

# Northfield Road Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103775
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	336152
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Charalambos Loizou

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	397
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jenny Bird
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Moore
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 April 2007
<b>School address</b>	Northfield Road Netherton Dudley
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and spoke to some parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation as well as assessment and tracking data that teachers use to monitor pupils' progress. One hundred and thirteen responses to the questionnaire for parents were collated and the results appear at the end of this report.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of boys and girls, particularly in Years 3 to 6, in English and mathematics, and the impact of measures taken by the school to raise attainment
- the learning and progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the impact of provision there on attainment in writing in the rest of the school
- the extent to which the school has improved assessment since its last inspection and the demands placed on pupils in lessons
- how well the senior leadership team and phase leaders improve the teaching and support the staff as well the impact of monitoring and support for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds.

## Information about the school

This is a large primary school whose Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two Reception classes for four-year-old children. The pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds but the large majority are of White British heritage. Other pupils come from a range of backgrounds, the largest two groups being of Pakistani and Caribbean heritage. There is an above average proportion of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English and most of these are in the Reception Year and in Years 1 and 2. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than in other schools nationally. The main areas of need include pupils with moderate learning, emotional and behavioural, or speech and language difficulties. There is an above average proportion who have a statement of special educational needs for specific learning difficulties or disabilities such as hearing or visual impairment. The school has the Investors in People award as well as the nationally accredited Information and Communication Technology Mark, the Active Mark and Healthy Schools Award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

### Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' attainment in English, particularly in writing, and in mathematics; the quality of teaching to accelerate pupils' learning and progress from satisfactory to good; the impact of the leadership team's monitoring to sustain improvements to the teaching; and the need to raise attendance rates and eliminate persistent absence.

Attainment is low in English and mathematics and national test results show that this has been the case for some time. There are signs of improvement to current attainment and to pupils' learning and progress in reading and science. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with enough good teaching across the school to show that there is the capacity to sustain improvements to attainment. Children join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age. The most significant development has been the introduction of an effective system for teaching letter sounds (phonics), introduced in the Early Years Foundation Stage and now being adopted throughout the school. This has had a positive effect on raising attainment in reading and, to a lesser extent, in writing. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to edit and refine their writing, but this is not consistent across all classes. Lessons are well planned and clearly set out what pupils are expected to learn but pupils' writing is not always as accurate as it should be with some poor spelling and sentence structure. In mathematics lessons, tasks are sometimes challenging but do not always extend pupils' thinking because opportunities are missed for pupils to practise and consolidate learning by applying number skills to practical problem-solving tasks. The most effective teaching provides work that is carefully tailored to pupils' needs and the questions posed by teachers stimulate pupils' interests and curiosity. This was observed in an effective lesson in Year 5 when pupils used handheld devices to write instructions for younger pupils in the school. The lesson was successful and questions were pitched at the right level for all pupils.

Pupils feel safe in school and their personal development is good, reflecting the school's good pastoral care. Pupils behave well and contribute effectively towards their school and community. They are given a good range of responsibilities, for example, playground buddies, prefects, monitors and school councillors who particularly enjoy representing the views of other pupils. The school has well-established partnerships with other schools, organisations and support agencies to deal with the challenging

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circumstances it faces in the area it serves. It is particularly successful in supporting and caring for pupils whose circumstances cause them to be vulnerable and those who have specific disabilities such as hearing or visual impairment. Despite the best efforts of the staff and the local authority's welfare service, attendance rates are low because of the persistent absence of some pupils, which disrupts their learning and progress.

The headteacher and two deputy headteachers work closely with phase leaders. This extended management structure has enabled all the staff to undertake more accurate and regular checks on pupils' progress. As a result of their monitoring, there has been an improvement to teachers' planning and their use of assessment. Governors have been given a boost to their roles and responsibilities since the headteacher was appointed two years ago. They provide satisfactory support and have appropriate committees to ensure that they are kept informed about pupils' learning and progress, as well as curriculum developments. The school has satisfactory capacity to sustain the current trend of improvement to the quality of teaching. However, the school's self-evaluation of teachers' and pupils' performance is not yet sharp enough to provide clear priorities for improvement while academic outcomes for pupils remain low. Consequently, the school is providing inadequate value for money.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment in writing and mathematics by:
  - providing opportunities for pupils to write more extensively and improve the accuracy and structure of their writing, particularly spelling and punctuation
  - providing opportunities for pupils to apply their number skills to more challenging problem-solving tasks.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
  - sharing best practice across classes to ensure that more lessons are of good quality
  - ensuring that teachers pose questions in all lessons that extend pupils' thinking and learning
  - planning tasks for pupils that are matched more closely to their needs and abilities.
- Ensure that the leadership team's evaluations of pupils' and teachers' performance are robust enough to provide clear priorities for improvement that accelerate pupils' learning and progress across the school.
- Improve attendance rates and reduce the rate of persistent absence with the cooperation and support of parents and carers.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**4**

