

# Inspection of Northgate Primary School

Cricketfield Lane, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 2RL

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Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Jane Tanner. This school is a single academy trust, Northgate Primary School Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Laurence Foote.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Northgate Primary School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils have a thirst for learning. They work hard and achieve well, particularly in reading and mathematics. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they get to develop outside the classroom. Most pupils grow into articulate, well-rounded individuals by the time they leave.

Adults have established clear routines for pupils to follow. They have high expectations of pupils' conduct and attitudes to learning. These are well understood, even by the youngest children. As a result, the atmosphere around the school is calm. Pupils feel safe. They learn well in their classrooms and play happily on the playground.

Pupils enjoy the clubs on offer. Some of these are led by the older pupils. There are many such opportunities for pupils to develop responsibility and leadership skills. House captains enjoy running the school shop. Executive councillors set the agenda for wider school council meetings. The well-being, diversity and inclusion council considers ways to support the whole school community.

A deliberately planned series of themed days or weeks enhances the curriculum. On RE (religious education) day, pupils explored the creation story. They reflected on scientific alternatives. A 'take one picture' event generated high quality writing and artwork inspired by L S Lowry.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils,. The curriculum sets out the key concepts and knowledge that pupils will learn in each year group and each subject area. There is a sharp focus on developing pupils' vocabulary. Curriculum plans identify the key language that is needed in each unit of work.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. Where possible, it is linked to the local area. This makes it meaningful for pupils. In geography, for example, pupils went on a field trip to a new housing estate. They considered where would be the best location for a leisure facility.

Teachers explain new concepts clearly. They use skilful questioning to probe pupils' understanding. If teachers spot misconceptions, they address these quickly. They adjust their teaching if they see more widespread misunderstandings.

The school has adopted teaching approaches that are designed to help pupils know and remember more. Teachers use these consistently and, in most subjects, highly effectively. However, in a small number of subjects, pupils do not learn as well as the school would like them to. This is because the curriculum in these subjects has been reviewed. It is in a transitional or early stage of development. Teachers need support to design sequences of lessons that will deepen pupils' understanding.

The school's sharp focus on language development starts in the early years. Children extend their vocabulary through daily stories, rhymes and songs. They learn subject-specific language in other areas of learning. In mathematics, for example, Reception children practise the language of comparison, using groups of toy bears.

Reading is prioritised. It is well-taught throughout the school. In the Nursery, children learn the early skills needed for letter and sound recognition. Through the Reception class and Year 1, pupils extend their repertoire of sounds. Most pupils quickly learn what they need to become confident and fluent readers. Any pupils who struggle get effective, targeted support. Across the school, pupils learn to discuss texts and develop their comprehension skills.

The school is determined to enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to succeed. In most cases, pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers make adaptations for them if these are needed. A small number of pupils learn in the school's woodland group. These pupils get an individualised approach, delivered by skilled and nurturing adults.

Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to school life. There is a strong culture of respect throughout the school. Pupils are friendly and courteous. Older pupils are excellent role models. They actively promote positive behaviour in the corridors and dining room. The school acts quickly and effectively to support any pupils who struggle to meet expectations.

Pupils have a mature understanding of issues around diversity. They are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Older pupils tackle complex issues such as stereotyping. They are not afraid to challenge injustice if they see it. All pupils learn about healthy relationships and personal safety at an age-appropriate level. A thoughtfully planned series of assemblies teaches pupils invaluable qualities such as resilience, patience and kindness.

Leaders have high expectations and are tenacious in their drive for school improvement. Trustees are committed to the school's ambitious vision. Their oversight and challenge support leaders in their drive to realise the school's priorities. Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the development opportunities they are offered. Staff appreciate that leaders are mindful of their workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum has been recently reviewed and is in a transitional or early stage of development. Pupils do not learn as well in these

subjects as the school would like them to. The school should continue to prioritise the implementation of these new curriculums, including supporting staff to design sequences of lessons that will deepen pupils' understanding.

## 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.

## Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138539
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242291
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	445
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Laurence Foote
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Tanner
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.northgate.herts.sch.uk">www.northgate.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- In September 2012, the school converted to academy status, under the Academies Act 2010. When its predecessor school, Northgate Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2008, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative provision.
- The school is a single academy trust. The trustees are referred to as governors by the school.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, including senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, and governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and a sample of pupils' books for other subjects. They spoke with the subject leaders for these subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation and policies, including the school development plan and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's parent and staff questionnaires. They also spoke with pupils, parents and staff, and considered other communications from parents, to gather their views of the school.

### **Inspection team**

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Harbrow	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Scott	Ofsted Inspector

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