

Newcastle CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123488
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	359448
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Kendall
Headteacher	Richard Langford
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2007
School address	Church Road Newcastle, Craven Arms SY7 8QL
Telephone number	01588 640260
Fax number	01588 640890
Email address	admin@newcastle.shropshire.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Inspection number	359448

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector who observed two teachers, five lessons and held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised a sample of pupils' books, teachers' planning documents, and tracking and assessment data. Questionnaires from 24 parents and carers, 21 pupils and 5 staff were analysed.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work, looking in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is progress consistently good across the school?
- What is the quality and rigour of the school's tracking and assessment system?

Information about the school

Newcastle CofE is a very small primary school in an isolated rural community. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. They are taught in two mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that seen nationally. Pupil mobility is high and more children leave or join the school midway through their primary education than is the norm. The school has gained Healthy Schools status and the ActiveMark award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Newcastle CofE is a good school. The headteacher provides a clear sense of purpose and direction, clearly linked to school improvement. The effective teamwork of the headteacher, teaching staff, governing body and the local authority has ensured that teaching and learning have improved and clear priorities have been set for further improvement. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. They like the positive family atmosphere and typically say: 'I cannot emphasise enough how pleased I am with this school. There is a very happy atmosphere, combined with the right amount of discipline, which is conducive to good learning.' Staff want the best for each pupil and, through working closely with families, strive to achieve this goal.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress, particularly in their personal and social development, their communication and language skills and their understanding of number. Although there are appropriate opportunities within the classroom for children to select activities for themselves as 'free-choice', there is insufficient equipment or adult support to allow children to freely explore things with purpose and challenge in the adjacent outdoor area. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress over their time in school. Standards are above national averages at Year 6, which constitutes good achievement for pupils, although the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in mathematics was lower than average in the latest Year 6 national tests.

Arrangements for the evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning are good and lead to good teaching. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and of the need for healthy lifestyles. Parents and carers say their children enjoy coming to school. Pupils agree enthusiastically and this is reflected in their high levels of attendance. Most pupils work hard, both independently and co-operatively, and this has a positive effect on the good progress they make in lessons. The curriculum ensures that pupils receive a good variety of exciting activities and experiences and is enriched by visits, residential stays and visitors to school. Pupils enjoy the good range of after-school activities and clubs, including physical activities. Pastoral care of pupils is good. Pupils are tracked carefully and data analysed rigorously to ensure any pupil falling behind is identified quickly and support is provided. The school has excellent links with its local community and has forged good links with schools outside the local area and overseas. The school has a good understanding of how well it is doing and what needs to be done next. This, along with improvements to date, shows its good capacity to maintain and sustain improvement.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop children's independent learning skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage by improving resources and accommodation to enable children to have free access to a good range of activities in the outdoor area.
- Improve standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2, particularly the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels for their age, by providing more opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills across a range of subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress in their time in the school. Although the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics was lower than average in the latest national tests, attainment in English and overall standards were above average. The quality of learning in lessons and the work in pupils' books seen during the inspection confirm this good progress. In one good numeracy lesson, all pupils made good progress because the teacher encouraged very high levels of motivation by his energy and enthusiasm, maintained a very good pace throughout and closely matched tasks to pupils' ability. Very good use was made of information and communication technology, with pupils using digital 'voters' to record their answers, allowing an instantaneous assessment of pupils' understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support provided by class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and Year 6 pupils stated that they will be sorry to leave the school in the summer. This enjoyment is clearly reflected in the very high levels of attendance. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation and are confident that issues they raise will be dealt with promptly by the school. Their good behaviour makes a strong contribution to the good progress they make in lessons. They behave considerately towards each other and respond quickly to any additional guidance from staff about how to conduct themselves. Pupils are interested in the school's health promotion strategies and understand the main threats to their health and how these can be avoided. They enthusiastically take on responsibility and play a very constructive role in the school and, through the school council, have had influence on decisions about school life. Their involvement in the termly 'Farmers Markets' which are held in school, includes being responsible for all the banking of the proceeds and calculating of the profits. Coupled with their well-developed basic skills, this prepares them well for the world of work.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Strategies for managing the behaviour of pupils are very effective so that lessons are calm and purposeful, and pupils work hard. Carefully targeted questioning draws out pupils' ideas and develops their thinking and reasoning skills. Teachers assess learning carefully and provide work at the right level to match pupils' widely different learning needs and abilities in the two mixed-age classes. Pupils who need extra help are supported well and those who find learning easy are given more challenging tasks. Individual education plans to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are child-friendly and appropriate. This helps these pupils to learn successfully. Support by teaching assistants is well focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. Staff work together well to ensure that pupils know how to improve. Clear targets are set to help them reach the higher standards of work.

