

Norbreck Primary Academy

Norbreck Road, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire, FY5 1PD

Inspection dates 25–26 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Norbreck Primary Academy is a good school. It is a harmonious school community where high expectations are at the heart of its work.
- Pupils are very happy at the school because of good support and guidance. They are given positive and constructive support on how to improve their work.
- The school is improving, led by a dedicated and committed headteacher. The progress of pupils is discussed fully by staff and, as a result, staff know their pupils well, and ensure that they are developing well across the school.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school governors assist the headteacher in ensuring that the school's procedures for managing the performance of staff are rigorous and increasingly challenging.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school, because of a focus on individual needs in this subject. The rates of progress in reading between Years 3 and 6 are above those found nationally, and pupils attain above average standards by the time they leave in Year 6.
- The progress of pupils in mathematics and writing is good and, in the current Year 6, pupils are set to achieve above average standards in mathematics by the end of the year. For disadvantaged pupils, progress is more than that expected nationally.
- The care, support and guidance that pupils receive lead to spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision which is of a high standard.
- Parents are very supportive. They are fulsome in the praise of staff, and appreciate all that the school does for their children.
- Behaviour is good. There are high expectations to uphold good manners and respect for each other which staff, pupils and parents value. The school's efforts to ensure that children are safe are very successful.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards of writing in Key Stage 1 are not improving quickly enough. There is not enough focus on accuracy and care. Older pupils do not always get enough opportunities to practise their skills in writing and so achieve higher standards.
- Some of the most able pupils do not progress as quickly as other pupils in the school. This is because, at times, teaching does not sufficiently challenge them.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 29 lessons or parts of lessons, and conducted other learning walks and work scrutinies.
- Inspectors observed children during playtimes and lunchtimes, spoke to them during lessons, and met with three separate groups to discuss areas of their learning and experiences at school.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and middle leaders. A meeting also took place with members of the Governing Body, and one with an improvement partner from the Local Authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents shared by the school, including pupils' work in the books, the school's own current performance data, the school's arrangements for safeguarding, documents relating to the monitoring of teaching and performance, and pupils' attendance data. They also looked at the school's own self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered the 94 replies made on Parent View, and the 45 replies to the staff questionnaire. The school's own surveys were considered, and several conversations took place with parents at the beginning and end of school.

