

Norton-In-Hales CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123491
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	340352
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Hilary McDonald
Headteacher	Mr Darran Hall
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They saw eight lessons and four teachers and held meetings with parents, pupils, staff and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at its policies, records and assessment information and 51 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- the quality of provision and children's attainment and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- whether pupils' current standards have risen sufficiently to demonstrate improved progress
- how well the school promotes links with contrasting environments to promote community cohesion.

Information about the school

Norton in Hales CofE Primary is a small school. Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average; the largest group of these has moderate learning difficulties. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The present headteacher took up his post in September 2009.

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

Norton-in-Hales Primary School provides a satisfactory education. In the last year, the new headteacher has started to address weaknesses and the school is clearly moving in the right direction. It already has some strengths.

The curriculum is good, with numerous additional features that do a great deal to combat potential rural isolation. The school nurtures its pupils well and they develop as delightfully courteous and confident individuals. Numerous interesting initiatives have contributed to pupils' outstanding understanding of how to stay safe. They are well aware of potential hazards that may arise when travelling to and from school or using the internet. They know about the dangers of drugs, smoking and alcohol. Pupils are very confident that any issue they may raise will be promptly and effectively dealt with by the school.

Parents and carers are most supportive of the school and have few concerns. One parent's views reflect those of many, 'My children are happy, look forward to school and we all feel part of the school. The headteacher has worked hard to build on previous improvements and make things even better.'

Children enter the school with the expected levels of attainment and, although standards rose a little in 2010, pupils leave Year 6 with average attainment. Effective support for those with moderate learning difficulties ensures they make similar progress to their peers. Achievement for all groups of pupils is satisfactory.

Teaching is inconsistent and less effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. In the Reception class, planning leads to too much formal instruction and too few child-initiated activities. Children do not have enough chances to learn and play outside. Lessons in Key Stage 1 can lack the correct degree of challenge for all. More engaging, challenging teaching in Key Stage 2 stimulates pupils' great appetite for learning and improves their progress. However, marking and target setting lack the precision needed to promote better learning.

The headteacher has started to focus on weaknesses and this is leading to rising attainment. Increased involvement of all staff in leadership and management has developed a shared commitment and ambition. The school's self-evaluation identifies where improvements need to be made, but planning lacks the sharpness required to promote rapid progress. Monitoring of teaching has been too infrequent to markedly improve classroom practice. Nevertheless, there is a trend of development and the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- By April 2011, improve the consistency and quality of teaching by:
 - sharing the best classroom practice to improve expectations and challenge in all lessons
 - monitoring lessons more frequently and acting promptly to follow up weaknesses.
- By September 2010, develop provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - raising staff awareness of the requirements for this age range
 - planning sessions so that there are more opportunities for child-initiated learning and outdoor activities.
- By January 2011, improve marking and target setting so that they provide pupils with clear indications of the next steps in their learning.
- About 40% of 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 enter Year 1 with attainment that is typical for their age. There are the annual variations common to the small year groups in the school, but over time attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average. The school's stronger focus on promoting the progress of more able pupils this year has seen attainment start to improve in the school as a whole, especially in English and science, but Year 6 pupils' current standards remain broadly average.

A positive atmosphere in lessons, consistently good behaviour and pupils' enthusiasm to participate ensure that learning is rarely less than satisfactory. Teachers know pupils well and skilfully identify those who would benefit from extra support. More challenging, interesting teaching in Years 3 to 6 means pupils make faster progress in Key Stage 2. Overall, progress is satisfactory, with no significant variation between different groups of pupils. Achievement, including for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties, is satisfactory. This is exemplified in the good support the teaching assistant gave to provide sympathetic help to Year 1 and 2 pupils who needed assistance to improve their reading and writing. In an excellent lesson on Greek temples, keen Year 5 and 6 pupils, who were fired up by the teacher's lucid and exciting introduction, conducted detailed research into various architectural and other features of these buildings.

Pupils share a good understanding of what it takes to grow up as healthy individuals. They appreciate the healthier school meals and enjoy the numerous opportunities to take part in sport that the school affords, while bemoaning the limitations to energetic activities imposed by their small playground. The school council is at an early stage of development and, while it is beginning to provide a good forum for discussion, it has limited independence and has not yet had a significant influence on school life. Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour promote strong relationships with the local community, and attendance is good. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their

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education: they have a good understanding of what is expected at secondary school and a developing knowledge of the world of work. Pupils' strong moral and social development is well exemplified in their good attitudes and the calm atmosphere throughout the school. Their understanding of those from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds is more limited because the school has few links with contrasting areas at home and abroad.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is enriched by numerous additional experiences for pupils. Visits, linked with topics studied, to places such as Shrewsbury Abbey enhance pupils' interest. Special days, such as the recent dance day and the planned astronomy day, provide interesting highlights. Visitors from the local community such as the vicar, mayoress and postman add variety to pupils' experiences. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is widespread and the new 'learning platform' provides an excellent resource for learning both at school and at home. The numerous after-school clubs are very popular; for example, over a third of pupils attend the dance club and more than

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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half attend the singing club.

While some teaching is good or better, its quality is inconsistent. The most effective lessons are in Key Stage 2 where teachers plan engaging activities and are careful to ensure that all pupils are kept at full stretch throughout the lesson. Across the school, pupils are enthusiastic to learn, keen to get on and happy to work independently or in collaboration with their friends. Teachers manage classrooms with great competence so there is a pleasant, co-operative atmosphere.

