

Midsomer Norton Primary School

High Street, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, BA3 2DR

Inspection dates 7—8 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress during their time in school and by the time they leave they have reached standards which are above those expected for their age, especially in English.
- Pupils enjoy learning because teachers plan carefully to give them lots of opportunities to practise their skills in interesting ways.
- Pupils and adults show great respect for each other. Pupils mostly behave well and those who find it difficult to manage their behaviour are helped to improve.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are quickly identified and are given effective support.
- The headteacher and other leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of what the school is doing well and what needs to improve. They have high aspirations for the school and are taking the right steps to achieve their goals.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching because teachers do not always show pupils what they are expected to have achieved by the end of the lesson.
- Teachers sometimes do not provide work that is hard enough for more-able pupils in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 24 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and parents and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 79 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and well as the views of parents in the playground.
- Information about how school leaders are finding out how good the school is and the plans they have for making it better, as well as assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, teachers' plans, pupils' work and safeguarding procedures were examined.
- Inspectors analysed 34 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Dr Colin Lee	Additional Inspector
Stephanie Thomas	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Midsomer Norton is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The pupils are mainly White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is much lower than average.
- The school offers no alternative provision for pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards set for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use assessment during lessons to make sure that pupils are clear about what they have to do when working on their own and how to overcome the difficulties they may encounter
 - give more-able pupils more challenging activities in mathematics and ensure that they move onto these activities as soon as they are able.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- During their time in school, pupils make good progress so that, by the time they leave, they have above-average levels of attainment particularly in reading and writing. Their attainment is not quite so good in mathematics because too few pupils reach the higher levels. The school is taking steps to ensure that upper-ability pupils do not underachieve.
- Children begin Nursery and Reception with skills broadly in line with those expected for their age. Careful analysis of children's strengths and weaknesses is used to provide experiences which enable any children who are not at the right level to catch up. For example, communication skills were identified as a weakness so additional speech and language support was put in place. Children who arrive in school unable to speak English are given very good support and parents are encouraged to stay with their children and use both their home language and English until the children gain confidence.
- High-quality teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) means that pupils do well in the national phonics screening test. Boys do particularly well. In 2012, pupils' average points score for reading at the end of Key Stage 1 was significantly above the national average.
- In both key stages, pupils eligible for the pupil premium make better than expected progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, their average point scores are broadly in line with those found nationally, although standards in mathematics are lower than in English. Rigorous monitoring has identified these differences in outcomes and measures are in place to close the gap.
- The frequent opportunities pupils have to discuss their learning in pairs, as well as the skilful way teachers help pupils to extend their answers through questioning, mean that, by the time they leave, they are articulate and confident speakers.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well. All groups of pupils do at least as well as their peers nationally, and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do particularly well because their needs are quickly identified and met through support in the classroom, as well as through specific programmes delivered by teaching assistants. As one parent of a child with special educational needs said, 'The staff go above and beyond what we could expect to help our child achieve her potential.'

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils enjoy their lessons and come into the classroom ready and eager to learn. They recognise that the teachers are helping them to be successful, independent learners.
- The environment of the Nursery and Reception classes is carefully designed so that children can choose the resources they need, and they have been trained to clear up when they have finished.
- In the older classes, pupils have been taught the skills of self- and peer-assessment so they are able to reflect on how well they have done and recognise what they need to do to improve. A very positive development has been the introduction of monthly assessment books which the teachers use to identify next steps for both individual pupils and the whole class. Teachers use these assessments as the basis for the next lesson so that the pupils can see how they are improving and they are motivated to do even better.
- Pupils also know what they need to do to improve their work from the comments made by teachers in their books and from the effective use of targets. Pupils know their targets and teachers refer to them regularly in lessons, sometimes setting activities which enable pupils to practise the aspects they are trying to improve.
- The new system for tracking and recording pupils' attainment and progress is providing teachers with the information they need to make sure that they are giving the pupils work which is not too easy or too difficult. Teachers plan carefully and make sure that they give help to the pupils who need it.

