

Inspection of Northgate Primary School

Green Lane, Northgate, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 8DX

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Northgate Primary is a school where pupils' voices are heard. Their views are valued; their behaviour is understood and staff have high expectations for them. As one pupil commented, 'teachers understand how we think and this helps us to learn'. Leaders do the right thing at the right time and, as a result, the school has improved since the last inspection and continues on its ambitious journey.

The vast majority of pupils form very positive relationships with each other and understand the difference between falling out between friends and intentional, damaging bullying. A few parents and pupils feel that, in spite of action from the school, bullying incidents do not stop completely. However, inspectors found that the school had effective and innovative strategies for helping pupils to get along better.

Pupils behave well and are safe in school. Friendly, polite and alert, they listen to adults' instructions and explanations in and out of class. They understand exactly what the school's values are all about. Pupils are genuinely and rightly proud of how inclusive the school is: no one feels isolated or unwelcome if they come from a different faith, culture or type of family.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders focus on the right priorities, and as a result the school has improved since the last inspection. The teaching of reading from Reception upwards is a strength. Leaders have ensured that staff have expertise in phonics. The school's excellent library is in constant use throughout the day. Pupils naturally pick up a book to read at every opportunity, as well as exploring demanding texts as part of their English curriculum.

Teaching and materials are adapted so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who attend the resourced unit, can learn effectively alongside their peers. Leaders and staff possess a sound understanding of different needs and are skilled in identifying pupils who may have difficulties.

Pupils are taught a well-sequenced, demanding and varied curriculum from Nursery through to Year 6. Curriculum planning is particularly precise and ambitious in science, physical education and design and technology. Staff are confident in teaching the planned curriculum in all subjects and phases. They are adept at checking pupils' responses as they go along. However, leaders know that there is more work to do to establish the most effective methods of formally assessing what pupils know and remember in all subjects.

Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge, not only as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also because of previously low expectations. Leaders are tackling this systematically. For example, the current mathematics curriculum is deliberately

planned to help pupils get more secure with their number work right through the school, including in the early years.

Many children in the early years have not had enough experience of choosing rewarding activities, playing games, solving problems or interacting with adults. The new curriculum in the early years is designed to provide richer experiences for children and prepare them well for Year 1. However, leaders have rightly identified that Nursery and Reception staff need further training to ensure that all children access a full range of experiences that will help them to progress the most.

The school develops pupils' character and sense of responsibility extremely well. Pupils help to shape the school's special inclusive ethos. All pupils have the opportunity to take on leadership roles and promote the school's values. As a result, pupils are confident ambassadors for the school and themselves. Their strong sense of identity and what they stand for shines through and gives them the determination to change things for the better when they enter the next phase of their lives.

Pupils are attentive and disciplined in lessons. They respect adults and know they are there to help them learn and be safe. Very little off-task behaviour gets in the way of learning. Some pupils in the school have experienced significant difficulties and sometimes find it difficult to settle to the routines of school. However, over time, their behaviour and self-esteem improve.

Governors are completely in tune with the school's priorities. They challenge leaders to pinpoint the impact of their work, not just on raising standards in the school, but on pupils' experiences. Governors safeguard the school's values and its commitment to inclusion, while providing strong support for the headteacher and staff. They keep a careful watch on staff's workload and welfare. Staff feel very supported. Leaders inspire staff's commitment to working together for the good of the pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know the pupils and the community they live in well. They understand that pressures from outside the school can cause strain for some families, which may put children at risk. Staff are trained effectively in how to spot and report signs of concern. Records of concerns are thorough and orderly. The school works closely with other partners who protect children. Leaders' in-depth knowledge of pupils and their backgrounds is invaluable in ensuring that other agencies step in and protect children who are at risk.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment of the current curriculum is not fully established in all subject areas. As a result, leaders are not getting precise enough understanding of how much

pupils learn and what they remember. Leaders must ensure that assessment of pupils' learning is directly based on what pupils have actually learned and that it is helpful for future planning.

- Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes are getting used to the new approach to the early years curriculum. Some opportunities to help children progress are being missed. Leaders must ensure that adults working in the early years understand exactly how to implement the new curriculum and that they gain confidence when directing and responding to children they are working with.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	133973
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10200866
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	619
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah James
Headteacher	Amanda Harrison
Website	http://www.northgate.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Northgate is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The current headteacher took up her post in September 2020.
- The school has resourced provision for up to 14 pupils with hearing impairments.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, governors and a representative of the local authority.

- An inspector spoke to parents dropping off their children and took into account responses to Ofsted Parent View. An inspector spoke to one parent on the telephone.
- Responses to the staff and pupil surveys were taken into account alongside other evidence.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, design and technology, and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leads, looked at planning, visited lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of their work.
- All inspectors visited the Nursery and Reception classes. Inspectors also reviewed aspects of the wider curriculum, including computing, art and music.
- Inspectors spoke to several groups of pupils about their views about their personal development.
- Inspectors considered the school's work to support pupils in the resourced unit and those with education, health and care plans.
- Inspectors reviewed arrangements for safeguarding pupils, which included checks made on adults working in the school and records of concerns about child protection. Inspectors also spoke to staff and pupils about safety and child protection.
- Information about pupils' behaviour, attendance and incidents of bullying was reviewed.

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Laurie Anderson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Ellison	Her Majesty's Inspector
Shaun Jarvis	Her Majesty's Inspector

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