

Northgate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133973
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	328790
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Burghart

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)	460
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	Craig Jackson
Headteacher	Alison Wood
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Green Lane Northgate Crawley RH10 8DX
Telephone number	01293 526737
Fax number	01293 538086

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 much larger than average primary school. Nearly half the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest of which is Pakistani. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is well above the national average. A greater than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times other than at the start of Nursery or the end of Year 6. The school has a special support centre for pupils with hearing impairment with places for 15 pupils. For most of their time such pupils are taught in mainstream classes. Across the school the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Children start school part time in the Nursery which, together with the two Reception classes, makes up the Early Years Foundation Stage provision.

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 where pupils are particularly happy and keen to learn. Excellent pastoral care ensures that pupils' personal development is outstanding. Effective educational guidance helps pupils make good academic progress from starting points which are well below national expectations. Pupils achieve well whatever their background or ability. Standards have been improved from significantly below average in 2006 to broadly average by the time pupils leave the school, although writing standards fall below this. In 2008 there was a marked difference between the performance of more-able pupils in science, where girls in particular did well, and English and mathematics. This has been successfully addressed with more-able pupils making the same good progress in all three subjects. The development of assessment involving pupils in evaluating their own work to improve standards is a success story in English, mathematics and science. Academic support and guidance are not so well established in other subjects and opportunities are missed to promote progress. Support for those with hearing impairment is outstanding, helping such pupils to be fully included in all activities. Other pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well provided for.

The school is well led and managed under the excellent guidance of the headteacher. She is well supported by senior managers. They have fashioned staff and governors into a strong team and this provides the basis of the school's good capacity to improve. Middle managers make a satisfactory contribution to school development. Their day-to-day management is good but they do not all have a clear enough understanding of how particular groups of pupils are doing and are not sufficiently involved in analysing data across a range of subjects to be sure of pupils' progress.

Pupils enjoy their learning because teachers provide them with work well suited to their abilities in ways that are interesting. The school has built upon the good care reported in the last inspection. Physical and pastoral care are outstanding and excellent relationships are at the heart of the school's child-centred ethos. Teaching is good overall drawing on the school's good curriculum, notwithstanding a few lessons where the pace is too slow and where some activities go on for too long. There is a core of excellent teaching and support which forms a good model for improving teaching as a whole. All staff successfully encourage pupils' personal development and set good examples. Pupils are growing up as sensible caring young people, who are sensitive to others' points of view. They have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and appreciate how to stay safe. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. From the beginning of their time in Nursery through to the end of Year 6 pupils learn that their actions affect other people. This is the basis for outstanding (but not perfect!) behaviour and pupils' positive contribution to the school and local community. Pupils are well prepared for future study and life in general.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children of all backgrounds and abilities get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception. They quickly settle into routines and respond extremely well to what is expected of them. They make excellent progress in personal, social and emotional development, readily making choices, sharing, taking turns and showing consideration. This helps children to become independent learners and underpins the school's excellent ethos. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, in particular they are pleased with what Nursery and Reception have to offer:

'Fantastic support for my child. She is really happy to come to school,' was a typical comment. Parents clearly appreciate that the school takes excellent care of their children.

Whilst it has not always been the case in recent years, children currently in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making good progress from starting points that were well below expectations. Standards this year are likely to be average by the time children join Year 1, the exception being in early writing skills where standards are below average, despite good progress. Teaching and support are good overall with examples of outstanding teaching in the Nursery. Assessment is used effectively to identify how well children are doing and in planning what to do next.

Relationships are excellent and children's behaviour is outstanding. Provision is well led and managed with a successful commitment to encouraging learning through play activities. Although there are times when some children in Reception receive too little direction from the teacher, good use is made of the excellent space and facilities inside and outdoors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enhance the quality of teaching, building on the good models which already exist, to improve the minority of lessons where pace is too slow and expectations are not high enough.
- Develop the monitoring of middle managers to improve their awareness of, and their impact on, standards and progress in the subjects they are responsible for.
- Improve the use of assessment to drive up standards in foundation subjects, making good use of established practice in English, mathematics and science to involve pupils more effectively in evaluating their own performances.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In a big improvement since 2006, pupils achieve well. Standards have been improved from significantly below average to broadly average in response to improved teaching, planning and well-targeted extra support. From the beginning of Nursery to the end of Year 6 progress is good. Recent improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage have resulted in children making strong progress to reach broadly average standards at the start of Year 1. This lays down a secure basis for the future. However, in previous years this was not the case with the Years 1 and 2 pupils regularly having started Key Stage 1 below average. Consequently, the average standards likely this year at the end of Year 2 represent good progress. Until this year pupils entered Year 3, the start of Key Stage 2, with below average standards. By reaching broadly average standards at the end of Year 6, pupils show that they have made good progress. For a variety of pupils with acute disabilities, achievement is excellent. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same good progress as most of their classmates. Some pupils, for example those with hearing impairment, often make outstanding progress in developing communication skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is a clear strength of the school. The independence which is successfully nurtured in the Early Years Foundation Stage is being built on very effectively throughout the rest of the school. It is the basis of the school's approach to learning. Pupils are tolerant and caring and demonstrate high levels of consideration for each other's

