has provision for breakfast and after school clubs.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Northbourne is a good and improving school. The curriculum and EYFS are outstanding. The curriculum is designed to closely meet the interests and needs of the pupils, and enrichment is a strong feature. Themed events, such as a Tudor Banquet, visits from historians, as well as visits to museums and hospitals, have a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of school. Exciting curriculum activities, such as setting up a 'Healthy Cafe', help pupils to adopt a good understanding of healthy foods. The Christian values and ethos have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Pupils show good care towards each other, behave well and have positive attitudes. Most parents are highly supportive of the school and the comment made by one parent, reflected the views of many when they wrote, 'This is a happy and caring school.'

Pupils make good progress because teaching and learning are good. Strengths include good questioning, the use of a stimulating variety of resources and good use of information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers and support staff work well together to provide effective help for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. However, sometimes not all pupils understand how to complete the activities set. This happens when they are not structured enough. On occasions, pupils do not fully understand what it is they are meant to be learning. They then make slow progress because the teacher does not sufficiently check their understanding.

The headteacher's leadership is strong and she has worked hard to bring about improvements. She sets a clear direction for the school and is supported well by an able deputy. Improvements have been made to the quality of teaching and learning, to assessment and tracking systems, and to the curriculum. Provisional data for national tests in 2008 indicate that these initiatives have had a positive impact on standards at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. All show improvement compared to last year's results, and were above last year's national averages. Standards in the school as a whole are average overall. These improvements show that the school's capacity to improve further is good.

The school has established an outstanding range of links with external partners such as with schools abroad, in Malta, Finland and Spain, which has a highly positive impact on pupils' cultural understanding. Pupils contribute well to school life and to wider communities, through participation, for example, in recycling projects, links with the church and gardening club. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their schooling as shown in their good development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Pupils' enjoyment of school is demonstrated by their good attendance.

Care, guidance and support are good. Pastoral care and support are strengths. The school provides a high level of support for all pupils including those who are vulnerable. The school's links with other agencies such as the police and fire service ensure that pupils have a good understanding about how to keep themselves from harm. Improved tracking systems have enabled the school to provide swift support for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. As a result, they make good progress in line with their peers. However, academic guidance is variable, as teachers' marking does not consistently inform pupils about how to improve their work. Targets are set for pupils in English and mathematics, but not all pupils know what they are or understand them fully. As a result, not all pupils are clear about their next steps for improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children enter the EYFS with skills that are below those expected for this age group, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and communication and language. Children are welcomed into the Pre-school, which has a very warm, caring and homely atmosphere. This is reflected in the comment made by a parent, that the Pre-school provides, '...a really friendly environment'.

They make excellent progress, and achieve very well because they are given sensitive encouragement in a very caring environment to achieve their best. This has a positive impact on their confidence, self-esteem and independence, which enable them to become active participants in their learning. By the time they are ready to go into Year 1, most achieve at least what is expected for their age, and many children achieve beyond this. They do particularly well in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and their physical and creative development. The highly creative curriculum that children are offered, combined with very good levels of interaction and support, mean they can practise their skills in being creative and develop their own ideas, for example when making models, from recycled materials. The new national EYFS framework has been very carefully implemented to ensure that children can access a full range of activities, which help them to learn and develop. Children's welfare is given a high priority. For example, information to ensure health issues are addressed is clearly displayed for staff. The provision is very well led and managed and a very methodical approach has been taken to ensure EYFS covers all the expected elements. For example, the developing partnership with parents and carers has been improved, and continues to be a focus for the provision.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Build on last year's gains in pupils' achievements in Year 6, to improve standards in English and mathematics throughout the school.
- Improve the quality of academic guidance so that all pupils understand their next steps for improvement.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The school's work in improving the quality of teaching and learning, assessment and tracking, as well as providing a more relevant and meaningful curriculum, has had, a positive impact on standards. Provisional data for the national tests in 2008 indicate that standards by the end of Year 6 have improved in all areas. Standards by the end of Year 2 are below average in reading and writing. Standards are average overall throughout school. The school is working hard to raise standards in mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 1, by providing pupils with more opportunities to talk, as well as by making learning more practical. Literacy is central to the creative curriculum and provides pupils with opportunities to write in meaningful contexts. Progress information presented by the school suggests that the gender gap evident in the 2007 results, in English and mathematics has been closed because of the impact of such work.

