

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Norbreck Primary Academy

Norbreck Road, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire FY5 1PD

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Inspection dates:

18 and 19 March 2025

## Outcome

Norbreck Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Ian Cooper. This school is part of Mulberry Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is a single-academy trust overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paula Hartley.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in the family atmosphere of this large, friendly school. Staff have created a nurturing environment for all pupils. They know the pupils and families well. Relationships are strong. Pupils trust staff to look after them. They feel safe and valued.

The school has the highest ambition for the learning and behaviour of all pupils. Pupils rise to meet these expectations. They display positive attitudes to learning and they achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support. They are fully involved in the life of the school.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They strive to live up to the school's motto: 'Whatever we do, we do it well.' Pupils behave consistently well in lessons and during social times.

The school offers a range of opportunities that excite and engage pupils while enhancing their learning. For example, visitors immerse pupils in different career opportunities to ensure that they are well prepared for life beyond the school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning in the outdoor environment. They especially enjoy canoeing and residential trips. These experiences foster a strong sense of curiosity and promote pupils' enthusiasm for learning.

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

The school has placed ambition for all at the centre of its curriculum thinking. Recent changes to the curriculum are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Current pupils are typically learning curriculum content well so that they are prepared well for the next stage of their learning. However, this is not reflected in the published data. In 2024, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly below average. This was due to weaknesses in the previous curriculum, which have broadly been addressed.

In most subjects, the school has identified what pupils should learn and when this should happen. However, in some subjects, it has not identified the essential knowledge that pupils must master to build a solid foundation for future learning. This means that teachers are unsure of what to emphasise so that pupils remember this knowledge. As a result, some pupils are not able to use prior learning to help them understand new learning.

Mostly, staff check pupils' understanding and adapt learning activities to make up for any misunderstandings. However, in a few subjects, these checks do not consistently lead to effective actions that help pupils with their learning. Consequently, some pupils develop gaps in their learning.

Children flourish during their early years. The school ensures that children embark on their educational journey beyond the Reception Year with a strong foundation for later learning. Children exhibit a genuine enthusiasm for learning. They remain engaged during the different activities that they encounter each day.

Pupils with SEND are identified swiftly. Staff are knowledgeable about pupils' needs and ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons. Through staff support and some adaptations to activities, pupils with SEND access the curriculum alongside their peers.

The school has fostered a culture in which reading is prioritised and celebrated. From an early age, children are exposed to nursery rhymes, songs, and stories. Pupils learn letter sounds and words in a systematic and organised manner. As they develop their phonics knowledge, pupils are given books that match the sounds that they have learned. Pupils quickly gain the knowledge that they need to become confident, fluent readers. Those who face challenges in learning to read receive additional support that helps them to catch up quickly.

Pupils' attendance is a priority. The school works in partnership with families and external organisations to ensure that pupils attend daily. Pupils recognise the importance of consistent attendance and are rewarded for their efforts.

Pupils have access to an effective and well-thought-out personal, social, health and economic education programme. There are a range of opportunities and experiences on offer to develop their resilience, enthusiasm, and respectfulness. For example, entering the Blackpool youth games and taking part in events and competitions. Pupils develop

their ability to work with others by participating in team-based problem-solving challenges or organising outdoor games that require exploration and collaboration. Pupils learn about diversity through guest speakers during assemblies and community visits. These visits enrich their education and ignite their curiosity about life in modern Britain.

Trustees, all of whom are governors, work closely with the school to establish a clear and strategic vision. They hold the school to account for its performance through considered support and challenge. Staff appreciate the consideration that is given to their well-being, workload, and professional development. They are proud to work at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school an appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects the school has not identified the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. This prevents some pupils from learning all that they could. The school should make clear the precise knowledge that pupils should learn in these subjects so that pupils learning builds on what they already know.
- In some subjects, the checks on pupils' learning do not lead to actions that overcome their misunderstandings. Pupils develop gaps in their knowledge as a result. The school should ensure that information from the checks on pupils' learning is used to address misconceptions and gaps in knowledge so that pupils can build on secure prior knowledge.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding,

behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138739
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	10348274
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	589
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paula Hartley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Cooper
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.norbreck.blackpool.sch.uk">www.norbreck.blackpool.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	9 and 10 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The current headteacher took up post in September 2024.
- The chair of governors took up the post in September 2024.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher for the school. The inspector also met with a range of teaching and support staff.

- The inspector met with representatives from the board of trustees and held conversations with representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector took account of a range of other information, including the school's own self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, school policies and minutes from meetings of the governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also evaluated the responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Julie Brown, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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