

The New North Academy

32 Popham Road, Islington, London N1 8SJ

Inspection dates

20–21 September 2016

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

- Leaders nurture a strong ethos of care, ambition and commitment. The headteacher sets high standards for the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. She takes effective action swiftly when aspects of the school need to improve.
- Leaders monitor teaching closely and provide teachers with helpful training and support to ensure that the quality of the teaching in the school is good.
- Teachers know their pupils well and the support each one needs to thrive. Most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress.
- Pupils are attentive, responsive to their teachers and value their education.
- Pupils reflect the school's values and show high levels of respect and empathy towards each other.
- Leaders are vigilant to risks of harm that pupils may face. Leaders uphold high standards of record-keeping to ensure that safeguarding procedures are efficient and effective.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and English. The curriculum enables pupils to develop their skills and knowledge in a wide range of subjects. Pupils gain valuable experiences by taking part in high-quality extra-curricular opportunities which boost their confidence and raise their aspirations.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the strengths in leadership are extended to new and less experienced leaders so that the momentum of improvement and embedding of key strategies continues, and is accelerated in the early years.
- Embed rapidly the new tracking systems, including in the early years, so that the progress of pupils across the curriculum is accurately and regularly reviewed.
- Ensure that teachers apply the school's feedback and presentation policy equally well to enable pupils in all year groups to improve their work.
- Ensure that teachers plan appropriate levels of challenge to deepen pupils' understanding and accelerate the progress of most-able pupils.
- Establish a consistent routine for the setting of homework that supports pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has been in her post for four terms. On her appointment, she promptly and precisely recognised areas of the school that needed urgent development. She put in place clear policies, which, accompanied by her high expectations of staff and pupils, have led to rapid improvements in aspects of the school that were less than good. She has created a strong ethos of care, ambition and commitment. This has influenced all who work in the school, fuelling their enthusiasm and recognition of the rewards of hard work. The headteacher provides exemplary support for other senior leaders in the school so that they are increasingly well placed to hold staff to account for the quality of their work.
- Since taking up her post, the headteacher has taken decisive action, supported by the governing body, to improve the quality of teaching. Leaders have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the quality of teaching across the school because of their regular monitoring and feedback to teachers. They make sure that teachers receive the training they need for their teaching to get better. Teachers feel well supported by leaders and have gained much from professional development opportunities.
- Leaders ensure a thorough and regular review of pupil progress to identify swiftly when individual pupils and groups are falling behind. Leaders, including governors, allocate pupil premium appropriately so that pupils receive the support they need to do better at school. Leaders' actions have secured improvements in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils so that they achieve at least as well as other pupils nationally. The recent introduction of new assessment tracking systems reflects the headteacher's constant drive for further improvement. She recognises that the tracking of pupils' progress across all subjects is not as thorough as it should be.
- Values of respect, responsibility and fairness are integral to everyday life in the school. Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take on additional responsibilities, such as membership of the pupil parliament, which has nurtured in pupils a high level of respect for each other's views. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school.
- Leaders have established a curriculum that impressively balances the priority for pupils to continue to improve their skills in English and mathematics when exploring a wide range of subjects. This enables them to discover new talents and raise their aspirations for the future. The headteacher recognises the subject specialisms of her staff so that pupils benefit greatly from working with, for example, artists, musicians and information technology specialists. The opportunity for pupils in Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 to learn to play a musical instrument is very worthwhile. This enables them to work with pupils from other schools, and to visit impressive venues and experience the fulfilment of performance, for instance when taking part in a recent concert at Goldsmiths, University of London.
- Leaders have promoted a sense of community across the school and have successfully engaged increasing numbers of parents in school life. A wide range of popular extra-curricular clubs, such as sewing, yoga and 'lads' and dads' football' often involve parents working with their children and are very well received by families.

