

Northfield House Primary Academy

Northfield Road, Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 9DL

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2018

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has undergone significant change since becoming an academy and has improved considerably.
- The executive principal and head of school lead with passion and drive. They are ambitious for all pupils to achieve their very best.
- Governors fulfil their responsibilities well and work effectively in partnership with trustees. As a result, they have helped drive improvements in this school. The multi-academy trust has provided effective support to change the school for the better.
- Parents, carers and staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and recognise the positive changes which have taken place.
- Pupils enjoy school, take care over their work and are proud of their success.
- The creative 'novel'-based curriculum makes sure that pupils' learning is built on a literary foundation of quality books and stories.
- Leaders and staff have successfully raised the status of books and stories across the school. Pupils read widely and often; they enjoy reading.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils.
- Teachers create a climate in which pupils are encouraged to express their thoughts by talking. As a result, pupils who speak English as an additional language have ongoing opportunities to develop their confidence in speaking and listening.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength.
- Children make good progress in the early years as a result of well-planned learning. However, teacher expectations with regard to children's social development are not consistently high across all aspects of the provision.
- Attendance is improving. However, too many pupils are not attending school regularly.
- The most able pupils make less progress in reading and mathematics than they do in writing.
- Not all middle leaders play a full role in delivering whole-school improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence by further raising the aspirations of parents to see the relevance and value of education for their children, so that their children attend regularly.
- Disseminate the best practice in the early years to ensure that all children in early years benefit from high expectations of their social development.
- Improve outcomes for the most able pupils in reading and mathematics by:
 - making sure that they are stretched to higher levels of comprehension and inference
 - further developing their mathematical reasoning.
- Develop middle leaders to:
 - contribute confidently to whole-school improvements
 - further extend their leadership roles across the multi-academy trust, enabling leaders to contribute to and learn from best practice elsewhere.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive principal and head of school lead with a clear moral purpose. They are ambitious for each pupil, wanting to enrich the lives of pupils and ensure that they get a high standard of education.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the place of the school within the community. This vision is lived out on a daily basis. Overwhelmingly, parents rightly believe that the school is well led and managed.
- Leaders work well with trustees and governors strategically to develop the school. The school development plan links to an effective self-review process. Leaders have a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school and have brought about significant improvements to raise standards.
- Senior leaders have developed sustainable leadership capacity in the school. The shared approach to leadership means that teams of staff work well together to bring about improvements.
- Leaders have been willingly seeking external support and acting on advice from a range of other schools and specialists. As the school has improved, leaders increasingly take a leading role in sharing their expertise across the trust and with other schools.
- Staff feel valued and are proud to be part of this school. Many say that there has been much improvement. Staff value professional development, especially the work of the school's enquiry groups.
- The vice principal has developed a bespoke curriculum to inspire and engage pupils, based on a series of novels. This literary approach supports pupils with their reading, writing, speaking and listening very effectively. It also exposes pupils to a wide range of books. The curriculum engages pupils and has increased their love of reading.
- Leaders use targeted funding well to overcome barriers to learning. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from a range of approaches to raise aspirations and help them learn. Teachers also help parents support their children's learning. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sport premium well. Increasingly more pupils are involved in sport. Various school teams are raising the school's sporting profile in Leicester. The celebration of sportsmanship has helped pupils to understand the importance of teamwork, playing by the rules and being fair and honest.
- Leaders use additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities effectively to improve the outcomes they achieve.
- This is a highly inclusive school. Work to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength of the school. Staff consistently demonstrate a strong moral purpose, which has a direct impact on pupils' sense of right and wrong and of belonging.
- Purposeful educational visits enrich pupils' learning. Pupils spoke with passion about their theatre, museum and outdoor visits. The school's curriculum focuses strongly on humanitarian and global issues. For example, Year 5 pupils carefully consider the

challenges of poverty in an ancient Mexican city.

- There is a tangible sense of mutual care and respect across the school. Teachers provide an impressive range of opportunities to learn about different cultures and religions. The school's commitment to valuing inclusion and diversity is embodied in its 'One Leicester, One World' display.
- Whole-class teaching, sporting and cultural events embed British values. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their recent visit to Downing Street.
- A significant majority of parents believe that the school is well led and managed. They say that the school does a very good job in helping pupils who speak English as an additional language. Parents appreciate the ways in which they are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning.
- Middle leaders work alongside senior leaders and are supported in their professional development. However, not all middle leaders take full responsibility for leading whole-school improvements.