- Most teachers explain the focus of the lesson and share with the pupils what they might be expected to achieve. However, in a minority of lessons, teachers do not spend enough time demonstrating exactly what pupils are expected to be able to do by the end of the lesson and do not check that all pupils understand. This means that pupils are sometimes unsure how to overcome the problems they meet when they are working on their own and the pace of learning slows down.
- Teachers are skilled at teaching phonics, reading and writing but are less confident teaching mathematics. Teachers are not yet consistently applying the agreed calculation policy, including the use of correct mathematical vocabulary. In some lessons, the expectations of higher-ability pupils are too low so that they spend too much of their time on activities which require them to practise what they already know rather than moving quickly on to more challenging work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good overall with examples of exemplary behaviour in most lessons, in assembly and in the playground at play and lunch times. Teachers rarely need to remind pupils how to behave because high expectations are embedded within the school. The good relationships between all pupils and adults contribute to the positive school ethos and sense of belonging.
- The frequent opportunities that pupils have in lessons to discuss their learning in pairs, encourage them to get on well with each other. They are sensible and help each other willingly.
- There are positive attitudes to learning in most lessons, although a minority of pupils find it difficult to manage their behaviour, which is why behaviour overall is not outstanding. These pupils are supported very well and behaviour logs show improvements.
- Attendance is consistently above average, nearly all pupils arrive on time and there have been no exclusions for more than two years.
- Pupils feel safe and parents agree. Pupils understand the danger of drugs and they find the visits to the school of different emergency services and the Year 6 pupils' day at the LifeSkills Centre very enjoyable and helpful in reminding them of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when they are on the internet. Pupils understand the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They report that there is very little bullying and if there is, it is always sorted out. The arrangements for safeguarding are very secure.
- The older pupils enjoy becoming monitors and house captains, roles they earn partly for the leadership they demonstrate at the Year 6 camp which takes place at the beginning of the academic year. They take their responsibilities seriously and understand that they need to set a good example for younger pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear understanding of what the school is doing well and how it needs to improve. Their plans focus on the right priorities and they make sure that teachers receive high-quality training and are able to learn from the good practice of others, both in the school and through local partnerships. They share the vision that they have for the school very effectively with staff.
- Middle leaders have a good understanding of their responsibilities and are held accountable for making improvements. They value the opportunities they have to review how well their areas are doing and to lead training for colleagues. They are aware of the difference they are making and have well-focused plans for improvement.
- The quality of teaching is improving because of the accurate way in which school leaders identify how individual teachers need to get better and then provide coaching to support them. Performance management is used well and regular reviews of progress throughout the year mean that teachers have frequent opportunities to reflect on how well they are doing. Support for teachers at an early stage of their career through mentoring and shared observation of good practice is very effective.

- The recent changes to the curriculum have made a significant difference to pupils' engagement. Learning is brought alive through a wide variety of visits to local places of interest and visitors come into school to broaden pupils' experiences. Opportunities for practising the skills learnt in English and mathematics lessons have been extended through the introduction of topic-based books. Pupils enjoy applying their learning across the curriculum and they are proud of what they achieve. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- There are good opportunities for the development of social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding throughout the curriculum. A link is developing with a school in Nepal and music is a particular strength, as evidenced by the confident way in which pupils sang in two and three parts in assembly. Images from different cultures are displayed across the school and the rich vocabulary which one teacher developed in a writing lesson enabled the pupils to reflect on beauty, feelings and emotions very effectively.
- The local authority has provided effective support which has helped the school to make sustained improvements since the last inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is highly effective. The wide range of skills and talents on the governing body is used very well to provide high levels of challenge to leaders as well as providing meaningful support. For example, while the recent building work was being undertaken, governors' knowledge was very valuable in helping to make sure that the project moved forward as smoothly as possible. They have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas which need improvement, based on a thorough understanding of data. They hold leaders to account through challenging performance management systems. They make sure that only the best teachers are rewarded financially and that underperformance is tackled. Financial monitoring is very thorough, including the use of pupil premium funding and the difference it is making to pupils' achievement. Governors regularly undertake professional development and the systems for inducting new governors are very thorough.

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	109080
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	405209

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Alexander
Headteacher	Damian Knollys
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 March 2011
Telephone number	01761 412289
Email address	midsomernorton_pri@bathnes.gov.uk

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