- Senior leaders were highly effective when the behaviour of pupils was not what they expected it to be. They revised the behaviour policy, ensured that it was clear to all staff and pupils and provided training for staff. As a consequence, pupils noted that there are fewer instances of poor behaviour and this observation is supported by leaders' records. The rate of fixed-term exclusions has reduced.
- The leadership team, including governors, monitor closely pupils' attendance at school. Leaders have established an extended and dedicated team of staff to work with families to identify and overcome any issues that cause pupils to be absent from school. As a result, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved. Levels of persistent absence have decreased.
- Leaders have responded with appropriate urgency to lower than expected provisional key stage 2 outcomes in 2016 in reading, writing and mathematics. They have commissioned well-planned, intensive and targeted support from the local authority to identify and remedy any shortfalls in the accuracy of assessment.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has worked hard to ensure that their work is effective. They have responded wisely to a thorough self-evaluation of their skills and experience. They have sought advice, and recruited and trained accordingly, to ensure that they are well placed to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
- Governors have a very clear vision for the future developments of the school. They are knowledgeable about school strategies, for example to improve attendance and the quality of teaching. They check with leaders regularly in their meetings to ensure that pupils are making good progress, and if not, to identify what else is needed.
- Governors have worked prudently with the headteacher to renew the performance management policy of the school. They ensure that each member of staff has targets relevant to the school's development plan.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders keep meticulous records relating to safeguarding. These show that staff receive all essential training and regular reminders and updates, so that they fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Leaders are alert to risks to their pupils such as radicalisation and female genital mutilation. The school is vigilant in following up any concerns about pupils. Leaders demonstrate persistence and dedication in pursuing appropriate links with outside agencies to provide pupils with the support they need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils are generally attentive in lessons and responsive to their teachers' high expectations. Pupils engage enthusiastically in discussions with each other and are comfortable sharing ideas about their work and extending their thinking.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well. They work successfully together to ensure that pupils receive the help they need when they have difficulties completing their work, and this enables them to make progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning effectively, especially when their

subject knowledge is strong. This deepens pupils' understanding and improves the way in which pupils express their responses.

- Teachers routinely incorporate challenging tasks into their planning so that the most able pupils are motivated and stretched. Pupils enjoy seeing how many challenging questions they can complete at the start of mathematics lessons, which helps them to boost their skills and confidence in arithmetic. On occasions, some pupils find the challenges too easy and are ready to move on more quickly.
- Teachers use behaviour management strategies and the rewards system effectively and fairly to foster positive relationships in lessons. There are occasional pockets of low-level disruption in different year groups when pupils are ready to move on or are waiting for extra help, and so become distracted with off-task behaviour. Pupils refocus swiftly when their teachers give them reminders.
- When teachers set homework, it supports learning in lessons and pupils say that they find it helpful and interesting. However, not all teachers have established a consistent routine for the setting of homework.
- Teachers usually use the school's feedback and presentation policy effectively, so that pupils reflect productively on their work, make improvements and good progress. There are some occasions when teachers do not follow the policy. As a result, pupils are not clear what they have to do next to meet their targets.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They are very confident about ways in which they should keep themselves safe. For example, they understand why they need to protect their identity online because of the careful guidance they have received from their teachers.
- The values curriculum is thoroughly embedded across the school. It includes overarching themes such as tolerance, respect and sustainability across all the subjects that pupils study and the assembly programme. Pupils are highly respectful of each other's differences and value the diversity of backgrounds that the pupils represent. They show great empathy for others who find settling at school difficult.
- Pupils gain much from the formation of the school's pupil parliament. Pupils take on roles such as secretary of state for defence and home secretary. In these roles, they find out more about health and safety and safeguarding in the school. Working with teachers and their peers, they are able to make suggestions about ways in which to improve the school. Their representation of pupils' views has resulted in higher-quality school lunches, and in the school reducing levels of water and electricity usage. Through this valuable experience, pupils learn about democracy and the rule of law and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are very positive about their education and mindful of its importance to them as they plan their futures. As a result, they are responsive to their teachers' high

expectations for attentiveness and good manners. Incidents of low-level disruption are rare.