Test results show that too few pupils reach or exceed the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics, although current trends show that reading standards are improving. Writing tasks encourage pupils to edit and improve their writing, but some

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lack the confidence and skills to write independently with sufficient accuracy. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in most lessons, although this varies across classes. Consequently, learning and progress for these groups is satisfactory overall. Pupils in the early stages of learning English make satisfactory progress improving their speaking skills because they are often encouraged to engage in discussions with other pupils.

Pupils cooperate well and share ideas in lessons when engaged in practical tasks but there are missed opportunities for them to engage in more challenging work in mathematics. Pupils feel safe and many stated that they trust that adults will deal effectively with any incidents of bullying or misbehaviour. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to eat healthily and many participate in a good range of sports and activities provided after school. School councillors take the lead in representing the views of others. Pupils contribute well to their local and wider community, for example, when organising charitable fund-raising such as collecting harvest items for families who are in most need in the local area. The pupils have a good sense of their own community and an increasing knowledge of ethnic diversity in Britain through the opportunities they have to learn about other cultures and customs.

The staff have adopted many strategies to improve attendance and there has been some success as they are edging towards the national rate. However, attendance is still below the national average and this is largely caused by some persistent absenteeism. There are good links and partnerships with parents, outside agencies and the local community which have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning. This is enhanced by the introduction of a nurture group that supports pupils and families who are most vulnerable. Pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous. They show initiative and know that the staff will listen and respect their views. Older pupils act as peer mentors and good role models to support younger children. Although pupils develop a range of skills, they are not sufficiently prepared for the next stage of their education in core skills such as writing and mathematics.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>4</b>
	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

The teaching is satisfactory and there is good teaching in all phases of the school. There have been improvements since the last inspection to the way teachers plan, although there remain inconsistencies that account for the uneven pattern of progress. A common strength is the way teachers routinely share each lesson's learning objectives with the pupils, helping them to understand what is expected of them. Class discussions are productive and stimulating and set a good pace but sometimes there is too little time left for more focused independent work that will extend pupils' thinking. The staff provide good care and guidance during lessons and at other times. Pupils are able to explain their curriculum targets because these are often referred to during class discussions.

In the main, teachers use assessment to group pupils by ability for lessons in English and mathematics. The work planned for pupils who find learning difficult is well matched to their needs and is sometimes supplemented by good quality support provided by teaching assistants. The level and intensity of the support are not consistent across classes and, as a result, some pupils are not getting sufficient help in lessons. Target setting is increasingly being managed by teachers as they become familiar with new methods of assessment, but there is still more to do to ensure greater consistency across classes when checking whether pupils are on course to reach their targets.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that contributes towards the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a broad range of topics for pupils to study that draw together different subjects and include good opportunities for them to use information and communication technology. Topics incorporate a good range of visits or activities that will help the pupils to care for the local environment, such as eco projects and the recent 'Autumnal Walk' undertaken by Reception children.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been diligent in establishing routines and systems that enable staff and governors to contribute towards a systematic process of assessment, audit and review. To some extent this has been successful but there is more to do to eliminate pockets of underachievement. A start has been made in monitoring the teaching and pupils' progress but this is not yet robust enough.

Changes to the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders and phase leaders who manage year groups have resulted in a much sharper focus on self-evaluation. The added impetus of having an extended management structure to include the deputy headteachers and phase leaders has resulted in improvements which demonstrate that the school has the capacity to tackle and eliminate underachievement.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory as pupils appreciate and learn about the different cultural backgrounds that exist in Britain today. The staff are good at listening to the views of the community and this accounts for the good level of satisfaction expressed by pupils and parents. Good partnerships and a determination to help families support their children's learning at home through regular workshops is also a pivotal part of the school's work. Improved assessment systems have increased the capacity for the staff to monitor the progress of different groups, such as those representing different backgrounds and heritages, including those who join speaking little or no English.