The curriculum meets pupils' different needs and interests successfully. Carefully adapted activities ensure that all groups of pupils in the mixed-age classes experience success and staff are beginning to link subjects to make learning more meaningful. Changes have been made to the mathematics curriculum as a response to the disappointing proportion of Level 5 attainment in the 2010 national tests. Provision for and standards in information and communication technology are a particular strength. For example, pupils have won prizes for their short animated film 'Shoes In Love'. The curriculum is enriched with a good range of visits and visitors, together with a wealth of extra-curricular activities, all of which

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

are much enjoyed by pupils. Collaboration with other schools and extended services support the development of the wider curriculum very well. The school has very strong links with a nearby small primary school and curricular planning is a joint effort between the staff of the two schools. Every pupil is valued and cared for as an individual. This gives them the confidence to learn and enables pupils new to the school and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make the same good progress as others.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides strong leadership for a well-motivated staff and governing body team. He has identified, and successfully tackled, areas requiring improvement and, as a result, most aspects of the school are now good or better. The governing body is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school and is fully involved in evaluating its work. As a result of regular monitoring and support, teaching is consistently good across the school. The small size of the school ensures that all pupils and their families are known very well by staff. The school's very positive relationship with parents and carers and its excellent links with a wide range of partners contribute significantly to improvements in pupils' achievement and well-being. Very strong links with local schools help to overcome the potential isolation of such a small school. These links enable staff to share their expertise, to ensure pupils gain wider experiences and broaden their horizons, and to overcome any barriers to learning due to the very small cohorts. The value of this strong relationship was demonstrated strikingly during the recent period of heavy snow in the area. Several pupils were snowbound for six to eight days but the headteacher and class teacher managed to get into school each day and contacted parents and pupils through email and two-way video calls so that pupils were able to continue their learning from home.

Equality of opportunity is promoted well in all the school's work. As a result, the school is a happy, harmonious community in which to work and learn. Through rigorous analysis of the school's regular and accurate data on pupils' progress, staff are constantly alert to any variation in achievement and are proactive in devising initiatives to overcome any weaknesses. Systems for the safeguarding of pupils are good and there is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among the governing body and staff at all levels. The school has particularly strong procedures to ensure safe and responsible use of the internet. The school promotes very effectively community cohesion within its own and the local community and has formed good relationships with schools in a contrasting area in the United Kingdom and in Uganda.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

At the time of inspection, there were only a very small number of Reception age children in the Early Years Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 class. They had quickly settled into the classroom routines, were clearly enjoying school and played happily together and individually. Historic data shows that most children join the class with typical levels of attainment for their age and make good progress in their first year in school. Children are working and playing with older, Year 1 and Year 2, children from the time they enter the school and this eases transition to the Key Stage 1 curriculum. Teachers and support staff carefully observe and record children's achievements on a day-to-day basis and use this information to plan the next steps in learning. Happy and caring relationships are quickly established. Children behave well and are enthusiastic in all that they do. Staff work hard to achieve a strong partnership with parents and carers. Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are good. Adults provide a wide range of interesting learning activities; in the best cases, they allow children to work on things that they choose themselves as well as take part in more formal group activities with adults. Although the Early Years Foundation Stage classroom has an outdoor area that is directly accessible from the classroom, the school has recognised the need to improve the provision as this area is not being used to its full advantage to encourage children to explore their learning independently. However, there is a very good focus on helping children with their communication skills and ensuring that they develop an ability to work with others in a friendly and purposeful way. Adults have a good knowledge of the learning, development and welfare requirements of very young children and use well national guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage to support children's learning.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all families returned a completed questionnaire, which meant that the response to the questionnaire was much greater than that found nationally. All parents and carers agree that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps their children safe. The very large majority express positive views about almost all aspects of the school. A minority feel that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspection found, however, that behaviour was good throughout the school, and this was confirmed by pupils who said that behaviour is usually good and there is no bullying.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newcastle CofE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there 38 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	75	6	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	75	6	25	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	7	29	13	54	2	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	50	8	33	3	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	58	7	29	2	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	54	9	38	2	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	67	6	25	2	8	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	13	54	9	38	2	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	50	8	33	3	13	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	38	8	33	5	21	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	38	12	50	2	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	50	8	33	0	0	2	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	67	5	21	2	8	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newcastle CofE Primary School, Craven Arms, SY7 8QL

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for talking to me about what you do there. Newcastle CofE is a good school. Those who lead your school do so well and all the adults take good care of you. It was good to see that you clearly enjoy school and that you have a good understanding of how to keep safe and how important it is to eat healthily and take regular exercise. It is to your credit that you behave well, and get on well with each other and with all the staff. It is especially impressive that your levels of attendance are so high. This helps to ensure that you all make good progress. Teachers work hard to help you to learn and to make sure you enjoy being at school. However, I have asked the school to make things even better by ensuring that:

- opportunities for outdoor activities for Reception children are improved so that they become more confident in finding things out for themselves
- more of you achieve the higher levels in mathematics.

You can all help standards to rise even further by always doing your best and making sure that you know your targets.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.