

# Northlew and Ashbury Parochial Church of England Primary School

Northlew, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 3PB

## Inspection dates

1–2 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Northlew and Ashbury School sustains a very friendly atmosphere, which promotes mutual encouragement in both pupils and staff. As a result, they are very caring and respectful of each other and exude confidence.
- The headteacher's well-respected and unflagging enthusiasm and commitment that each child should be treated as a unique individual are fully shared and promoted by staff and governors.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have strengthened the way they work together as a team. They are looking to the future with refreshed vigour and are quickening the pace of improvement.
- The care of pupils with complex needs, including disabilities, is exemplary.
- Teaching is typically good. At times, as in art and music, teaching is outstanding. Other strengths include the way all staff keep pupils very safe, sustain pupils' good behaviour and develop their collaborative learning skills.
- Pupils' good academic and personal achievements are further nurtured across a broad and stimulating range of often practical learning activities, both in and out of school.
- As a result, as the pupils say, 'Learning is often fun' and pupils greatly enjoy school and share excellent relationships.
- All staff promote very supportive links with parents and this excellent partnership helps to secure the pupils' self-confidence and consistently above average attendance.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At times, teachers do not make enough reference to pupils' individual targets or give pupils sufficient information about how to improve when they mark their work.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunity to learn by finding things out for
- Pupils' handwriting skills and the way they set out their work in mathematics are not developed consistently enough as they move through the school.

themselves.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited ten lessons and was accompanied by the headteacher during several of these observations.
- The inspector observed morning playtime and lunch breaks and also attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with members of the school council and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes. The inspector met with governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector held meetings with school staff, including senior leaders.
- The inspector spoke with a number of parents as they brought their children to school, and took account of their views in planning and undertaking the inspection. The inspector also received seven staff questionnaires. Although there were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to produce a result, the inspector took account of the school's own survey of parents' views conducted earlier this year.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a very small school.
- All pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, children from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the normal times is slightly above average. The school does not use any alternative educational provision.
- The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are accommodated in a mixed-age class with Years 1 and 2.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress from good to outstanding by:
  - strengthening teachers' marking of pupils' work, especially in mathematics, by more specifically identifying next steps for improvement and frequently linking them with pupils' individual targets
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning, including by investigating and finding things out for themselves
  - more consistently developing pupils' handwriting skills, and, in mathematics, focusing on encouraging pupils to set out and record their work more precisely so that their understanding and progress can be more readily checked.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children's skills on entry vary significantly from year to year; whilst sometimes matching those normally expected, emotional and communication skills are often below expected levels.
- Observations of pupils' responses in lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and analysis of school and national data show that achievement is good for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Pupils entitled to pupil premium support also achieve as well as other pupils, as, for example, in the 2012 end of Year 6 national assessments, when all those receiving such additional support attained the same at least expected levels of attainment as their peers.
- Pupils are genuinely pleased by what their schoolmates achieve and, encouraged by their teachers, enjoy working together and sharing ideas. As a result, pupils make excellent gains in developing their speaking and listening skills.
- From the moment they arrive in school, children are also encouraged to look at and enjoy books and also begin the systematic and very successful development of their knowledge of letter sounds (phonics), which continues and underpins their excellent progress in learning to read. By the time they leave the school, pupils are confident capable readers, demonstrating above average reading skills.
- Children make full use of these skills to engage well in all areas of learning and make a good start in the Reception and Years 1 and 2 class, especially in developing their self-confidence and social skills.
- Above-average speaking, collaborative learning and reading skills continue to support the pupils' good progress as they move through the school. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils talk knowledgeably about consonants, vowel sounds and tricky words and in Years 3 to 6, pupils thoughtfully discuss how to deduce, infer and interpret differing texts.
- As a result, pupils' broadly average levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics represent good achievement in relation to their starting points.
- Attainment in writing and numeracy is improving, as seen in pupils' displayed imaginative letters, written as if from 'The Big Bad Wolf' and in reply from 'Red Riding Hood'. However, progress is constrained on occasion by weaknesses in handwriting and the presentation of recorded work.
- Even so, across the school, stimulated by an exciting range of activities, many pupils demonstrate good skills across the expressive arts and in using computers.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers typically adapt their teaching methods well to match pupils' interests and understanding and manage behaviour very effectively.
- All staff present excellent role models and provide consistent, extremely well-organised care, especially for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- In all classes, the teachers' and teaching assistants' close knowledge of individual pupils, aided by precise questioning, lifts pupils' confidence and extends their thinking. This was observed, for example, during a practical music-making session in the Reception and Years 1 and 2 class when the teacher successfully developed the pupils' understanding of terms such as volume and tempo.
- Thought-provoking and enjoyable learning was also seen in the Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 class, as pupils took part in a carousel of mathematics activities, including working on computers, completing timed multiplication tables tests and discussing word problems with the teacher.
- All staff are skilled in talking with the pupils and explaining how they can improve. However, teachers do not always make best use of written marking to make links with pupils' individual targets and to identify the specific actions that pupils should make to improve their work. This

means that, on occasion, opportunities to quicken pupils' progress, for example to improve handwriting and the way pupils record the steps taken to solve number problems, are missed.

