

Norton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111623
Local Authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	337710
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Mary Griksatis
Headteacher	Ms Susan Dawson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons, observed nine teachers and spent approximately one third of inspection time looking at learning, including time spent looking at pupils' work. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and a representative from the local authority. They observed as much of the school's activities as possible, in particular the teaching and learning in classrooms. They also analysed the school's documentation, progress data, welfare arrangements and the 138 completed questionnaires from parents, as well as those from pupils and staff.

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

- achievement in Key Stage 2 by all pupils, including the more able pupils
- any consistent disparities in achievement between different groups of pupils
- teachers' expectations of all pupils in Key Stage 1 and, especially, Key Stage 2
- the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning
- the effectiveness and quality of self-evaluation at all levels of management.

Information about the school

This large primary school serves a mixed urban area. It has a fairly stable pupil population. A high percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are White British; a few speak English as an additional language. Currently, the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The school holds a number of awards, including the Green Flag Eco School Award and the International School Award. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Nursery and two Reception classes. The school has had a number of changes to staffing in the past two years, including the appointment of a new headteacher.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides satisfactory provision for its pupils. It is an improving school emerging from an unsettled period. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has recently introduced new systems of management which are already serving the school effectively. Parents, pupils and staff are happy and supportive of these. Staff feel valued: there is a combined sense of purpose and momentum. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is improving and so are standards. The school provides good care for its pupils, especially day-to-day pastoral support. As a result, pupils feel safe: staff are always ready to listen, advise and resolve any anxieties. Staff are good role models and quickly gain respect, good behaviour from pupils and positive attitudes. Good community links, partnerships beyond school and interesting activities outside lessons have a positive impact on pupils' personal development.

The Early Years Foundation Stage offers good provision and children achieve well.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory elsewhere in the school. There are no consistent differences between groups, especially since the school improved the performance of more able pupils in Key Stage 2. Standards have been low over time in all subjects but are rising. In 2009, they were below average and are closer to average at present. Teaching is satisfactory and better assessment and planning are improving learning. Teaching is best in Years 5 and 6 where expectations are higher, introductions to work clearer and learning brisk. These attributes are not routinely present in other year groups. The school has done well to enrich the curriculum and is increasingly diversifying learning within lessons. However, teachers do not reinforce literacy and numeracy enough by putting learning in context, especially by linking subjects or using real life experiences. In some lessons, teachers are not confident about how much they should give pupils and how much pupils should learn for themselves.

Senior and subject leaders are increasingly proactive in guiding and monitoring their subjects, although evaluations are not always accurate and insufficiently link provision to pupils' outcomes. Governors are supportive, although not well enough involved in the school's development. The school is a happy, bright place to be. This is helped by recent refurbishments and, in particular, displays that not only celebrate pupils' achievement but also indicate the range of their cultural and other experiences. Achievement is on the up, staff morale is good and the curriculum is becoming richer. As a result, the school has good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards and achievement in all subjects by ensuring that teachers:

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- have high expectations of pupils of all abilities and set work that consistently meets their needs
- strike a better balance between teacher-directed and independent learning
- use every opportunity to develop literacy and numeracy through other subjects
- explain new work clearly so that pupils can learn more quickly.
- Ensure that the school's development is more sharply focused through:
 - more rigorous and balanced evaluation, especially of teaching and learning
 - more effective involvement by the governing body.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are happy at school. Rising attendance is a clear indicator. They are attentive in class, respectful of their teachers and enjoy learning new things. They are comfortable working independently or with others, but are insufficiently self-motivated to work briskly. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory across the school. Progress by pupils in Key Stage 1 has tended to be satisfactory in recent years and standards in all subjects have been consistently average; they rose a little in 2009.

Pupils' progress through Years 3 to 6 has begun to improve following a period when it was inadequate; it is now satisfactory. Standards in English, mathematics and science were low in 2007 and 2008; they improved in 2009 but were still below average. A key factor was that not enough pupils attained high levels. The school's data and evidence from work books show that pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to achieve standards that are broadly average. There are no significant disparities in the achievement of different groups of pupils. For example, the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language is comparable to that of other pupils.

Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. Activities such as peer massage and playground games reinforce social bonds, and foster reflection and consideration for others. Pupils are comforted in the knowledge that staff are always at hand to supply a kindly word and allay any concerns. Pupils enjoy physical activity and know about healthy eating, although not all lunch boxes reflect this. Pupils are proud of their school and of the part they play in its development. For example, they have introduced special boxes for lunchtime play equipment and make the most of their graffiti wall to share ideas. Their awareness of community is good, boosted by links with Kenya and Zimbabwe. Their broader cultural development is exemplified by good quality artwork and lusty singing. Pupils develop well spiritually. A recent initiative, when pupils acted anonymously as guardian angels to other pupils, was so successful that some pupils are quietly continuing their unseen protection. All in all, they are satisfactorily prepared for

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the next phase of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is improving, with the best practice in Years 5 and 6. Common strengths include the good rapport between staff and pupils, underpinned by effective management of behaviour. As a result, pupils are relaxed yet eager to work. Interactive whiteboards are used skilfully to motivate pupils and clarify learning; teaching assistants are well deployed. In good lessons, teachers are clear in their presentation of new learning. Expectations of all groups of pupils are usually good because assessment is well used. Teachers are more flexible in their use of time, so learning tends to be quicker. Pupils learn well from helpful advice and marking. However, these strengths are not yet commonplace in most lessons.

