

The Norman Church of England Primary School, Northwold

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121122
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339872
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Karen Heath

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Muir
Headteacher	Robert Hothersall
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2006
School address	School Lane Northwold Norfolk
Telephone number	01366 728241
Fax number	01366 728241
Email address	office@norman-pri.norfolk.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2010
Inspection number	339872

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including teachers' planning, pupils' books, the school development plan, school policies and minutes of the governing body's meetings. Inspectors observed 13 lessons and all five teachers in the school. Inspectors met with governors and staff, spoke to pupils and looked at 44 parent and carer questionnaires as well as questionnaires from the staff and pupils. Inspectors also looked at documentation with reference to the safeguarding of pupils.

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

- the achievement of the more able pupils
- the progress pupils make in mathematics
- how well teachers use assessment to inform their lesson planning.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average primary. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is slightly higher than the national average. The very large majority of pupils are White British. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is less than the national average. Pupils are organised into mixed-aged classes. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage moved into a new classroom with an outside area last term. The school has gained the Activemark and Healthy Schools status.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school which is at the heart of its local community. The headteacher has a clear sense of direction and has put in place strategies which are moving the school forward by raising expectations and beginning to improve the academic outcomes for pupils. There are already some strengths in different aspects of pupils' personal development.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a real strength of the school where children do well because practice in planning and assessment is consistently good. Both the inside and outside learning areas provide a stimulating environment for young children. Older pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. In particular, their progress in writing is starting to accelerate in response to school initiatives. The range of strategies put in place to improve pupils' progress in mathematics are yet to have a significant impact.

The inspectors observed some good teaching, particularly in themed lessons, but the quality varies throughout the school and is satisfactory overall. Group tasks and questioning techniques are not always successful in challenging pupils of a wide range of ages and abilities to do well. Lesson outcomes are not always precisely defined at the planning stage to ensure that they reflect the pupils' targets, or that they can be evaluated by both pupils and teachers at the end of a lesson. Teachers' marking does not provide sufficient guidance in identifying pupils' next steps in their learning.

The governing body provides good support and challenge to the school's leadership. Monitoring by the headteacher is effective, but overall monitoring systems do not focus sufficiently on checking that policies continue to be implemented, and other senior and middle managers are not sufficiently involved to have a strategic overview. Nevertheless, the school has accurately evaluated its own effectiveness and has produced a detailed school development plan with a clear focus on raising standards. It has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that group work provides sufficient pace and challenge and is planned to help pupils meet their academic targets
 - using different levels of questions for the range of abilities and ages during whole-class sessions to challenge thinking and engage pupils in their learning
 - ensuring that lesson plans identify success criteria appropriate for the different

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

ability levels by which pupils and teachers can judge the effectiveness of the lesson.

- Accelerate the progress of pupils in writing and particularly in mathematics, especially for those of higher ability, by:
 - ensuring that teachers' marking always tells pupils clearly how they can improve their work
 - reviewing pupils' individual learning targets to make sure they provide sufficient challenge
 - giving pupils opportunities to check their own work, review the teachers' marking, and feed back to the teacher if they think the work is not sufficiently challenging.
- Improve the effectiveness of monitoring by:
 - rigorously and regularly checking strategies and policies which have been implemented, to make sure they are sustained
 - using the school's tracking system so that leaders at all levels have a strategic view of how well pupils are doing within their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels have discrete time allocated to carry out their responsibilities, and are held to account.
- 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**

All of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said their children enjoy school, and their good attendance reflects this. Pupils say they feel safe, there is no bullying and they are confident that any concerns they have will be dealt with. The family groupings, where older pupils take responsibility for younger ones, are particularly effective in ensuring that pupils feel secure. The pupils talk about the things they enjoy like the topic work and particularly the special events such as the craft days and raising money for charities.

Most pupils achieve satisfactorily. Their attainment over the last three years by the end of Key Stage 2 has been broadly average with most pupils making satisfactory progress from their starting points. The 2009 national test results show that some higher ability pupils made slow progress. Currently in Year 6, more able pupils are making satisfactory progress in English but slower progress in mathematics. Most pupils make good progress in reading but less progress in writing and mathematics. Progress for the more able pupils is variable within different year groups. They rightly say that work is often not challenging enough for them, especially in mathematics. Pupils respond well when teachers question them in a challenging way, but where questioning is the same for all pupils in a class group, the pace of learning for the more able slows down.

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

Inspectors observed pupils demonstrating Lgood skills in information and communication technology. Pupils show evident enjoyment in the lessons where teachers have planned learning through themes. They particularly like the opportunities to work in a variety of ways in the classroom; they work well individually and cooperate well in groups. Pupils' behaviour is good, both in the classroom and on the playground.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and their consequences for adulthood. They are aware of the importance of a good diet and exercise and are very keen to participate in sports clubs. These strengths are reflected in the awards the school has gained. Pupils share a number of responsibilities within school, and this helps equip them with some basic life skills. The school council provides opportunities for pupils to influence the life of the school, such as improving the toilets, choosing local and international charities to support, and deciding on the theme for the village carnival. Pupils have a good relationship with the local community and act as waiters for the Carers' Lunch group and provide regular entertainment for the Forget Me Not club.

Pupils mix well with each other and show a sense of social responsibility. They reflect on their experiences and are interested in the beliefs of others, which they have learnt about in lessons and assemblies. Pupils have limited opportunities to engage effectively with others from a range of different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

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	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

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

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is good. Long term plans and topic plans are well constructed to reflect the interests of pupils and the themed lessons provide very imaginative opportunities for learning. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities available and these are enjoyed by a good cross-section of the pupil population. The school's excellent sports and business partnerships have enabled this small school to provide many opportunities that would not otherwise have been possible within its own resources. Provision for personal and social development is good. There are some weaknesses in the way success criteria are outlined in lesson planning, and the main factor slowing the progress of able pupils is the way challenge is established through group work.

