

Inspection of Northcote Primary School

Cavendish Drive, Walton, Liverpool, Merseyside L9 1HW

Inspection dates: 15–16 October 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and welcoming school. It lives up to its school motto, 'Caring, learning, growing'. Staff and pupils describe the school as 'like a family'. Pupils enjoy school. They appreciate the friendly greetings the headteacher and staff give them each morning.

Pupils feel very safe and secure in school. They know how much staff care about their well-being. Pupils told us they really value support such as counselling when they need extra help.

Staff are determined that all pupils will flourish. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils leave school as resilient learners. They achieve well in English and mathematics.

Pupils become confident and fluent readers. They were very excited when the school's double-decker reading bus arrived on their playground. They told us how much they enjoy their reading time on the bus.

Across the school, most pupils behave well. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils learn to be thoughtful and considerate. Older pupils are enthusiastic leaders. For example, the school's eco council keep the playground neat and tidy.

Bullying is rare. Pupils told us that staff sort out any incidents quickly.

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

Pupils learn about a wide range of subjects in this school. Leaders make sure that pupils achieve well. They also make sure that pupils learn how to be safe and healthy. Pupils develop as thoughtful and articulate individuals. They appreciate differences, including other cultures and religions. Developing pupils' personal development is a clear strength of the school.

A strength of the school is the ambition that leaders have for all pupils, including pupils with SEND. Staff give pupils with additional needs a very wide range of carefully planned support. This includes for pupils' mental health, social skills and learning. Through regular trips to museums, galleries and a local university, pupils learn to aim high.

To help all pupils achieve well, leaders are determined to further improve pupils' attendance, including for disadvantaged pupils. They have put in place a wide range of strategies, including a walking bus. Despite the considerable efforts of staff, some pupils miss school regularly.

Staff, pupils, parents and carers hold the school in high regard. Staff feel valued by leaders. Teachers appreciate the many opportunities they have to attend training. It

is clear that leaders give staff training a high priority. This means that teachers develop their skills to lead different subjects, such as mathematics.

Leaders have improved the plans to teach different subjects. This helps pupils to learn well over time. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson on sound, pupils talked confidently about fair testing. They used scientific vocabulary such as vibrations and soundwaves with good understanding. This is because pupils are building on what they already know.

In some subjects, these improvements to the school's plans are recent. Pupils struggle to remember in detail some of their previous learning. This is the case in art and design, geography and history. Leaders' checks on how well pupils learn are not always used to improve teaching when needed.

Pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well in mathematics. In the early years, children enjoy mathematics in lots of different ways. For example, they make repeating patterns and count different objects with adults. In Nursery, children enjoy making shapes to count using play dough. Across the school, teachers give pupils lots of practice to learn key facts, such as times tables. Teachers plan lessons which build on what pupils already know in mathematics. This helps pupils to develop confidence and become accurate in their calculations.

In Nursery and Reception, leaders share rhymes, books and stories with children. In other classes, teachers read a wide range of books and novels to their classes. Everyone knows that it is important to read. Leaders have made sure that younger pupils read regularly with an adult. Reading books are closely matched to pupils' reading ability. Pupils leave the school as fluent and confident readers.

Leaders make sure that children start to learn phonics as soon as they start in Reception. In the Reception and key stage 1 classes, teachers use some different approaches to teach pupils new sounds. This is sometimes confusing for younger pupils who struggle to read fluently. Teachers do not regularly check whether these pupils are keeping up with the pace of learning in phonics lessons.

In the early years, children play cooperatively. They follow teachers' instructions, for example working together to tidy up the classrooms. Older pupils move calmly and quietly around the school. Pupils say that if lessons are interrupted by misbehaviour, staff act quickly. Pupils and staff agree that the school's behaviour policy is fair and works well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have regular training. Staff know how to check for signs that a pupil may be at risk. Leaders work closely with other agencies and professionals to ensure that pupils and their families get support when needed.

Leaders check the staff recruited to work in school to ensure that they pose no threat to pupils.

Staff and visitors teach pupils about the risks they might face in their everyday lives. Pupils learn how to stay safe when using technology. Pupils know that they should speak to an adult in school if they are concerned about anything.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At present, there are some inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics. Staff need additional training to improve their expertise and knowledge. In phonics lessons, staff need to check that pupils are keeping up with the pace of learning. Leaders need to ensure that a consistent approach to phonics is put in place that enables all pupils, including those falling behind, to learn to read accurately and fluently.
- Leaders have planned a broad and balanced curriculum across different subjects. Leaders need to check that curriculum plans across different subjects, including art and design, geography and history, are having the intended impact in strengthening pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Subject leaders carry out a range of assessment activities to check teaching and learning across the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that these checks are used to further improve teaching and learning.
- Leaders need to ensure that improving pupils' attendance remains a high priority for the school. This will help to reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent, including disadvantaged pupils.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're 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	104564
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10057953
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	456
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Brian Lawless
Headteacher	Roy Morgan
Website	www.northcoteschool.com
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2018

Information about this school

- There have been no significant changes since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

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

- We met with the headteacher and the deputy headteachers.
- We held meetings with five governors including the chair of the governing body, the coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND and the school's attendance leader.
- We checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the school's single central record. We met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in school.
- An inspector met with parents at the school gate to seek their views. We also considered 31 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, including free-text responses.
- We considered 17 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

- During the inspection, we met with groups of pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 and observed lunchtimes and playtimes.
- We examined a range of documents. These included minutes of the governing body meetings and safeguarding documentation.
- History, mathematics, reading and science were considered as part of this inspection. For each of these subjects, inspection activities included discussions with leaders, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils about their learning. In reading, an inspector also observed a member of staff listening to pupils read. In art and design, computing and geography, we looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke to pupils and subject leaders.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Steve Kirkpatrick

Ofsted Inspector

Gill Burrow

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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