

Norton-sub-Hamdon C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123818
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340433
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Joanna Pike

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	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan More
Headteacher	Kathy Foot
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2007
School address	New Road Norton-sub-Hamdon Stoke-sub-Hamdon TA14 6SF
Telephone number	01935 881815
Fax number	01935 881920
Email address	school.256@educ.somerset.gov.uk

Age group	Error! Reference source not found.
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Six lessons were observed, six teachers were seen, meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at: lesson plans; pupils' literacy and numeracy books; the school's policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe; the school's development plan; data on pupils' attainment and progress; records on vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities; and subject action plans. Inspectors also scrutinised 17 questionnaires from staff, 65 questionnaires from pupils and 56 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- whether as a result of the school's actions progress is now consistently good across the school
- how effectively the school monitors provision and assesses and tracks pupils' progress
- the impact of monitoring and teachers' professional development on the quality of teaching
- how well the curriculum contributes to pupils' academic and personal development.

Information about the school

Norton-sub-Hamdon school is smaller than most primary schools and serves a rural area. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is in the Reception class. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school has gained Healthy School status and the Dyslexia Friendly School award.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Pupils really love their learning at this good school because of the exciting and varied activities which they are offered. All pupils join in some of the outstanding range of clubs on offer, including a wide range of sports. This breadth of opportunity also contributes to pupils' excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they treat each other and the school with care and respect.

The headteacher has built a strong staff team, and together with the governors has created a rich and broad curriculum so pupils can achieve well personally and academically. Pupils have a good understanding of the local community because of the numerous ways in which the school and community work together. Pupils' understanding of the diversity of cultures within Britain and the global community is not so well developed. The school's self-evaluation is very thorough and accurate. This ensures that the school focuses its attention on the key priorities for improvement. Determined action was taken to address a dip in attainment and progress in 2007 and 2008 caused by changes in staffing circumstances. Effective use was made of support and training for staff as well as a range of initiatives. These actions led to better teaching. Initiatives included the 'talk for writing' project which focuses on giving pupils more opportunities to talk through their ideas. This proved successful in writing and was spread to mathematics. Overall, pupils make good progress, especially in reading. As a result of the focus on writing and mathematics attainment has risen to above average and progress is good in Year 6. The school knows that it still has work to do in raising achievement further in writing and mathematics so that all cohorts are making consistently good progress. Provision in Reception has improved since the previous inspection and is outstanding. As a result, at the end of the year Reception children make good progress and reach above-average attainment. These improvements in provision and achievement indicate that the school has good capacity to improve.

In spite of these improvements, pupils do not always have a clear idea of how well they are doing or how to improve. Most pupils know their targets, but teachers do not regularly refer to these in lessons to help pupils know what they need to do to reach them. Neither do teachers always explain the key points for success in lessons so that pupils can evaluate their own progress using these.

Parents value the outstanding care which their children receive. Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults have their best interests at heart. Relationships are exceptional, and the school has a family feel.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils’ learning, especially in writing and mathematics, by developing their understanding of how well they are doing and how to improve so that pupils:
 - know the key points to success in lessons and use these to evaluate their own progress
 - understand their current level and the steps they need to make in lessons to reach their target.
- Improve pupils’ understanding of the diversity of cultures and traditions in Britain today and in the global community by developing the use of relevant topic work and forging links with another United Kingdom school by the end of the calendar year.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils’ confidence and enjoyment are two key factors in their good progress. They work hard, even when the challenge is high. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson pupils concentrated and persevered well in extending their skills in multiplying decimals. Attainment is above average and progress is consistently good in reading across the school. Writing has improved over the last two years and attainment is now above average. In mathematics the greater focus on pupils knowing their number facts, together with staff training, has improved attainment.

Pupils relish the opportunities they have to contribute to the school community, such as acting as mentors or buddies for younger pupils. Reception children are very excited about being ‘maxis’ to the new children when they visit. The school council gives older pupils an effective voice. For example, members expressed concern about the safety of riding scooters during breaks and changes were made. Pupils gain a good awareness of the world of work through hearing about different jobs from visitors and during trips. Opportunities such as ‘charity challenge’, when older pupils organise fund-raising activities, develop enterprise and team skills. These experiences, together with their above-average reading, writing and numeracy skills, prepare them well for their future economic well-being. Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils’ positive attitudes to their learning. Good links with the local church contribute well to pupils’ growing awareness of the feelings and beliefs of others.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning Taking into account:	2
	2

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

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good or better. Pupils learn well because their understanding is built in small steps, with teachers giving good explanations. Opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking helps deepen their knowledge. In a Year 2 and 3 mathematics lesson the teacher presented a problem-solving challenge. Pupils really enjoyed the task and were totally engrossed in explaining their ideas to each other. This helped to build their understanding of different approaches and they made good gains. Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' good learning, but very occasionally, when teachers are talking to the whole class, they are not used so well.

Assessment is used effectively to plan and adapt learning so that work is well matched to pupils' needs. Marking mostly gives good advice on how to improve, but does not always make clear how well pupils have done. Just under a quarter of pupils' responses to the questionnaires indicated that they did not know how well they were doing. This was confirmed from discussions with pupils, and in lessons when frequently opportunities were missed for pupils to assess their learning.