Pupils and teachers have good relationships. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to provide pupils with individual and group support to remedy weaknesses in their learning. The improved tracking and assessment procedures have enabled teachers to identify underachievement. Intervention strategies have been used to support the learning of any pupils falling behind, and this has had a positive impact in improving pupils' progress. However, assessment in lessons is not always focused on what pupils have understood and able groups sometimes continue to be given work that is insufficiently challenging. There are too few opportunities for them to be involved in checking their own learning and evaluating its success, or responding to teachers' comments.

The school has established the necessary systems to support the most vulnerable group of pupils and works with outside agencies to help to foster their learning and development. Pastoral care is generally effective, though records of work sometimes lack clarity. The coordinator for special educational needs has limited time to analyse data and streamline systems.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher successfully conveys his vision for improving the outcomes for pupils, and has the full support of his teaching staff and an effective governing body. In this small school, the leadership roles of other teachers are constrained by the limited time allocated for these duties. For example, they do not routinely analyse tracking data. Together, the headteacher, governing body and staff have accurately identified areas for

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

development in a comprehensive plan and put in place strategies that have improved the quality of teaching and learning. However, the development plan is too long and does not indicate the most pressing priorities. Because of this it does not provide fully effective guidance to ensure that monitoring focuses on maintaining the key strategies. The governing body has a breadth of experience and adopts a professional approach in challenging as well as supporting the school. It has a well-established monitoring and evaluation schedule, which is well documented.

The school has made a considerable effort to seek the views of parents and carers by holding forums, sending out questionnaires and asking for suggestions during parents' and carers' evenings. As a result changes have been implemented, including sending out curriculum information and setting up a support group for parents and carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who receive copies of their children's individual education plans but are not always involved in discussing them.

The school works well with a range of partners to support the pupils. It has established an effective transition programme for pupils transferring to high school. The school has carried out an audit of its social, ethnic and religious context and understands that well. It is in the process of implementing a plan to improve the way it promotes community cohesion. The staff are committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve equally well, regardless of their background. The school takes the necessary steps to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for example, have full access to the curriculum. There is no significant variation in the progress made by particular social or ethnic groups of pupils within the school.

Safeguarding procedures are good and all statutory requirements were in place at the time of the inspection. Staff are well trained in child protection and risk assessments systems are well developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3
---	----------

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good provision in the Reception class ensures that children achieve well across all the areas of learning. Adults plan a good range of practical and purposeful tasks that engage children's interests well. Staff are skilled at letting children do things for themselves so that they learn from experience and quickly become independent. There is a good balance between activities that children explore for themselves and those that adults lead. The focused teaching of number, letters and sounds has enabled the children to make good progress in these areas of learning. Adults' interaction with children is also a strength, and this effectively develops children's speaking, listening and thinking skills.

Learning through play is strongly encouraged and children have free access to the new and stimulating outside area. Children show a strong sense of enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning, for example when experimenting in the outside 'music studio', digging in the vegetable patch or riding the bikes. Staff have high expectations that children will cooperate with one another, share, and take turns. As a result, children behave well.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Adults work together well and there is a strong commitment to reflect on practice and improve. Most systems have been quickly and very effectively established since the move. Those for observing and recording individual children's progress are effective, but are not efficiently collated to make them easily accessible for all staff.

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

Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers who responded by questionnaire feel that their children are happy in school and that it keeps them safe. Although some parents and carers feel the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour, during the inspection behaviour was seen to be good both in classrooms and outside, and pupils were exceptionally well behaved in the dining hall. A small minority of parents and carers feel their suggestions and concerns are not taken up. The team saw evidence that the school has done much

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

to improve communication with parents and carers, seek their views and make changes accordingly, for example sending out termly assessment information so parents are more aware of their child's progress. There has been limited uptake by parents and carers for the recently established parents' and carers' forums. A similar minority felt that leadership and management of the school are not effective. The team judged leadership and management to be inconsistent, with clear direction at the top but some weaknesses in monitoring.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Norman Church of England Primary School, Northwold 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 101 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	45	23	52	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	43	25	57	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	36	26	59	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	23	26	59	5	11	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	12	27	26	59	3	7	2	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	27	23	52	5	11	2	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	30	25	57	3	7	1	2
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)	11	25	26	59	2	5	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	25	26	59	6	14	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	9	24	55	11	25	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	14	20	45	9	20	4	9
The school is led and managed effectively	12	27	17	39	9	20	3	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	34	25	57	2	5	2	5

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupil's 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.



27 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Norman Church of England Primary School, Northwold IP26 5NB

Thank you for making me and my inspection team so welcome and taking the time to give us your views; this was most helpful.

Your school is satisfactory and improving and is a very important part of your community. You told us you feel safe and you understand a lot about healthy living. When you leave school your standards are similar to other pupils in the country, although we think some of you could achieve more. Your headteacher and the governing body have a good understanding of what needs to be done to make your school even better.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to improve the quality of teaching so that you are challenged more - for example in your group work or in the way teachers ask you questions in class. We would like you to be more involved in saying how easy or difficult the work was so that teachers can change their plans for the next lesson - you can really help them with this.

You told us that you think your targets need to be reviewed more often so they are more relevant for your different ability levels, and we agree with you. We have asked the teachers to make sure you know what you need to do to improve your work, and to give you time to read the comments they make in your books. We have asked those adults who have leadership responsibilities to make sure that they check up that all these changes have been made and that they are working.

I hope you all enjoy the carnival, which I know you are looking forward to - it sounds like great fun!

Yours sincerely

Karen Heath

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.