Pupils' progress is good, including that of pupils with moderate learning difficulties, because of good tracking systems, which enable the school to provide early intervention and effective support for those pupils not making the expected progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and this is evident in the enthusiastic way they talk about it being fun, and in their good attendance and behaviour. They get on well with each other and say they feel safe and secure. As one pupil said, 'It's not just being with your friends, it's about making new friends.' Pupils talk of being valued and respected. The school council is effective in giving pupils a say in what happens in school, as the recent improvements in playground facilities show. Moral and social development is good. Cultural development is a particular strength because of the school's outstanding links with other countries through activities like the Water Aid Project, or the pen pals groups. As a result, the school has attained the International Schools Award. Spiritual understanding is good, exemplified when all pupils participate in the, 'Lords Prayer', as well as when they reflect on making the right choices, in assembly. The school is currently working towards an Eco Schools Award, helping to raise pupils' awareness of issues in the wider world. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their schooling, through the various roles they carry out, for example the school council, along with the good progress they make in their basic skills.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress because teaching and learning are good, and at times outstanding. Lessons are well planned and teachers create a purposeful, working atmosphere in which pupils flourish. Good subject knowledge is used when questioning pupils and assessing how well they are doing. Pupils respond positively to the challenges given to them. Learning, they say, is fun and they enjoy their lessons. Pupils are encouraged to contribute their ideas to lessons, and this helps to develop their speaking and listening skills effectively. They grow in self-esteem and confidence. Relationships are good and behaviour is managed well so that most lessons have a good pace. Sometimes this flags when pupils are not sure of what they are being asked to do, or when introductions go on for too long. Not all pupils are clear about what it is they are learning about, and then become confused because teachers do not check their understanding sufficiently. Support staff provide good individual and group support for pupils with moderate difficulties. This enables these pupils to make good progress in line with their peers.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The vibrant and creative curriculum is helping to improve pupils' progress. The school has worked hard to ensure that the curriculum builds on their interests so that learning is meaningful and relevant for them. Motivation has improved greatly and is shown in pupils' enthusiasm for events such as the Egyptian Day, Drumming Workshop and Roman Day. Parents too, are encouraged to participate in their children's learning through, 'Home Learning', where parents help children to complete project work. Parents are invited to events where pupils' work is celebrated. The school were able to show good evidence where not only the motivation of pupils increased, but that of their parents too. French, or Spanish, is taught to pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2. The outstanding curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' team building skills, self-esteem and cooperation skills through visits to the outdoor activity centre, coaching in

rugby and football, as well as residential visits. Links between subjects are strong. For example, pupils completed a 'Lighthouse Project', with strong links between design technology, geography and science. The curriculum helps pupils to make good progress in their basic skills in literacy, mathematics and ICT, as their learning takes place in meaningful contexts.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

There is a very caring ethos within the school, which parents endorse. For example, comments included, '...an underpinning ethos of treating each other kindly.' and 'Staff are kind, caring and really listen.' The school has a good range of procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe and free from harm. Staff are trained, for example, in first aid and incidents are logged carefully to record any action taken. The breakfast and after school clubs are well organised to meet the needs of the pupils and to accommodate the different age ranges and abilities. All groups of pupils including those identified as having moderate learning difficulties are well supported, and given guidance on what they should try to achieve next, based on what they can already do. Procedures are in place to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and any unexplained absence is noted and acted upon, especially if there are any concerns about a child's welfare. Very strong links between the pre-school and EYFS class ensure seamless transition with minimal disruption. Targets are set for the pupils learning in English and mathematics but these are not understood and known by all. Teachers' marking does not always help pupils to identify what they need to learn next. As a result, not all pupils are clear about how they can improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Through the dedicated leadership of the senior management team including the highly effective deputy, improvements have been made in teaching and learning, the curriculum, and standards at Key Stage 2. Pupils' progress is at the forefront of the school's work, is reviewed with teachers on a termly basis, and challenging targets are set.

Staff at all levels work well together and are supportive of each other. Subject managers are actively involved in evaluating and assessing their areas of responsibility. They monitor teaching and learning and scrutinise pupils' work. The mathematics manager is new to post so it will take time before her impact can be measured.

The school is working hard to improve standards in English and mathematics further, through the curriculum. All staff, including governors and support staff, are part of curriculum teams, and work innovatively to ensure that it is dynamic and meets the interests of pupils. The impact of governors is good. They have a good understanding of the school, help with policy writing, contribute to the school's self-evaluation and provide challenge when appropriate.

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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 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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### 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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## 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 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	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

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

15 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northbourne Church of England Primary School, Didcot, OX11 8LJ

Thank you for being so welcoming and helping us when we came to inspect your school to find out how well you are getting on. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, and talking to you. You go to a good and improving school.

Here is a list of some of the most important things we liked about your school.

- The youngest children get off to a flying start in the pre-school and EYFS.
- The curriculum is outstanding because your school works hard to make sure that you complete activities that are of interest to you. You have an excellent range of visits, visitors and themed days such as, 'Egyptian' and 'Roman Day', which you enjoy. Your school has an outstanding range of links with other schools in Malta, Finland and Spain; as a result, your cultural understanding is strong.
- All the adults in your school take good care of you. As a result, you have positive attitudes, enjoy school, behave well and take good care of one another.
- Your teachers plan good lessons, teach you well and provide interesting activities for you. As a result, you make good progress and attain average standards.
- Your school gives you many opportunities to take responsibility through the school council, recycling projects, as well as organising assemblies for parents.
- Your headteacher, governors and all staff are working hard to make things even better for you.

We have asked your school to improve standards in English and mathematics and to help you to understand more clearly, how to improve your work. I am sure that you will continue to work as hard as you all do. Good luck and very best wishes!

Yours sincerely

Pritiben Patel

Lead Inspector