Where lessons are satisfactory, teaching does not set high enough expectations and pace can be pedestrian. Planning does not seek to extend the more able pupils, although consistently effective work by teaching assistants provides strong support for pupils with moderate learning and other difficulties. Activities that conclude lessons can be weakly planned so do not revisit and emphasise what has been learned.

The assessment of pupils' progress is systematic, providing the school with useful information on variations in learning. For example, it accurately identifies those who may need small group 'booster' sessions. However, this information is not well used at individual level to give pupils clear, accessible targets for improvement. Coupled with marking that often lacks analytical comment, this means pupils rarely receive straightforward advice on the next steps in their learning.

Pupils, parents and carers appreciate the quality of care. One parent, typical of many, wrote, 'The staff are extremely approachable and happy to discuss any concern.' Children know the considerate staff take their anxieties seriously and like the 'worry box', where they can raise anything that may be bothering them. The school uses outside agencies judiciously to provide strong support for those experiencing barriers to learning. Older pupils benefit from the strong links with the local comprehensive school. These help to improve their familiarity and confidence in their immediate educational future.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

In his first year at the school, the headteacher has introduced a number of changes and these are having a positive effect. For example, the focus on providing more challenge for older pupils has improved the number gaining higher levels in Key Stage 2 national assessments and is starting to raise standards. He is promoting greater staff involvement in running the school, seeking views on priorities for improvement and

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developing the school's plans for the future through consultation. This is motivating staff and raising their ambition to tackle areas that need improvement. Nevertheless, the monitoring of teaching and learning is infrequent so that inconsistencies remain and this limits pupils' progress. The school runs smoothly from day-to-day, even when painters and handymen are refurbishing areas of the school, as they were during the inspection. Governors discharge their duties effectively. Clear monitoring systems afford them a full, if occasionally inaccurate, picture of the school. They provide strong support for school leaders and offer effective challenge. The governing body's systems to ensure that pupils are safe are rigorous. The school meets all its safeguarding duties and policies and procedures are systematically reviewed. The school fosters in pupils an excellent understanding of how to avoid risk and stay safe. Effective care ensures satisfactory equality of opportunity for all pupils and no discrimination.

Parents and carers attest that they are well informed about the school and their children's progress. Regular newsletters and the school's 'learning platform' all provide useful updates on recent and future events and the schools website, which is currently under construction, is due to start shortly. The 'friends' raise considerable sums that are put to good use in supporting educational visits and funding improvements to the school environment. Partnerships with the local authority, a local cluster of schools and numerous outside agencies, such as the police and the Royal Air Force, do a great deal to broaden pupils' horizons. Numerous partners contribute to the curriculum, providing pupils with an interesting perspective on the wider world and providing improved value for money. Shared training with local schools improves opportunities for staff to develop their skills.

The school has audited its community cohesion provision and identified where it is strong in local links with village organisations, like the Norton in Bloom group. It also knows where improvements need to be sought, particularly in developing links with contrasting environments in the United Kingdom and abroad.

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	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

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy a secure start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They settle quickly into the nurturing environment and soon develop good social skills and a love of learning which they take with them through the school. The pleasant, well-equipped accommodation, both inside and out, makes a good contribution to children's well-being. Regular trips, like one to an aquarium, provide excitement and variety. Staff work well as a close team to care for children and support their learning. Children enter the Reception class with the skills and aptitudes that are typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress and move into Year 1 well prepared for more formal education and with attainment that is broadly average. Teaching covers all required areas of learning and focuses on developing children's basic skills in literacy and numeracy. However, plans indicate an imbalance in favour of adult-led activities, so that children are not given enough opportunities to initiate their own learning. This has the additional effect of limiting chances for children to work, play and learn outdoors. Regular assessment provides a clear picture of children's start and end points but does not give accessible information about each child's day-to-day activities.

The area is well organised and runs smoothly. Parents and carers are welcomed into the Reception area and informal contacts ensure parents, carers and staff are well-informed and promote children's well-being. Arrangements to keep children safe are thorough. The leaders of the Early Years Foundation Stage are not fully up-to-date with all current curriculum requirements but are aware of this shortfall and are seeking additional training and guidance.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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

Almost all parents and carers regard the school very favourably. The overwhelming majority of those who returned questionnaires were happy with their child's experience of the school. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about how the school deals

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with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection found no evidence to support this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Norton-In-Hales CofE 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 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 98 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	65	17	33	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	65	17	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	41	28	55	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	33	30	59	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	49	24	47	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	45	24	47	3	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	49	23	45	3	6	0	0
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)	23	45	21	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	45	24	47	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	43	21	41	7	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	47	22	43	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	61	18	35	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	59	19	37	1	2	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

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.



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Norton-in-Hales CofE Primary School, Market Drayton, TF9 4AT

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. It was so nice to meet such polite and keen pupils and we thought your behaviour was good. Well done!

Norton-in-Hales Primary School provides a satisfactory education. It has some good features and some things that could be better. The best elements are the way you are cared for, your good personal development and the good relationships in the school. The mix of subjects and topics you study, known as the curriculum, is also good, giving you some very interesting work to do.

The headteacher and staff are starting to make improvements. I have asked them to concentrate on:

- improving teaching by checking up on lessons more often and making sure you are kept at full stretch at all times
- improving the Reception class by giving more chances for children to work independently, especially outdoors, and developing teachers' understanding of this age range
- making sure that marking and target setting give you more helpful advice about how to improve your work - and if you do not understand how to improve, you should ask.

Once again, thank you for all your help. It was very good meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector

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