

Northlands Primary School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 125576 |
| Local Authority | Warwickshire |
| Inspection number | 328361 |
| Inspection dates | 17–18 September 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Alwyne Jolly |

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) | 208 |
| 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 | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Philip Ash |
| Headteacher | Louise Symons |
| Date of previous school inspection | 16 November 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Pinders Lane Rugby CV21 2SS |
| Telephone number | 01788 542440 |
| Fax number | 01788 542440 |

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Age group | 3–11 |
| Inspection dates | 17–18 September 2008 |
| Inspection number | 328361 |

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: 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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This primary school with Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS) is of average size. A high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Attainment on entry to the Nursery in the last two years has risen and is now broadly average, but has been traditionally below expected levels. The school gained the Healthy Schools Award in 2007 and the Activemark Award in 2008. The headteacher took up her position in September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Northlands Primary School has continued to provide a good standard of education for its pupils through a period of significant change in both the teaching staff and senior leadership. Parents remain very positive about what the school has to offer which was summed up by one parent who said 'Northlands has a wonderful atmosphere which allows parents to feel relaxed enough to approach teachers.'

Children receive a good foundation in the EYFS, which is well led and managed. When Year 6 pupils leave the school, they have made good progress. The most recent but unvalidated national test results indicate that standards are average and have improved overall since 2007. Pupils from the range of different ethnic groups and abilities are integrated successfully so they all achieve well. Pupils learn well not only because they are taught effectively, but because of the strong relationships which are developed between pupils and teachers. The development of pupils' writing has been a less effective feature of teaching in Years 1 and 2 and standards are lower in this key stage. Older pupils, however, make better progress because of a more consistent approach and greater opportunities to write freely. Teaching is particularly effective in Year 6 where there are smaller ability groups in English and mathematics to support pupils who are not making appropriate progress. On an individual basis, however, pupils receive insufficient guidance to help them understand how they can improve.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good and pupils enjoy school. A wide range of sporting activities and two national awards are a testament to the school's success in promoting a healthy and active lifestyle. There are good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and involve them effectively in their community. This is reflected in the good curriculum where effective use is made of the local environment for particular projects, especially in the EYFS. Pupils appreciate the good pastoral care and support they receive, which gives them an effective understanding of how to stay safe.

The leadership and management of the school remain good because they are clearly focused on raising standards and providing for the academic and social needs of the pupils. The school has maintained the positive standards identified at the time of the last report and continues to demonstrate a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for learning and development in the EYFS is good. The school works extremely well with parents and this ensures children make a smooth transition from home to school. Children in both the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress. This is due to an effective curriculum, which is closely matched to children's needs, whilst still being fun and challenging. Teachers also have high expectations and use effective questioning to extend learning further. This not only helps to build confidence, but also gives children plenty of opportunity to respond and communicate with others. By the time pupils enter Year 1, most have reached or exceeded the expected levels in all areas of learning. There is effective support from teaching assistants who make a valuable contribution to the good teaching and learning. There are, however, occasional missed opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. The outside area is used extremely well to support all areas of learning. The welfare of children is good, which ensures the personal aspects of care are strong and this contributes to a very positive start.

Relationships are very good and consequently children make good progress in their personal development. Good leadership and management ensure children make a very positive start to their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' writing in Years 1 and 2 by ensuring there are more planned opportunities to improve both the content and skills used.
- Work closely with parents and pupils to identify individual targets to help pupils to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, sustaining the improved levels attained by the end of the EYFS. At key stage 1 the standard of pupils' writing is below average and lacks the range of vocabulary and structure expected by the end of Year 2. The provisional results for 2008 show that recent initiatives, such as the Big Writing and intervention programmes have not yet been implemented with sufficient consistency to improve standards of writing.