The curriculum has certainly broadened in the past few years. Activities, such as art workshops, clearly stimulate pupils' interests. Teachers reinforce social values and a sense of citizenship well. The school has been introducing more variety in lessons to support learning but not enough numeracy and literacy lessons reflect this. Some

¹ 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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lessons lack the vitality and focus to instil in pupils a love of learning and to tap into their latent energies.

The school takes good care of its pupils. Staff are kind, considerate and quick to respond to the needs of individuals. Formal systems of care, including safeguarding procedures are secure. There is good support for more vulnerable pupils, and external agencies are well used to provide relevant expertise. The school has done well to improve attendance to a broadly average level and to maintain it. Good links with local schools smooth pupils' move to secondary education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership has been the decisive catalyst for change. It has clarity of thinking and good vision, as well as a firm commitment to inclusion and tackling any discrimination, that is fully shared by staff. All staff, especially the senior and middle managers, feel valued and part of the drive for improvement. They are beginning to monitor their areas of responsibility more regularly but are not as rigorous as they could be in assessing the quality of teaching and learning.

Self-evaluation is mainly accurate and action plans appropriate. However, the school's improvement plan is very bulky and not sufficiently finely-tuned to highlight overriding priorities. Governors are supportive and caring about the school but are not proactive enough in its development. All statutory requirements, including arrangements for safeguarding pupils, are met.

Partnerships are good, especially to promote pupils' personal development. The school has worked hard to involve parents in their children's learning but such work is at an early stage. The school keeps parents well informed of their children's progress. It has a good and structured approach to community cohesion. The strong sense of community within the school is echoed beyond. Pupils have planted bulbs in the locality and participate in such events as the Stockton Riverside Carnival. Reciprocal staff visits have given pupils a valuable insight into African lifestyles.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Children mostly start school with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age, but this varies and can at times be closer to expected levels. Good teaching, especially in the Nursery, enables children to make good progress in all areas of learning. Constant evaluations of children's progress underpin teachers' planning, but there is scope to improve the accuracy of all assessments. By the end of the Reception Year, children are in line with age-related expectations and sometimes exceed them.

Staff provide a good range of activities that motivate children and prompt learning through discovery and discussion. Sometimes, there are too many activities which make it hard for children to make measured and informed choices about what to do. The good access to the large and well resourced outdoor provision that Nursery children enjoy is not as well used for Reception children. Welfare arrangements are secure and reflect the same efficiency as elsewhere in the school. Children feel secure and so are happy, behave well and enjoy learning. Staff have done well to minimise any issues arising from the recent absence of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and to maintain the good provision since the last inspection.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

Parents are happy with the school and the education it provides for their children. Some specifically praised the improvements to the school, especially the warm ethos and quality of care and support from staff. They feel that their children are safe, contented and prospering in their personal development. The inspection team agrees with these views. A few parents had concerns about how well staff manage pupils' behaviour and the school's communication with them. The inspectors found little evidence to support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Norton 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 138 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 416 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	82	59	53	38	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	92	67	45	33	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	65	47	66	48	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	46	70	51	2	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	74	54	60	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	68	49	64	46	3	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	47	68	49	1	1	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)	58	42	68	49	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	44	71	51	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	45	62	45	7	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	63	46	62	45	5	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	76	55	54	39	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	81	59	53	38	2	1	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



22 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Norton Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS20 2RD

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the recent inspection of your school. Your opinions matter and certainly helped my colleagues and me to get to know your school better. I would like to tell you the judgements we made.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education. It has been through a bit of a difficult time because of changes to staffing and senior leaders. Standards in Key Stage 2 suffered, as a result, and progress was not very good. However, recent changes have paid dividends. Teaching is improving, so you are learning more quickly and standards are rising. They are not quite where they should be by Year 6, but they are getting there. We would like teachers to improve your progress further by providing work that is really challenging, make lessons livelier and use all subjects to strengthen your literacy and numeracy. We would also like a better balance between the contribution from staff and you finding things out for yourselves.

There are a number of good things about the school. These include your positive attitudes in lessons, your good behaviour and the way you care for one another. You should be proud of your improved attendance. We know you feel safe in school because staff look after you well. All the various activities you have and links with the world outside school are broadening your horizons. Progress in the Nursery and Reception classes is good.

The school is improving because of the leadership. However, all staff are playing their part and feel, like you, part of the school family and able to contribute to its improvement. We know that there is still some way to go before the school is good in all areas. We judge it would help if the school were to streamline its planning for the future and make sure that the governors are more involved.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Andrew Scott

Lead inspector

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