Inspection team

Jeremy Barnes, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Loftus	Additional Inspector
Peter Martin	Additional Inspector
Alastair Younger	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Norbreck Primary Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2012. When its predecessor school, Norbreck Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is a larger than most primary schools.
The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is similar to that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after children.
- The proportion of pupils with special education needs is broadly average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. Nine percent of the children are from different ethnic groups, mainly Chinese and Eastern European, and most of these speak English as an additional language.
- The academy meets the government floor targets, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school's headteacher is a local leader of education, and one of its senior leaders is a Specialist Leader of Education.
- The school is an alliance partner in the Fylde Coast Teaching School Alliance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more focused teaching and closely matched support raises the overall achievement of the most able pupils in both key stages and in the early years.
- Improve pupils' writing, especially in Key Stage 1, by:
 - making sure early writing is more accurate in its letter formation
 - ensuring that all staff show pupils the right way to form letters, using a clearly agreed script
 - giving more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing through activities in other subjects in all classes.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Governors and senior leaders provide this academy school with strong and clear leadership. As a result, staff know their roles well and subscribe to a strong set of values and positive attitudes.
- The headteacher is determined and dedicated, sharing her aims and values clearly with the school community. Staff report being part of a team which is constantly striving for improvement, and where everyone is valued and supported.
- The provision for teachers' professional development is very good and staff are very appreciative of the opportunities they receive. There is an enthusiasm for professional dialogue which is indicative of a staff who are willing to 'go the extra mile' to improve classroom practice.
- Parents are very satisfied with the school's work and report that their children are happy and safe. Many praise the clear communication between staff and parents, saying that the school is 'so well organised' and that their children are 'thriving' at the school. School leaders are respected, both in the school community and in the local area.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They know their children well and monitor progress rigorously. Although the improvement plans and development areas are ambitious and aspirational, they could benefit from more precision. This would assist staff in focusing on improvement priorities within clear timescales.
- Although not part of an academy chain, the school has been careful to retain a wide support network. It is an alliance partner within the local teaching school alliance, where it assists in providing a range of on-going training for both its own staff and those in other schools and networks. Some of this work is led by staff from the school. This is typical of the school's desire to play a full part within its local community, and is much appreciated by staff.
- Although several middle leaders are new to their role, already their aspiration and skills have resulted in improvements to teaching. They regularly check each other's practice and come together to ensure that pupils' work is assessed and evaluated correctly.
- The school's curriculum offers a range of exciting opportunities for pupils, both within and outside school hours. Notable strengths are in music and French, where pupils speak and write with enthusiasm. The curriculum promotes high standards of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is determined to ensure that pupils develop an excellent understanding of living harmoniously within a modern British community. There is a great deal of enrichment opportunities for pupils, typified in their quality by an award-winning school choir, who sing with excellent pitch, feeling and diction. Equal opportunities are fully promoted.
- Leaders are assiduous in ensuring that the sports funding is used to good effect. The numbers of pupils experiencing sporting competition are increasing, and the funding has also increased the number of opportunities given to pupils out of school hours. Although using the sports funding to buy in local specialist support, staff are improving their skills as well because of the guidance and advice provided.
- Parents are very satisfied with the leadership at the school, and inspectors spoke with many who valued the good communication between home and school, whether through the availability of teachers, or the weekly newsletter and text messages.
- Safeguarding procedures meet all statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school and work closely with leaders to monitor the standards of achievement and teaching. Subject leaders report regularly on both challenge and support. When becoming an academy, the governors were careful to ensure that they had a range of appropriate skills to oversee the work of the school, and this re-evaluation has helped strengthen their monitoring of the school's work.
 - Governors have a good knowledge of specific funds such as the pupil premium and sports funding and these are allocated carefully, with reports freely available to parents. They know how these funds have been targeted and the success that this has brought to pupils' achievement. Governors are proud of their school, and have been vital in ensuring that the change to academy status has not compromised the gradual improvements at the school.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The headteacher is insistent that pupils show good manners, treat each other with respect, and care for their school. Staff, parents and pupils respond well to this and, as a result, relationships are good throughout the school.
- Pupils are very happy at the school and enjoy their learning. Attendance is consistently above average, and pastoral work of the staff, led by the school's learning mentor, ensures that pupils are listened to and cared for extremely well. For a large school, parents and staff both commented to inspectors how 'it has a family feel'.
- Lessons rarely suffer from low-level disruption. Pupils are attentive and keen to learn, showing a growing maturity as they discuss with their teachers how they can improve their work. Bullying is very rare, and children and parents have confidence in the staff to deal with it correctly in the event of it taking place.
- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, for example, within the large school council group. Through their own initiative and with the support of a local councillor, they have created a 'special zone' for pupils to enjoy at lunchtime. This is much appreciated by other pupils.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils are given good guidance about how to keep safe, including that regarding e-safety. Sensitively given advice has been taken up by pupils who report no discrimination or bullying.
- The school's learning mentor makes a valuable contribution to safeguarding pupils by linking with external agencies and working with parents. The good communications systems in the school mean that the staff are highly aware of vulnerable pupils and how they can be supported.
- Pupils have very good relationships with staff and with each other. They are very appreciative of the wide range of sports and health activities which promote their well-being. Parents agree, saying that staff 'do a lot for the children.'

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good over time, and some is outstanding. Its strengths lie in the good relationships between staff and pupils, leading to good feedback, support and guidance. For example, a work scrutiny showed that a pupil was asked in their book to ensure that particular vocabulary was used in future writing. The following week's work showed how this target had been achieved and how it had improved the overall quality of the writing.
- At its best, teaching promotes high expectations and challenges pupils to think. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the teaching of the most able group allowed pupils to discuss the perimeter of regular pentagons and then the relationship to multiplication. However, in some lessons, the work set for the most able is not challenging enough and pupils complete it easily.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils are given good feedback to help them improve. They speak very clearly about these processes, and even assist themselves through good self- and peer- evaluation. For example, inspectors observed Year 5 pupils supporting Year 3 pupils, showing them how they could improve their writing. This good peer support and assessment is becoming established throughout the classes.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good subsequent progress. Staff have been trained well in how to support this group of pupils, and teaching assistants, in particular, are skilled in recognising the teaching needed to support these pupils individually.
- The teaching of reading throughout the school is very effective, and as a result, pupils enjoy their reading and talk confidently about different authors, texts and styles. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were full of enthusiasm when putting together a brochure for tourists, quickly improving their knowledge of rhetorical questions and persuasive vocabulary.
- Support staff make very good contributions to the overall standard of teaching, for example ensuring that the teaching of phonics is at the correct level for each child. Their professional development is good so that their knowledge and skills are up to date.
- The marking of pupils' work in writing for the older pupils is consistently good. Colour codes are used to help the children know which aspect of writing requires improvement and pupils respond to the advice maturely. As a result, writing is improving between Year 3 and Year 6. However, it is less good between Year 1 and Year 2. Teachers do not always show pupils how to form letters and, on occasions, they allow