There is a good range of resources, particularly to support pupils' reading and work in information and communication technology. Teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities although their deployment is patchy across classes. At the time of the inspection all safeguarding requirements were met well. There are robust and consistent arrangements in place to ensure that suitable adults work with pupils.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>3</b>
	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>



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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Early Years Foundation Stage provision is satisfactory. An analysis of children's performance in the Reception classes last year shows that they made satisfactory progress in relation to their very low starting points. Children who have just started school have settled into routines because the staff provide learning experiences that are stimulating and imaginative. Most children play and work well together and are happy to pursue their own learning interests independently. However, some children do not concentrate on an activity for enough time to fully benefit or develop their skills. Adults monitor and observe the children to add to the accurate assessments of their progress in all areas of learning. The staff check how well the children are doing and sometimes encourage the children to choose activities such as reading and writing, but there is scope to ensure that more boys engage in such activities.

Detailed planning and satisfactory teaching ensure that lessons are positive and supportive, and there are well-resourced opportunities for the children to explore the world around them and develop their skills in language, number, and information and communication technology. As a result, children demonstrate enjoyment, curiosity and independence but some tasks are not sufficiently challenging to sustain all the children's interests and concentration. Activities flow freely from indoors to out but the supervision of the pupils is imbalanced resulting, in some cases, in outdoor areas being too crowded for the children to fully benefit. Adults take many opportunities to develop children's learning through role play, such as taking on the role of a 'park keeper' before their visit to a local park to explore autumnal features.

The work of the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has contributed to developing the provision, but the role also incorporates a management responsibility for pupils in Year 1 which limits the amount of time that can be spent checking and reviewing practice in the Reception classes.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

The questionnaires, written comments and views expressed by some parents who spoke to inspectors show that there is a good level of satisfaction with the school. Many commented on how supportive the staff have been in ensuring that their children are well cared for. A few parents expressed concerns about behaviour and supervision, as well as some reservations about their children's progress and the information provided by the school. Discussions with pupils indicate that some are also concerned about the behaviour of others. Records kept by the school show that parents are involved when a pupil misbehaves or if there are any incidents of bullying. Such incidents are infrequent and are dealt with very well, a view that is also endorsed by the large majority of parents.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Northfield Road Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 113 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 397 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	40	59	52	5	4	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	50	44	59	52	1	1	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	35	58	51	12	11	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	27	64	57	10	9	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	30	27	68	60	5	4	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	27	60	53	15	13	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	27	71	63	6	5	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	36	32	55	49	6	5	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	26	67	59	6	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	26	62	55	11	10	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	22	64	57	11	10	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	30	27	70	62	4	4	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	32	55	49	7	8	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



14 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northfield Road Primary School, Dudley DY2 9ER

We enjoyed talking to many of you when we visited. We have given your school something called a 'Notice to Improve'. This is because your school could be doing more to help you, especially in writing and mathematics. This means that another inspector will visit in a few months to make sure your school is improving. However, we can see why most of you and your parents like school because the staff take good care of you. We were pleased with your good behaviour and the way you all try hard. We think most pupils are making satisfactory progress in lessons but there is still a lot of work to be done so we have asked your teachers and the governors to do four things to improve your school:

- to provide you with more opportunities to improve your writing and mathematics work
- to make sure that the work provided for you is pitched at the right level for all of you
- we would like the staff and governors to check your work and progress as well as lessons to make sure the school continues to improve and that you all reach your learning targets
- we would like all pupils and families to make sure that you come to school every day if you can because your teachers and the inspectors noticed that attendance rates are too low.

Your teachers and support staff provide you with good opportunities to do art and design work, as well as information and communication technology, music, drama, gymnastics and a good range of sports. All these activities develop your interests and particular talents. You can all help too by carrying on trying hard and coming to school every day. We thought that you were all really mature and sensible, so keep it up. I wish you, your parents, staff and governors the very best.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector

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