Whilst standards are average overall, progress accelerates through Years 3 to 6 and is good overall. Provisional results for the 2008 Year 6 national tests show a significant improvement overall at all levels of ability. These results represent good achievement for the pupils, based on standards when pupils enter the Nursery. Results have varied with individual cohorts, but over the last three years, no ethnic group or gender has consistently underperformed and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning. They concentrate well in lessons, try to do their best at all times, are polite and respectful to adults and each other, and enjoy school life fully. Their behaviour is satisfactory. They take responsibility seriously and are keen to make a positive contribution to the community. They do this through a very active school council, and for older pupils in their roles as prefects, eco warriors and classroom helpers. They are confident that the school keeps them safe, and that staff deal with any instances of bullying fairly. Their knowledge of the importance of a healthy lifestyle is good and they develop a positive attitude to activity, enjoying daily aerobics and after school sporting clubs. Pupils show respect for different religions and cultures. The school contributes well towards community cohesion. They develop a satisfactory range of skills to prepare them for their future lives. Attendance is satisfactory and the school works hard to eradicate the poor punctuality of a few families.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, ensuring pupils make good progress. It is at its best in Years 3 to 6, where lessons invariably proceed briskly and with a clear sense of purpose. Pupils are actively involved in their own learning, which was evident in the enthusiastic way Year 4 pupils set about writing their own scripts after watching excerpts from popular children's television programmes. Pupils are motivated by the enthusiasm of their teachers and

the very good relationships they have with them. Behaviour in lessons is often good. There are a few instances of misbehaviour by a minority, but the teacher deals with these effectively. Very occasionally, in Years 1 and 2, insufficient challenge in lessons leads to pupils becoming confused about what they are aiming to learn or what skills or knowledge they are hoping to acquire. Despite this, learning is well enough focused most of the time in these years. Although group targets are set in a few classrooms, there is no whole-school approach to involve pupils and parents in identifying individual targets for improvement. However, pupils who are underperforming are placed in smaller sets according to their ability and given well planned work that ensures they make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum both meets statutory requirements and provides a wide range of opportunities to enhance pupils' learning. One day each half-term is devoted to a particular theme such as science or the environment, which gives all pupils the opportunity to increase their knowledge and skill in that identified area by focusing more specifically on it. The curriculum is well organised, and meets pupils' needs except for the development of writing skills in Years 1 and 2. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and the curriculum is planned well to promote pupils' well-being and personal development. All pupils enjoy and benefit from weekly music lessons with a music specialist. The range of visits and activities outside lessons, and visitors to the school, is good and enriches pupils' cultural experiences. The local environment is used well to enhance learning, for example trips to the mosque and gurdwara.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory overall. The pastoral care and support of pupils are good, but academic guidance is only satisfactory. Good relationships ensure pupils enjoy their work and develop confidence to make progress in all aspects of their school life. The school cares deeply for its pupils and provides a high level of support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who need the extra help. All procedures for safeguarding and welfare are robust. Parents appreciate the way the school communicates with them and guides them to support their children in their next steps. Excellent links with outside agencies ensure that vulnerable pupils receive additional high quality support. Academic guidance is less well developed because pupils are not always clear about the next steps they need to take to help them improve. A large number of support staff are skilfully deployed to support the pupils in their academic work and personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has experienced a significant turnover in both the teaching staff and senior management in the last two years. The interim leadership arrangements were successful over the last year in ensuring that standards by Year 6 rose. The new headteacher has articulated a clear vision for the school, which has quickly gained the support of a committed staff. The assistant headteacher, in her role as leader of the EYFS, has been a critical influence in ensuring pupils receive a very secure grounding in the initial key skills and other postholders give effective

support. The school development plan is a thorough document, which sets clear criteria to judge the success of initiatives in identified areas. Although the school's self-evaluation at times lacks a little detail, the leaders at all levels have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Realistic targets, based on pupils' prior attainment, were exceeded in 2008. Issues raised in the last inspection report have been addressed, apart from the continuing weakness in younger pupils' writing. The governors have been rigorous in ensuring the school meets the needs of its community, particularly in its determination to appoint what it believed to be the right headteacher. It is also committed to not only supporting the school leadership, but to questioning and holding it to account when necessary.

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.

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 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? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| 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? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

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 | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |
| 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 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? | 3 |

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 | 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

19 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northlands Primary School, Rugby, CV21 2SS

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We found you very polite and friendly and enjoyed talking to you and finding out what you really like about your school.

We found Northlands to be a good school, which is well led and managed. Your teachers try very hard to make your learning interesting and consequently, because you are well taught, you achieve well. You also understand well the need for living a healthy life by exercising and eating properly.

We have suggested two areas that the school needs to improve.

- We have asked the teachers to give those of you in Years 1 and 2 more opportunities to improve your writing in all subjects and you must play your part by writing as well as you can when given work to do!
- We have asked the teachers to work closely with you and your parents to identify individual targets to help you improve.

My best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Mr Alwyne Jolly Lead inspector