

Norton-Le-Moors Primary Academy

Norton Lane, Norton-in-the-Moors, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST6 8BZ

Inspection dates

4–5 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and the assistant headteacher form a strong partnership. Their vision and determination have led to significant improvements in teaching since the school opened as an academy.
- The executive headteacher provides incisive and knowledgeable support. She nurtures leaders' skills and uses expertise from schools in the trust to develop Norton-Le-Moors.
- The trust and the local governing body provide effective challenge and have a good understanding of the school. They ask probing questions and want the best for pupils.
- Leaders have galvanised staff. There is a sense of teamwork and morale is high. Staff receive high-quality training which helps them to reflect and improve their practice.
- The school's vision, 'the gateway to a bright future', reflects strongly in the school. Pupils make good progress in each year group. By the end of key stage 2, a high proportion of pupils achieve the expected standards for their age.
- Leaders have an accurate view of teaching. They carry out thorough checks on the quality of teaching and the work in pupils' books.
- Leaders have put in place very effective methods for assessing pupils' learning and progress. Consequently, teachers assess diligently and accurately.
- Pupils in all year groups enjoy reading. They read a wide range of books and make good progress. Staff also teach phonics well and give pupils a strong start to reading in key stage 1.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is good. Pupils use fluent methods in their calculation work. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- On occasions, some teaching does not provide a consistent level of challenge to pupils. Some pupils carry out work that is too easy or they do not move on to more challenging work when they are ready.
- Staff have developed a rich learning environment where pupils' work and achievements are celebrated. As a result, pupils are proud, happy and behave well.
- Leaders and staff have created a strong culture for keeping pupils safe. The safeguarding officer is proactive and provides sensitive support to families in the school community.
- Provision and curriculum planning in the early years require improvement. Children in Reception do not make enough progress in all the different areas of learning. Furthermore, assessment information is not used well to identify next steps in children's learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and boost pupils' progress even further by ensuring that:
 - teachers set work that is consistently well matched to pupils' needs and that pupils move on to more challenging work when they are ready
 - pupils receive more opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Improve the provision in the early years by ensuring that leaders and staff:
 - make better use of assessment in order to plan children's next steps and to accelerate their progress
 - ensure that activities have sufficient challenge across the breadth of the curriculum, both inside the classroom and in the outside area.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads Norton-Le-Moors with determination and purpose. She is ably supported by her assistant headteacher. Together, they have driven significant improvements to the quality of teaching. Furthermore, they have developed a united and hard-working team of staff. Leaders and staff have high expectations, which result in good progress for pupils across the school.
- Leaders have successfully managed unforeseen and unavoidable staffing disruptions during this academic year. It is testament to their leadership that a good quality of education has been sustained through this period. The executive headteacher has been instrumental in this process and has used the expertise of other staff in the trust to support the school. This collaborative, trust-wide approach provides further strength to the leadership team.
- Leaders evaluate their school thoroughly and accurately. They check and review the quality of teaching on a regular basis and use this information to address key areas for development. As a result, leaders know their school and are well placed to drive further improvement.
- Regular feedback to staff from leaders on how they can refine their practice improves teaching. Leaders observe teaching, look at pupils' work and provide staff with a half-termly summary of their performance. Staff appreciate this support, and it is having a positive impact on their teaching.
- Furthermore, teachers also receive high-quality training and appropriate performance management. This has been beneficial for all staff, but particularly for those teachers new to the profession. For example, newly qualified teachers work closely with the same year group teachers from other trust schools. They also receive effective mentoring by leaders and become competent teachers in a short space of time.
- Leaders use very effective systems for analysing assessment information. Teachers use regular and accurate assessments of pupils' progress, which are reviewed in half-termly meetings with leaders. Leaders and staff then identify and address any areas of weakness. Consequently, any pupils falling behind are picked up quickly and catch up in their learning.
- Leaders have identified the need for improvement in provision and to assessment in the Reception Year but have not yet had time to carry out their planned developments.
- The special educational needs coordinator leads with clarity and ensures that there is an effective use of additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She works closely with staff and parents to put in place specific additional support for these pupils. As a result, they are well supported in their learning and make good progress.
- Leaders are thoughtful when allocating pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Pupils receive a school uniform and a school bag to instil a sense of pride and identity. Staff also deliver additional support to this group of pupils, either one-to-one or in small groups. Leaders' strategies are effective because disadvantaged pupils achieve well on their journey through school.