Governance

- Governance is effective. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They regularly visit the school and monitor planned improvements. They are ambitious for the school community and support senior leader by monitoring improvements.
- Governors clearly understand their role within the multi-academy trust. Clear communication between trustees, governors and leaders means that all have worked together to improve the school.
- Both governors and trustees hold school leaders to account well. At times, they would benefit from a more comprehensive understanding of the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Governors undertake regular training, including safeguarding training. They monitor safeguarding particularly well.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders make sure that there is a strong safeguarding culture across the school. Leaders make sure that statutory requirements are met. Effective systems and records show that leaders respond quickly to concerns.
- Staff spot pupils who are at risk or need support and share their concerns with leaders. As part of her work, the family support worker helps families and children in many positive ways. A multilingual teaching assistant supports her well. Both have established strong relationships with families and members of the community. They make sure that children are safe inside and outside of school.
- Staff and governors receive regular training and are aware of the issues which affect some pupils. Leaders train staff regularly to be mindful of the needs of pupils and how to respond to any concerns swiftly.
- The vast majority of parents agree that this is a safe school. Pupils spoken to say that

they feel safe and value the care given by staff. Teachers teach pupils how to keep themselves safe in different circumstances. Pupils are confident that they can talk to an adult if something is wrong and that it will be dealt with appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils appreciate the support that staff give them. Teachers encourage them to participate well in lessons and work purposefully.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and particularly strong in Reception. Pupils in Year 2 who struggled with their reading are now decoding words accurately as well as developing their comprehension skills.
- Leaders have raised the status of books and stories across the school. However, the focus on developing pupils' love of reading and familiarity with high-quality books and stories is not yet having an impact on less able pupils' reading skills in key stage 1.
- Teachers monitor pupils' learning in mathematics regularly. They plan learning that develops pupils' calculation, fluency, application and reasoning skills. Pupils' work mostly matches their needs. However, teachers are not always challenging the most able pupils to enable them to achieve higher standards.
- Teachers develop pupils' writing well. Year 5 pupils were developing their report-writing skills, while others built upon their figurative writing. Teachers encourage creative writing. In Year 2, one pupil wrote, 'He had peachy skin and short brown hair and little googly eyes.'
- Homework supports pupils with their learning well. Pupils speak positively about the reading challenge and enjoy the model-making homework in particular. Some say that homework brings them and their parents together.
- Teaching assistants play a valuable role across the school. They benefit from professional development and are effective in supporting learning. Adults use questions to check pupils' understanding well. They also offer positive role models as learners.
- Leaders and teachers assess pupils' work accurately, working with other schools in the multi-academy trust to ensure that these standards are correct.
- Teachers encourage pupils to think about how they could improve their work, and how they can learn from the mistakes they make. Positive relationships between staff and pupils underpin successful teaching throughout the school. Staff work successfully as teams. For example, meetings about pupils' progress involve a team of staff to identify any pupils falling behind. They provide effective support when needed.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The personal development of all pupils is at the heart of the school's vision. Staff have high social expectations of pupils. Pupils are challenged to be ready, resourceful, resilient, responsible, respectful, risk-takers and reflective. Pupils understand these '6R'

qualities and value the importance of them in their school lives.

- Teachers plan a range of visits and activities that widen pupils' experiences. For example, a visit to a West End theatre has inspired the end-of-year 'Lion King' show. A visit to Hunstanton took some pupils to the seaside for the first time. A recent visit to the National Gallery and the Houses of Parliament opened pupils' eyes to the capital city and politics. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning on trips and visits.
- Pupils understand the importance of respect. Those that met with the inspectors explained how all should be treated with respect and deserve to be fairly treated.
- Leaders deal with any disrespectful behaviour promptly, in line with the behaviour policy. Pupils say that they can speak to an adult, and any bullying or unkindness is quickly addressed.
- Adults challenge pupils to think and reflect. For example, in an assembly, they participated well, joining in with a French action song. They sang enthusiastically with the words clearly reflecting the school's aspirations: 'We've got to trust one another, I can do anything at all, I can be anything I want, just believe in me.'
- Parents rightly believe that their children are happy and are well looked after. Parents overwhelmingly would recommend this school to others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils take responsibility for their behaviour, with some older pupils taking care of younger pupils at break and lunchtime.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils apply themselves well in lessons. Pupils take pride in their work and take care to present their work well.
- Pupils behave well in and around school. This reflects the views of parents that pupils behave well at school.
- Leaders work relentlessly with families and external agencies to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality. This has had some impact on improving attendance.
- Leaders' initiatives to reduce persistent absence are also effective. Consequently, the rate of persistent absence is now improving. Staff, children and their families value the work of the family support worker and multilingual teaching assistant. The school's strategies have led to improved attendance rates and continue to be a focus for further improvement. However too many pupils, particularly from Roma Gypsy communities, continue to be regularly absent from school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Standards have improved considerably since the school became an academy. This is because leaders have insisted on high-quality teaching in a culture that expects all pupils to succeed.
- In 2017, the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. Pupils made better progress than pupils nationally. Currently, the school's own assessment information indicates

that Year 6 outcomes will be good, but not as high as in 2017. Attainment in reading and mathematics for the most able pupils continues to be lower than the level similar pupils achieve in other schools.