The strong emphasis on English and mathematics is balanced by good provision across other subjects. Themes linking together several subjects are helping pupils apply their skills in literacy and numeracy. These opportunities are not yet systematically planned. Attainment in art and music is above average because of the good teaching in these subjects. Sport also benefits from the effective partnerships with other schools. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as other pupils because provision is good. This has been recognised by the school gaining the Dyslexia Friendly School Award.

The school has a welcoming ethos and staff provide excellent care. This results in confident pupils. As one parent said, 'the teachers are all very dedicated and care about my child as an individual.' The school has extremely well-organised transition arrangements to ensure that children starting in the Reception class can settle quickly and move smoothly into Year 1, and that pupils can make a confident start at secondary school. The school works really effectively to support parents and pupils through difficult times. Barriers to learning are minimised by arranging extra support

within school and making good use of the close links which have been developed with a range of outside agencies.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

A significant feature of the headteacher’s effective leadership has been developing skills in others. Staff work well as a team, having clear roles and responsibilities. For example, senior and middle leaders selected sensible initiatives to improve writing which the whole staff enthusiastically developed. Astute use of analysis and research, such as differences between girls’ and boys’ learning in mathematics, has helped the school to target strategies carefully. Evaluation is effectively used to adapt and further improve. Pupils’ attainment and progress is tracked well each term. Senior leaders have recognised that more frequent checks would help identify underachievement more swiftly. Governors play a significant role in school improvement. For example, governors held an open meeting with staff and parents to discuss mathematics. This helped the school and parents to work together to raise achievement. Governors’ monitoring is effective but is not always rigorous enough in using the school development plan’s success criteria to hold the school to account. Good policies and procedures ensure that safeguarding is effective. Governors and senior leaders keep these under review so that improvements can be made. At the time of the inspection all requirements were met, including child protection. The school promotes equal opportunities well. No groups achieve differently to others, and girls’ weaknesses in mathematics have been successfully tackled. Partnerships with other local schools extend what the school can offer, including staff training. The school has done much to promote community cohesion, as seen in the pupils’ sense of belonging to the school, their strong contribution to the community and the harmonious relationships throughout the school. A weakness is the extent to which the pupils appreciate their place in the global community and the diversity of people’s backgrounds in Britain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and	2
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driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

A parent commented, ‘I can’t believe how much my child has learnt since September.’ This sums up the outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children really flourish because of the highly attractive environment which is well arranged for learning. Children can hardly contain their excitement during lessons because adults make learning enthralling and fun. Extremely good use is made of the outdoor area and school grounds. Children thoroughly enjoyed their games with a parachute while making good gains in language, social and physical skills, alongside their knowledge and understanding about the world. Children develop good independent learning skills, and organise themselves and others well. Assessment is thorough and detailed, ensuring that next steps are planned extremely effectively to extend learning. Partnership with parents is excellent with many joining in the early morning activities. Leadership constantly seeks ways to improve provision further. For example, children are taught separately from Year 1 during the mornings so learning can be even more personalised. This has resulted in better attainment and progress. Children start in Reception with the skills and knowledge typically expected for their age, though reading, writing and calculation tend to be slightly weaker. By the end of the year children’s attainment is above average in all areas.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers expressed positive views about the school's provision and are largely in agreement with inspectors' judgements. In particular, all parents and carers who responded felt that the school kept their children safe and helped them to have a healthy lifestyle. A few disagreed with the statement that their children enjoy school and/or was making enough progress.

Inspectors looked into these areas carefully. They agreed with comments that the school is very successful at keeping pupils safe and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors did not find the weaknesses referred to above.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Norton-sub-Hamdon C of E 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 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 124 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	63	15	27	5	9	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	36	64	20	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	27	48	27	48	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	39	26	46	7	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	59	16	29	4	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	32	57	18	32	5	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	66	19	34	0	0	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)	29	52	22	39	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	32	57	18	32	4	7	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	30	54	30	2	4	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	45	20	36	5	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	55	16	29	5	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	40	71	10	18	2	4	1	2

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 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	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 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.

18 June 2010

Dear Pupils,



Inspection of Norton-sub-Hamdon, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, TA14 6SF

Thank you for making us welcome, showing us your work and talking to us about your school. Also thank you to those of you who filled in questionnaires. I thought you might like to know what I am saying in my report. Yours is a good school and we enjoyed our two days with you. We will remember how polite and extremely well behaved you all were. You know how to stay safe and your understanding of why exercise is good for you is excellent. You enjoy taking responsibility and we were impressed with the way you like to look after younger pupils.

You get off to an outstanding start in the Reception classes, and continue to make good progress throughout the school. The main reasons why you progress well are the good teaching and the exciting curriculum. Lots of you told us how much you like school and the exciting things you do in lessons and during trips out, such as your recent walk to Ham Hill. This leads to you really working hard because you enjoy your learning so much.

You told us that you are not always clear about how well you are doing or how to improve. Those in charge of your school want to make things even better for you. We have tried to help by asking the school to do the following.

- Help you to make even better progress in writing and mathematics by knowing the small steps you need to make in lessons to reach your targets, and by being given time to find out how well you have done in lessons.
- Improve your understanding of the different cultures and traditions of the people who live in Britain and around the world.

Yours sincerely,
Joanna Pike
Additional inspector

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