- Leaders have designed and implemented a lively and interesting curriculum. Each term, a class book is chosen to run alongside the curriculum topic. For example, in Year 5, C.S. Lewis's book 'Narnia' is used to immerse pupils in their 'magical wardrobe' topic. Most subjects are taught through the topic, but some subjects, for example science, are taught discretely. Pupils enjoy the curriculum and develop good knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers further enhance the curriculum experiences through a range of educational trips. Examples include Paris, London, Alton Towers, a World War II museum, Cadbury World and a residential outdoor activity trip. Teachers ensure that the trips add clear educational value and pupils' thrive on the experiences that they get.
- Additional funding for physical education (PE) and sport is used well. Pupils speak positively about the range of sports clubs they can access, along with regular opportunities for competitive sport. Leaders have also put into place specialist expertise to deliver PE lessons, which is enabling teachers to see best practice and improve their own teaching.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Leaders and staff plan days in school where pupils immerse themselves in a particular topic. For example, one class studied slavery and the impact that it had on particular ethnic groups. In a discussion with the inspector, one pupil commented, 'I think it was awful. People are the same and they should be treated the same.' Pupils also have a good understanding of British values. They talk knowledgeably about how democracy works in their own school, as well as from a wider perspective through processes like the general election.
- The local authority carries out termly reviews in the school in order to provide challenge and hold leaders to account. This external support is effective and the reviews are detailed.

Governance of the school

- Governors are knowledgeable and committed. They have high aspirations for the pupils and the school community.
- Governors:
 - have supported and challenged leaders appropriately, which has helped to steer the school to a stronger position
 - carry out regular visits to the school to check on key priorities that they take governor-level responsibility for in the school improvement plan
 - ask probing questions in meetings and on visits. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The trust shares good practice and expertise across the trust very well. This has helped Norton-Le-Moors make rapid improvements.
- The executive headteacher, who is also the chief executive officer, is unwavering in her pursuit of high standards. She offers strong support and challenge to leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture for safeguarding in the school is a strength. The school's safeguarding officer is incredibly thorough and has an excellent understanding of how to keep pupils safe. This translates well into practice because record-keeping is very well organised and any concerns about pupils' safety are followed up rigorously. The safeguarding officer also works very closely with external agencies in order to provide additional support for families. She builds positive relationships with parents and instigates 'early help' where it is necessary.
- Staff are very well informed about their responsibilities to keep pupils safe because they receive regular training. They are also given scenarios in staff meetings in order to check their knowledge of important issues or changes to guidance. Consequently, staff's understanding of safeguarding practice is effective.
- The checks for vetting and recruiting members of staff are very well organised. All statutory requirements are met and are administered very efficiently. This adds further strength to the safeguarding culture in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching in the school has improved considerably since the school opened as an academy. Teaching is consistently good across the school and particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning and make good progress.
- Teachers have developed a positive culture for reading among pupils. Pupils love focusing on a class book each half term, alongside the curriculum topic. This is enabling them to appreciate different authors, while also gaining a deeper understanding of the book by discussing it regularly in class. Teachers also set good questions for pupils so that they can practise their reading comprehension skills. As a result of these approaches, pupils' outcomes in reading are high in key stages 1 and 2.
- Phonics in key stage 1 is taught well. Staff have had good-quality training, which leads to precise teaching of phonics skills. Teachers also reinforce sounds in other lessons, so that pupils can read tricky words in a range of subjects. As a result, pupils' phonics screening scores are improving each year and are above the national average.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in writing is secure because they teach the technical aspects of writing accurately. Pupils are confident when using punctuation, vocabulary and grammar in longer pieces of writing. For example, during the inspection, a pupil in key stage 1 commented, 'I am adding interesting words to make my writing less boring and I am also adding conjunctions, which is when you join two sentences together.'
- Teachers use precise mathematical language when teaching calculation. Consequently, pupils can calculate with proficiency and explain their understanding using appropriate language. However, teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply their understanding through problem solving and reasoning.
- Teachers apply the school's policies for teaching consistently and effectively. For example, pupils have regular opportunities to evaluate, edit and improve their own and