- In key stage 1 in 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard and greater depth in writing and mathematics was above the national average, yet below the national average in reading. The school's own assessment information indicates that this will be similar in 2018. Fewer disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard and greater depth than other pupils nationally.
- Most children start the school in early years with skills below those seen typically. Children make good progress and by the end of the early years the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is consistently above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Years 1 and 2 are in line with those seen nationally. Children's workbooks in early years show that they are using their phonics knowledge accurately to write words and simple sentences.
- Leaders use funding to support disadvantaged pupils effectively, and the progress of these pupils is high. The close focus on their needs has helped these pupils to catch up with their peers by the end of Year 6 in writing and mathematics. These pupils make good progress because of effective interventions and the focus on speaking and reading across the school.
- The school's assessment information shows that the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved over the last two years. In 2017, the proportion of these pupils achieving a higher standard in reading by the end of key stage 2 was above that of all other pupils nationally.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of early years is good. The early years leader has high expectations and a clear vision for further improvement. Her skills are recognised and used to develop high-quality early years practice in other schools.
- Children enjoy their learning and make good progress during their time in Nursery and Reception.
- The majority of children who start Nursery show skills that are below those typically expected for their age, especially in communication and language. Many children are new to English when they start Nursery and many start at midpoints during the year. They learn well and make good progress while in Nursery and Reception.
- Outcomes for children at the end of Reception are good. Outcomes are higher for those children who attended the school's Nursery than for those children who start at the school in Reception.
- The school's assessment information shows that children build a solid foundation in Nursery. Children make even better progress during their time in Reception. This is particularly true for the children's speaking and listening, as well as their literacy skills.
- Teaching is good. Phonics is taught consistently well in Reception. Teachers have good

subject knowledge and make learning interactive and fun. Number work is taught well, and children learn to solve increasingly difficult problems.

- Where teaching is strongest in Nursery, the most able children show impressive skills in reading and writing simple words. Children delight in working alongside adults to find out the answers through looking at books and the internet.
- Some routines in Nursery do not help children to develop habits which support their social development and independence. Expectations of the children's social development are not consistent across early years classes.
- Overall, children are well prepared for Year 1. The 'I can' statements make sure that children and staff understand the high learning expectations. This approach is supporting the learning and progress of children.
- Parents feel very welcome in Nursery and Reception. This warm sense of partnership clearly continues throughout the children's time at school.
- Parents highly value the care and quality of education which children receive during their time in Nursery and Reception. Parents are proud of the progress their children make.
- Staff ensure that the early years provision meets welfare requirements and safeguarding is effective.

School details

Unique reference number	141221
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10053404

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Cathy Brown
Executive Principal	Sarah Ridley
Telephone number	0116 276 7761
Website	www.northfield-rmet.org.uk
Email address	office@northfield-rmet.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school which became an academy in November 2015. The school is part of the Rushey Mead Educational Trust.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with a statement or an education, health and care plan is also below national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than the national average and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is also above the national figure.
- The school experiences high levels of mobility, with pupils entering and leaving the school mid term.
- The school met the government's floor standard in 2017. Floor standards are the

minimum expectations for pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 34 lessons or parts of lessons. Senior leaders carried out some observations jointly with inspectors. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books with senior leaders and sampled books in classes.
- Inspectors heard pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive principal and head of school, other leaders and members of staff, and spoke to groups of pupils.
- The lead inspector met two governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also spoke to the chief executive officer from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and pupils around the school. In addition, they evaluated 65 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as four free-text responses. Inspectors also took account of 14 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 25 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including those relating to the school's self-evaluation, the governing body meeting minutes, improvement plans and school information on pupils' recent attainment and progress.
- Inspectors also considered behaviour and attendance information, policies and procedures relating to special educational needs, pupil premium funding, PE and sport premium funding, safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Chris Davies, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Fiona Riley	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Cossor	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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