

Northwold Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	100233
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	376373
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2012
Lead inspector	Narinder Dohel

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	447
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alexander Shopov
Headteacher	Alison Kriel
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 September 2008
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	23–24 January 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Narinder Dohel

Additional inspector

Barbara Firth

Additional inspector

Steve Caulfield

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors spent over nine hours observing learning in lessons or parts of lessons taught by sixteen teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and observed the school's work. They looked at work in pupils' books, tracking data showing pupils' attainment and progress, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, and policies and records for safeguarding pupils. They considered the 149 responses to the questionnaire received from parents and carers, and the 13 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in two Nursery classes and two Reception classes. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is also above average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication needs or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. Many are at an early stage of learning English. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils start or leave the school part-way through the school year. The school operates a before- and after-school club and has achieved nationally recognised awards, including Activemark, a sports award and a breakfast club award. The school meets the current government floor standards.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Northwold is a good school. Pupils benefit from the school's inclusive environment. The school works hard to promote positive attitudes to learning and improve academic and personal development.
- Teaching has improved and is supported well by skilled teaching assistants. Lessons are well planned to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met appropriately.
- When children start school their skills are generally below expected levels for their age and they make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their overall progress is good, and this has resulted in attainment by the end of Year 6 that is in line with the national average.
- The whole-school focus on improving mathematics is successfully accelerating pupils' learning and progress, although there are too few opportunities to apply mathematical skills through problem-solving and investigations.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive the extra help and guidance that they need to achieve at least as well as their peers. The same is true for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The school has rightly identified the need for greater challenge for more-able pupils as a priority.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, and staff work well together as a strong team. They have secured sustainable improvements in many aspects of the school's work since the last inspection.
- Attendance has improved significantly and is now above average. A large majority of parents and carers agree that their children make good progress, feel safe and are well looked after at the school. Pupils are sociable, friendly and invite visitors to share in their learning.
- Behaviour is generally good and is a key factor in pupils' good progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate the remaining inconsistencies in pupils' rates of progress by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations of the most-

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- able pupils and that they always provide them with suitably challenging work
 - further improving marking to ensure that pupils know what they have done well and what they need to improve and provide opportunities for them to respond to this.
- Ensure that the recent improvements seen in mathematics are sustained by:
- providing pupils with more opportunities to undertake mathematical investigations and apply their skills through problem-solving
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills across all subjects.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

When children join the school their communication, language and literacy skills, and their personal, social and emotional development are often particularly weak. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage work successfully to establish positive relationships and create an environment where children can grow in confidence and develop very good personal and social skills. Well-established routines and accessible resources ensure that no time is wasted and help to develop children's independence inside and outside. Adults extend children's learning effectively through discussion and questioning. They plan activities which promote children's curiosity and enable them to deepen their understanding. Pupils' knowledge of phonics is prioritised daily, both in Reception and in Years 1 and 2; during the inspection, they confidently practised their reading skills by sounding out groups of letters and miming actions that helped them to recall the letter sounds quickly.

The enthusiasm for learning which children develop during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage is built upon throughout the school; in lessons, pupils were engaged, worked well independently and concentrated well. By age six, most pupils have reached the expected levels in reading. By the end of Year 2, attainment overall has risen since the previous inspection, being average in writing and mathematics. Recently, rapid gains have been made in reading and pupils' current standards in this area are broadly average. Attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 has also risen since the previous inspection and is now at national average levels. Pupils whose starting points were much lower than those expected nationally are very rapidly narrowing the gap in attainment and match the progress made by their peers nationally. There are no significant differences in outcomes for different groups of pupils as they move through the school, and the school has worked hard to narrow any gaps. Pupils speaking English as an additional language achieve at least as well as their peers by the time they leave Northwold. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress in their learning. Almost all parents agree that their children learn well and make good progress at Northwold.

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Quality of teaching

Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is a strength of the school. It is effective in ensuring they make good progress. Extra help is provided by teachers and skilled support staff in lessons and in additional sessions beyond the classroom. This means pupils learn very well. Personalised, specialist support from therapists and well-trained additional adults ensures that pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties receive the extra help and guidance that they need. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive additional support in literacy skills so that they make very good gains in English and across all subjects. The school has effective systems to check the progress pupils are making. Assessment information is reviewed regularly and used to plan work that is matched to pupils' learning needs in lessons, although occasionally the most-able pupils are not provided with sufficient challenge. Teachers ensure that explanations and expectations of learning are clear. However, marking does not always make clear what pupils have done well or provide guidance on the next steps pupils need to take. Opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage pupils to respond to feedback.