other pupils' work. Teachers' consistent use of school policy enables lessons to run efficiently because pupils know exactly what is expected of them.

- Some pupils, on occasions, are not given a consistent level of challenge. When this occurs, the work is too easy and it does not deepen their understanding. Very occasionally, pupils are also given too much support from adults when they could be working out problems for themselves. While their progress over time is good, a raised level of challenge would boost pupils' progress even further.
- Teachers and leaders have put in place thorough systems for assessing pupils. Teachers assess what pupils know on a regular basis and then work with other teachers in school, and in the trust, in order to moderate judgements. Consequently, teachers' assessments are accurate and pupils' next steps are carefully identified.
- Staff have developed an inspirational learning environment for pupils. Displays in corridors and in classrooms are rich and meaningful. Pupils' work is celebrated and useful prompts are used in classrooms. Pupils are proud of their work and they use the learning prompts to support their learning in lessons.
- Parents are positive about the quality of education that children receive. During the inspection, several parents commented about the value of the progress updates and examples of their child's work that they receive each term. This opinion was shared by parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. All of those that completed the survey agreed, or strongly agreed, that their child is taught well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders and staff ensure that Norton-Le-Moors is an inclusive school and that every child is treated equally. This is evident in the strong relationships between pupils and staff. Consequently, pupils feel valued and are happy at school. During the inspection, one Year 6 pupil commented, 'When I leave this school, I will really miss the teachers.'
- Pupils have a thirst for learning which is evident in their positive attitudes in lessons. They work hard and persevere when they find something tricky. Pupils' consistently positive attitudes have a strong impact on their progress.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe on the internet and what they would do if they were concerned about something online. They also know the different types of bullying and who they would tell if they or someone else was being bullied. Staff's thoughtful teaching of safety further strengthens pupils' welfare.
- Teachers plan exciting spiritual, moral, social and cultural days. For example, pupils were recently engrossed in a range of activities about 'Chinese New Year'. The themed days often include experts and visitors in school. These wide-ranging experiences are having a strong impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils' conduct in class and around school is particularly positive. They respect one another, listen well and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Staff use reward systems like 'star of the week' and 'good to be green' to good effect. As a result, pupils are motivated to behave well and low-level disruption is rare.
- Leaders and staff provide good support to pupils who have emotional and behavioural needs. Leaders analyse behaviour incidents to identify pupils who might require additional support. External agencies are used to complement the strategies that are used in school. Consequently, pupils with additional needs are becoming increasingly successful at managing their behaviour and being ready to learn.
- Pupils' attendance is improving and it was above the national average in 2016. Leaders respond promptly to lower levels of attendance. Families are given good support so that they understand the impact of low attendance on their child's academic achievement. Positive attendance is rewarded and celebrated, which adds further motivation for pupils to attend school regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes continue to improve at Norton-Le-Moors. Pupils' work in books and the school's assessment information show that pupils' progress is good across the school. Leaders have improved teaching since academy conversion, which has had a direct impact on the quality of outcomes for pupils.
- In 2016 at the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. The progress for this group of pupils was particularly strong in reading and in the top 10% of all schools nationally. In 2015 at the end of key stage 2, progress in reading, writing and mathematics was also very positive.
- Pupils in key stage 1 achieved well in 2016. In reading, writing and mathematics, a high proportion of pupils achieved the expected standard when compared with the national averages. The proportion of most-able pupils who reached the higher standards was also above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in phonics in key stage 1. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 is rising, and in 2016 it was above the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well at Norton-Le-Moors. There are very few differences in the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils when compared to other pupils in school who are not disadvantaged. In 2016, at the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils made better progress than other pupils nationally who are not disadvantaged.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Staff provide precise additional support and classroom teaching in order to support their specific needs.
- Outcomes in mathematics are good across the school. However, the progression of reasoning and problem-solving skills in pupils' books is not strong. As a result, pupils' progress does not accelerate as rapidly as it does in other subjects.
- Leaders identified that boys do not achieve as well as girls in some subject areas and in