inaccuracies in letter formation, and writing that is untidy, to go unchecked.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress across the school is good. Unvalidated results from 2014 in Year 6 show that pupils achieved standards that were only in line with national averages in all subjects. However, these pupils had started from low starting points in Key Stage 1 and their progress was therefore good. School attainment information and inspection evidence indicate that the pupils currently in Year 6 are achieving standards which are above average except in writing, which is average.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress. It is better in mathematics, where more pupils, including the school's disadvantaged pupils, are attaining good standards and are challenged more. The school is particularly successful in ensuring that its pupils meet the expected standard in the Year 1 screening check on phonics (understanding the sounds that letters make). Rates are consistently above those found nationally.
- Reading attainment is good for pupils in Key Stage 1, helped by regular practice and review. Because there are good links with parents who support their child reading at home, enjoyment of reading is evident in all age groups, stemming from good quality books which are suitable for each pupil's needs.
- Whilst expected writing attainment at the end of Year 2 is broadly similar to that of all pupils nationally, not as many children achieve higher levels of writing. The school is well aware of this and has already taken steps to try to improve these rates through a range of well-planned strategies.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils typically leave with standards that are marginally above those nationally. This represents good progress from their starting points. The school regularly checks on pupils' attainment and takes decisive steps to offer extra support and teaching when a pupil requires further help.
- In 2013, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was a term behind that of all pupils nationally and over a term behind that of the other pupils in the year group. Since then, they have caught up well and now are achieving similar standards to those of all pupils nationally. This indicates at least good progress for this group of pupils and for some, outstanding progress, the result of good teaching and excellent care and guidance.
- The most able pupils in the school generally achieve well, especially in reading and mathematics. However, rates of attainment for these pupils are not as high as those seen nationally in writing. On occasions, they are not challenged fully in class and do not get sufficient opportunities to write to a high standard in other areas of the curriculum.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well, given their individual starting points. This is because of the good teaching which meets their needs, both in class and in separate teaching groups.
- Pupils with English as an additional language make excellent progress, because their needs are identified quickly. Resulting action assists them to catch up very quickly, and in some cases, exceed the performance of their class group.

The early years provision is good

- Most children enter the Reception class ready to start learning. However, over recent years the numbers of children whose skills are weak has increased. Children make good progress during their Reception year and in 2014 the numbers of children achieving a good level of development was above the average nationally. Children arrive at the school from multiple nursery settings, and as a result have a range of previous experiences.
- Well-established routines and good transition procedures mean that children make rapid improvement in their social skills, developing confidence and resilience quickly. Their language development is especially good from low starting points, where the school is supported by specialist external services that enable those children struggling with language to catch up quickly.
- The early identification of children with a disability or with a special educational need is a strength and these children benefit from specialist support from an early age, assisting them to make good progress.
- Progress is good because teaching and support is good. Attractive spaces, both inside and outside, and good resources assist the children to learn. The curriculum that they enjoy offers them a range of varying experiences, all of which mean their readiness for Year 1 is good.
- The school works well with parents. Inspectors were able to see an initiative called 'Together Tuesday', a very good example of the way parents and staff interact and share information. During this activity,

despite the presence of parents, children maintained very good concentration and focus, and parents gained much from seeing them at work and talking to staff.

- Staff are skilled at recognising when children need additional questioning to develop their learning when they are enjoying an activity, e.g. through a discussion about appropriate clothing for the weather. On occasions though, tasks and activities are not fully challenging for the most able children.
- Behaviour in Reception is good, because relationships are positive and caring, and children are imaginative and co-operative learners. They appear confident, happy and secure in their class and within the wider school setting. Positive attitudes to learning are strengthened by initiatives such as when older pupils read stories to a Reception class. Children's listening on this occasion was very good.

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

Unique reference number	138739
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	448879

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	609
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Ward
Principal	Karen McCarter
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01253 852219
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