Teachers use a range of strategies and resources to engage pupils' interest and enable them to take an active part in lessons. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, pupils used tablet computers successfully to practise letter sounds. Visualisers are regularly used to share and edit pupils' work against success criteria and pupils enjoyed the opportunity to use technology to create animated stories. Teachers manage classes successfully and acknowledge pupils' efforts and contributions in lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning, are keen to contribute and cooperate well. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, detailed records of observations are kept. These are used to plan the next steps in children's learning and set each child an individual learning target. Parents agree that their children are taught well at the school, they learn basic skills and their needs are met.

The curriculum enables teachers to promote the development of basic skills which underpin pupils' good rates of learning and progress. For example, in a Year 5 class, pupils were supported in writing about characters through engaging in role play and discussing and reading work with a partner. Although the teaching of mathematics has improved, the planned curriculum does not currently provide enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects. Teachers are also effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across all year groups.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were confident that the standard of behaviour at the school is good and their children feel safe. Evidence supports the view that the good behaviour seen

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during the inspection is typical over time. A few parents were concerned that there is disruptive behaviour in lessons, but inspection evidence does not endorse this view. Pupils' behaviour makes a positive contribution to learning in lessons and the calm and friendly atmosphere around the school. They feel extremely safe and are very confident that staff will help them, should any difficulties occur. One group said, 'There's always an adult around who can help if you need it.' Regular opportunities in class to discuss feelings and how to resolve any emerging problems ensure that the school takes active steps to keep pupils safe from bullying. Pupils know about different forms of bullying, keeping safe when using computers and are clear about the steps they should take in order to keep themselves safe in a wide variety of situations. Attendance is above average overall.

Leadership and management

Ambition to do even better and 'make every minute count' permeates the school's work. Everyone is focused on success, from the headteacher and governors to staff, pupils and parents. Systems for self-evaluation, identifying and addressing areas for improvement are rigorous and well established. These have had a good impact on improving the quality of teaching in the classroom and there is now less reliance on interventions to accelerate pupils' achievement. Significant improvement has been made since the last inspection and the capacity to sustain this and improve further is good. Equality is promoted and discrimination tackled very well so that attainment and rates of learning and progress have increased for all groups of pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding are secure and all staff are appropriately trained.

Topic themes are bringing the curriculum to life and are being planned to ensure pupils develop high levels of understanding across a wide range of different subjects. The curriculum provides memorable and enriching experiences. For example, older pupils spoke of their science links with a local secondary school and a trip to Cambridge University to work with scientists. Opportunities to develop 'financial literacy' through the CREATE project enabled pupils to visit the Bank of England and Canary Wharf. Displays of pupils' work around the school illustrate the school's success in achieving inclusion for a diverse community. Pupils learn about cultures and festivals from a wide variety of faiths and communities. They have a good understanding of values, and demonstrate caring attitudes towards one another. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the social and academic opportunities the school provides.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



25 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northwold Primary School, Hackney, E5 8RN

Thank you very much for your friendly welcome and for helping us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much and were pleased to be able to talk to so many of you. You told us how much you enjoy being at Northwold School and how it has got better. You also told us how the teachers are helping you to get better in your work and that behaviour in your school is good. You said you like the interesting things you learn about, especially the trips and visits that your teachers organise for you. We were delighted to see how very well you all get on together and that you are well behaved in lessons and around the school. This helps to make your school a happy place to be.

I am writing to tell you about the judgements that we reached. Northwold is a good school. You make good progress in your reading, writing and mathematics and reach national standards by the end of Year 6. Those of you who need extra help are very well supported so that you also make good progress. Your attendance is above average. All the staff work together as a team to look after you very well.

We can see that the adults who run your school want to carry on making it better. You can help by asking your teachers to make sure that:

- the work they give you is always challenging enough
- you always know what you have done well and how you can improve further
- you get better in understanding mathematics through investigations and problem solving.

I would like to thank you again and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Narinder Dohel
Lead inspector

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