some year groups. However, this has been addressed by the school and there are no significant differences in the performance of girls and boys. For example, in 2016 at the end of key stage 2, boys performed as well as girls in reading and writing.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Provision overall in the early years requires improvement. Children in Reception have not made good progress during this academic year and, as a result, they have not been sufficiently prepared for Year 1.
- The quality of teaching in Reception does not offer sufficient challenge across the breadth of the early years curriculum. Areas of the curriculum beyond reading, writing and mathematics do not get sufficient coverage. Furthermore, the level of challenge in the activities provided does not enable children to extend their thinking. Consequently, not enough children make good progress from their starting points.
- Children's learning in the outside area in Reception varies in quality. Sometimes, adults do not challenge children to think deeply or support children who have misconceptions. Additionally, in general the activities outside do not spark and sustain children's interest. Consequently, children's progress slows when learning outside.
- Leaders do not use precise analysis of children's assessments in order to identify those who require additional support. In addition, leaders and staff are not using assessments in order to identify children's specific next steps in their learning. As a result, some children have not received the support they need to make good progress.
- From 2015 to 2016, the proportion of children in Reception reaching the expected standard improved, and in 2016 it was above the national average. However, in the current academic year, children's progress in Reception has not been as rapid and the proportion of children working at the expected standards has decreased.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used productively, and these children achieve well compared to other children nationally who are not disadvantaged. For example, in 2016, all disadvantaged children achieved the expected standard.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is effective because staff use proficient subject knowledge. For example, in a Reception lesson, children had a good understanding of 3D shape and used mathematical language like 'vertices' and 'edges' to describe shapes. As a result, children make better progress in these subject areas.
- Staff and children develop extremely positive relationships across Nursery and Reception. There is a strong sense of trust and respect for one another. Staff have developed consistent routines which help children to settle and feel secure.
- Relationships are also positive between staff and parents across the early years. Parents appreciate this partnership and feel that communication is effective.
- Teaching in the Nursery provides children with interesting and challenging learning experiences. Staff ensure that there is a stimulating learning environment for children and that activities have a sufficient level of challenge. For example, children were curious and were using newly learned vocabulary to write about the different 'mini-beasts' in a small world tray. As a result of this more stimulating curriculum, children in Nursery make effective progress.

School details

Unique reference number	140859
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10032562

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Alan Irving
Headteacher	Maxine Rizk
Telephone number	01782 234792
Website	www.norton.stoke.sch.uk/
Email address	mrizk@nmat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- A large majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is part of the Inspirational Learning Academies Trust, which is a trust of three schools. An executive headteacher takes strategic responsibility across all three schools. A key feature of the trust is sharing practice and expertise. In addition, the trust holds the headteacher to account through regular meetings.
- There is a local governing body at the school which takes responsibility for challenging and supporting leaders to develop educational outcomes for pupils, as well as acting as a link to the local community.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 21 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of these observations were undertaken with senior leaders.
- The inspectors scrutinised work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met with two groups of pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and other leaders. Inspectors also met with two teachers. The lead inspector met with four members of the local governing body, including the chair.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including assessments and records of pupils' progress, the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is monitored and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors considered 14 free-text responses from parents. They also talked to parents at the start and end of the school day. Inspectors reviewed 10 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Matt Meckin, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wayne Simner

Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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