- Pupils are well versed in the school's behaviour code. They say it is working successfully to improve behaviour. Leaders' records of behaviour incidents show that their work has helped to improve the behaviour of individual pupils and groups.
- Pupils conduct themselves calmly and sensibly around the school. They are very welcoming and polite.
- The school acknowledges that some pupils are not punctual when arriving at school. Staff go to great lengths, including working with families to help them resolve specific circumstances that make it difficult for them to get to school on time. Once in school, pupils demonstrate how much they value their education. They do not delay getting to their lessons and settle promptly, ready to learn.
- Behaviour records show that serious incidents of poor behaviour do not happen very often, and pupils agree. Bullying is rare and while some name-calling occurs, pupils are clear that they know that this is wrong and its frequency is reducing because of the good influence of their teachers.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- By the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics is generally at least as good as, and often better than, the national average.
- The attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics is below the national average. There is a trend of improvement over recent years.
- Standards of attainment reached by the most able pupils at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 have improved in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of most-able pupils who have made good progress by the end of year 6 has increased. This is especially the case in mathematics. In 2015, most-able pupils made progress at rates higher than the national average in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils nationally because of the effective, targeted support they receive if they fall behind. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in reading from their starting points. However, some of the most able disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the specific help they need from their teachers and teaching assistants so that they make progress in meeting their individual targets. They often achieve as well as all pupils nationally.
- While remaining below the national average, the proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in phonics at the end of key stage 1 has increased in recent years. This is because of improvements in the quality of teaching and more efficient transition for pupils from the early years.
- Each classroom has a book corner – a space set aside where pupils can choose and read books. Pupils enjoy using these areas. However, the frequency of opportunities for pupils to read in lessons varies across year groups. Pupils are not always clear on what they need to do to improve their reading further

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- New leadership in the early years is strong. Leaders have a clear vision for future developments. However, their strategies have not been in place long enough to have had an impact on children's outcomes.
- Assessment systems are in the early stages of development. Teachers recognise on a day-to-day basis the specific areas in which individual children are falling behind and give them the help they need. However, they do not have a longer-term view of how well children are doing because a comprehensive tracking system of children's progress and attainment is not in place. This means that early years leaders do not have a precise enough view on the effectiveness of interventions and the allocation of the pupil premium funding.
- Children's work in their books shows that they make expected progress in the Reception class. However, there is little continuity between assessments in the Nursery and Reception classes, so children do not make progress as quickly as they are capable.
- The leader of the early years facilitates close communications well between staff working in the early years and those in key stage 1. The leader of the early years with responsibility for Year 1 ensures that children are well prepared for key stage 1. This ensured that and any aspect of learning they find difficult are targeted promptly by staff.
- Leaders plan the early years curriculum carefully to enable children to have wide-ranging opportunities to learn new skills. The area is well resourced and enriched through recent developments to the outdoor environment.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is improving because of staff training, development of the outdoor area and a more extensive range of resources. Leaders have made appropriate changes to routines in the early years so that lessons are more focused and productive. These developments have led to some improvements in children's achievement in reading and writing. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development increased in 2015, although remaining below the national average.
- Phonics lessons are engaging and clear. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning well to develop children's language. Children are motivated when adults encourage them to apply their learning to everyday situations.
- The early years site is safe and secure. Children play very happily with their peers, and while supervised closely, they interact very positively and productively without the intervention of adults.
- The behaviour of children in the early years is good. Adults use the star reward system effectively to promote children's self-esteem and enthusiasm for achievement and good behaviour.
- Leaders have established a detailed programme of induction for parents of children joining the early years, including home visits. This smooths the transition for children so they settle into their new settings quickly.

School details

Unique reference number	137393
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10008669

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Horten
Headteacher	Miss Nicola Percy
Telephone number	02077043900
Website	www.newnorthacademy.com
Email address	admin@newnorthacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not comply with DfE guidance on what academies should publish about: the pupil premium grant allocation amount for 2015–16 and 2016–17 and how the impact of the allocation of the pupil premium is measured; the special educational needs report; equality objectives; governors’ business and financial interests; and the charging and remissions policy.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of a special educational needs and/or disability information report, governors’ information and charging and remission policies on its website.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of girls attending the school is above average.
- The proportion of pupils representing minority ethnic groups is above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for special educational needs is above

average, while the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is close to the national average.

- The school has recently commissioned a programme of support from the local authority.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons in all phases and year groups in the school. Some observations were carried out jointly with members of the leadership team. Inspectors also completed learning walks in different phases of the school, sometimes accompanied by phase leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, a representative of the local authority, members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors also met with groups of pupils representing all year groups from Year 1 to Year 6. They also listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Inspectors evaluated a wide range of the school’s documentation including the school’s self-evaluation, the records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, behaviour records, anonymised performance management records and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils’ books to assess their progress over time.
- One inspector met with the school’s business leader, who administers the single central record.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school. They held informal conversations with staff and pupils.
- One inspector held informal conversations with parents at the start of the school day. The responses to the online questionnaire Parent View were taken into account, as were surveys completed by staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Amanda Carter-Fraser, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Meena Walia	Ofsted Inspector
Karla Martin-Theodore	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Birtles	Ofsted Inspector
Calvin Henry	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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