backgrounds and abilities. Their attitudes to school are excellent. Notwithstanding the few pupils who can, and sometimes do, present problems, behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are prepared to join in and work hard. They are totally committed to the school's system which encourages 'Working with Others' (WWO). As a result, social development is outstanding. Pupils and their parents are adamant that they enjoy school. Attendance is average rather than good due to pupils taken out of school for extended holidays. The school works hard to discourage this. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding with the school making the most of the rich multicultural lifestyles represented in all classes. Pupils know how to stay safe and are proud of the school's Healthy School status. They are confident their views are listened to. They make an outstanding contribution to the school as a community, particularly as school councillors and as playground buddies. Pupils play a good part in supporting local and national communities through fund raising. They are well prepared for life in general. They are extremely keen to help run the school shop and be part of mini-enterprise schemes, such as designing and marketing milkshakes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching ranges from excellent, for example as seen in some lessons in Nursery and Years 4, 5, and 6, to just a few instances where features such as expectations, pace and class management are inadequate. It is typically good with positive effects on learning. Relationships are excellent. Pupils know they can trust staff. Perceptive questioning, outstanding support from teaching assistants and planning that not only ensures subject coverage but also makes learning fun are highlights of teaching. A fine example, which included all these features, was in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were challenged to the limit to create a nest for a dragon's egg using only a small group of prescribed resources. Pupils, especially the more able, were enthralled by the task and relished working with others to solve the problem. In English, mathematics and science, staff make good use of target-setting to show pupils what to aspire to. They draw pupils into the evaluation of their own work in what is known in the school as 'assessment for learning'. Good marking refers back to pupils' targets and shows pupils how to make improvements. In subjects where such a system is not established it is difficult for staff and pupils to gauge and prove how much progress is being made.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is very successfully enhanced by an excellent range and number of well-attended extra-curricular activities, a variety of trips and the contribution of visitors to the school. Pupils are keen to say how much they enjoy what they have to do at school and for homework. There is still more to do in terms of forging links between subjects and developing curriculum planning to improve writing and support for some more-able pupils in mathematics. An increased emphasis on ensuring that such pupils are more systematically challenged is having a positive impact on progress. The curriculum very successfully supports pupils' outstanding personal, social and health education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral and physical care is outstanding. Safeguarding procedures are excellent and very effectively underpin the safe, happy environment where pupils flourish. Teaching assistants play a very successful part in supporting pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is not the first language. As a result, such pupils are fully included and make good and, sometimes excellent, progress in developing communication skills. Pupils who join the school mid-year are well supported. As one parent put it, 'Staff and pupils go out of their way to make sure everyone is welcome.' Support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (especially hearing impairment) is of high quality, with very strong and effective links with health services. Academic guidance is good. Involving pupils in the process of setting targets, monitoring and then evaluating their own performance is effective in English and mathematics and science. This system has been successfully extended to art but is yet to have an impact on pupils' performance in other subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's excellent leadership and management have forged the staff and governors into an effective team. There is a clear focus on learning and the progress pupils make in development planning. Senior leaders ensure that the school has educational direction and that challenging targets are set to prompt improvements. The success of this is evident in the rise in standards and increased progress rates over the past two years. Whole school self-evaluation is well managed and clearly identifies strengths and areas for further development. However, the part that middle managers play in this process is limited by their lack of analysis of data concerning achievement and standards. Outstanding management of equality of opportunity means that all pupils, regardless of their background and ability, are fully included. Initiatives to encourage community cohesion are good with outstanding features in how pupils from the wide range of ethnic groups are helped to understand and appreciate different lifestyles and beliefs. The school has good links with schools in other parts of the country. Whilst consideration of international diversity is satisfactory, it is an aspect already identified by the school as in need of development. Governors are very supportive making a good contribution to budget management and the deployment of staff and resources. They are actively involved in monitoring the impact of decisions made on pupils' progress. The governing body is well informed and in a good position to hold the school to account.

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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?	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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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 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	1
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**

14 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northgate Primary School, Crawley RH10 8DX

Many thanks for your warm welcome and help during the inspection. You can be very proud of the school council who told us all about the school. We were particularly impressed by the way you behave and the way you all, no matter what your backgrounds, get on with each other. Northgate is a good school.

Here are some of the highlights.

- You make good progress.
- You are being very successfully helped to grow up as caring sensible young people who get on extremely well with others in work and at play.
- Children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception.
- Staff take excellent care of you and make sure that in English, mathematics and science you know how to improve your work. We can see you know your targets!
- You are taught well. Teachers usually make the most of a good curriculum to make sure that you enjoy what you have to do.
- The school is well run. Your headteacher leads the staff and governors as a strong team. Together they have a clear idea of what works well and what needs to be improved.

We have asked staff and governors to do the following things to make the school even better.

- Make sure that the way you are taught is always as good as in the best lessons.
- Improve the ways that teachers who are responsible for subjects find out about how well you are doing.
- Involve you more in evaluating your own work like you do in English, maths and science.

You can help by continuing to work hard.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mike Burghart

Lead inspector