- Similarly at times, the pace of learning slows because too much adult-led teaching constrains pupils' ability to initiate their own learning activity and to find things out for themselves.
- Nevertheless, because teachers provide such an impressive breadth of practical learning opportunities, pupils really enjoy their time at school and learn well, as noted for example, in the Reception and Years 1 and 2 class, where pupils have observed and talked about tadpoles, experienced a 'Bear Hunt' and, when challenged by an adult, were seen to develop their understanding of fractions by dividing a cake into equal parts and then eating them!

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils, staff and governors agree that pupils behave well, as at the time of the previous inspection. They acknowledge, as the inspector found, that occasionally a few pupils do not always give of their best, particularly when recording their work in books, which is not always as neat as it should be.
- Even so, all those associated with the school, including parents and visitors, identify that pupils are very polite, show good manners, and relate extremely well to each other and adults.
- Inspection also showed that pupils' willingness to share and develop their ideas with each other, for example when discussing story characters in the Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 class, has a beneficial impact on their learning.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy, safe lifestyle. This is clearly evident in their confident, eager and skilled participation in the expressive arts and during the physical activities, which characterise the happy start to each day.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and show great consideration of each other's needs. They are mindful, for example, of e-safety and the need to beware of cyber bullying. Pupils say they feel very safe at school, understand that bullying can occur in different forms, for example verbal abuse, and state that bullying is very rare.
- Pupils say, 'Teachers are very kind and we have lots of friends', expressing confidence in the way adults look after them so well.
- Pupils make good contributions to the life of the school, for example on the school council and participating in fund-raising events such as 'Readathon' in aid of children suffering from cancer.
- Attendance continues to be above average, further reflecting pupils' great enjoyment of school and the staff's very supportive links with parents.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The respected headteacher leads a strong drive to do the best for the pupils. She fulfils a significant teaching role and shares her expertise effectively with other staff to check that good teaching is sustained across the school.
- As a team, leaders and managers, including governors, check the work of the school effectively to make sure that the right areas for improvement are identified and tackled. This includes reviewing teachers' performance regularly to ensure that salary progression reflects the quality of their teaching and leadership responsibilities.
- Staff are supported well by checks of their performance and have engaged purposefully in training to develop their skills, for example to sharpen their teaching of phonics.
- As a result, pupils' reading skills are strong across the school and the pupils' adept speaking skills also reflect the high quality of the school's work in the expressive arts.
- These features also show good improvement since the previous inspection, and the capacity to continue this into the future. Leaders are now increasing the use of pupils' reading and speaking

skills to quicken their progress in literacy and numeracy.

- Pupils are treated equally, and are kept free from discrimination, aided by the staff's diligence in sustaining close links with parents and their deep knowledge of each pupil's individual needs.
- As a result, significant strengths in assisting disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils supported by the pupil premium, frequently by providing additional adult support on an individual basis, enable them to achieve as well as other pupils.
- Pupils are also kept safe through high quality pastoral support and by full adherence with safeguarding and other statutory procedures, such as safe recruitment of staff.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully and harmoniously across a broad range of stimulating activities encompassing the expressive arts, sport and environmental aspects. During the inspection, for example, pupils collaborated as archeologists exploring the site of new raised planting beds and painted beautiful shell pictures reflecting those of a Japanese artist.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this effective school.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is firmly focused on securing the future development of the school. The governing body strongly promotes close links with parents, the church and local community and contributes to the wide range of activities that enrich pupils' learning. Governors also undertake regular training, for example in monitoring the budget and teaching. Close consultation with staff keeps governors well informed about the quality of teaching and learning. This also enables them to work effectively with the headteacher in making sure that checks of staff performance lead to improved teaching. Governors receive regular reports from the headteacher, question her closely, holding her to account for the way provision promotes pupils' learning. As a result, governors ensure that pupils have their individual needs met and that additional funds, such as the pupil premium, are spent effectively helping those pupils assisted to achieve as successfully as other pupils. Governors also visit the school often and have recently restructured their sub-committees to make better use of their expertise in checking and supporting the work of the school. For example, governors know how to compare the school's data of pupils' attainments with those of other schools and, with staff, are now improving the way they examine data of pupils' progress.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113414
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	413004

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	34
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Helena Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Lampe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3–4 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01409 221420
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