

# New Town Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109785
<b>Local Authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	356623
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Watts

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Malcolm Morrision
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Linda Sujeewon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 May 2008
<b>School address</b>	School Terrace Reading Reading RG1 3LS
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<b>Email address</b>	head.newtown@reading.gov.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 18 lessons or part-lessons taught by nine different teachers. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessments, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. They held discussions with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils, and informal conversations with parents and carers. The inspectors analysed 52 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and others by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How well is assessment used to plan teaching and provide suitable challenge for pupils, particularly the more-able pupils in Key Stage 1?
- How good are the school's provision and strategies to accelerate pupils' learning of English?
- To what extent are leaders and managers at all levels evaluating performance and taking effective action to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement? How rigorous are procedures to improve attendance?
- How rigorous are procedures to improve attendance?

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic heritage with Pakistani being the largest group. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. A small minority are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average overall, but they are not evenly distributed through the school. Some year groups have a high proportion while others have few. Their needs include moderate learning, speech, language and communication difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school part-way through their primary school education is much higher than average. There are 26 part-time children in the Nursery and 27 full-time in Reception. A breakfast club on site is managed by the school, but a private nursery and after-school club are managed by different organisations and were not part of this inspection.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

New Town Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is making good improvements after a decline in performance. There are some good and outstanding features to its work. Considerable improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage mean that children get off to a good start and make good progress from low starting points, particularly in developing their communication and social skills. The school is particularly effective in developing childrens' acquisition of language.

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their consideration for others, and their appreciation and understanding of different cultures and faiths. Pupils feel safe at school because of the positive ethos and the good care, guidance and support provided. They show a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Community cohesion is promoted successfully and pupils benefit from productive partnerships with a range of primary schools that have a different intake of pupils to New Town. Pupils make good contributions to the school and to the wider community. However, attendance is low despite the school's efforts to improve it. Too many families take extended time abroad. ♦♦♦♦

After the last inspection, attainment declined to low levels because of inconsistencies in assessment and teaching, and a higher than usual number of pupils in year groups requiring learning support. Senior leaders and the governing body have made good use of assistance from the local authority and taken effective action to arrest the underachievement, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is now broadly average in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress continues to improve but is not consistent across the school. Attainment in Year 2 remains below average and very few pupils reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching is improving but variation in practice remains. Teachers usually share the purpose of the lesson with the class so pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn. In the most successful lessons, pupils are challenged well with interesting tasks that are well matched to their needs. In a minority of lessons, tasks are not sufficiently challenging, especially for the more able, and the pace of learning is slow. A good curriculum is enriched with a wide range of clubs and visits. ♦

The headteacher provides good leadership and direction, and is well supported by other senior staff in promoting good provision and driving improvement. Performance is systematically evaluated and the findings are used well to inform improvement planning. Improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage, and recent improvements to teaching and to pupils' attainment and progress, especially in Years 3 to 6, demonstrate a good capacity for further development.

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

- By July 2011, raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly by the end of Year 2, by ensuring that the majority of lessons are good or better.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that in all lessons:
  - the purpose of the lesson is effectively shared with the pupils
  - tasks are suitably challenging and well matched to pupils' abilities, particularly for the most-able pupils learning time is maximised and learning proceeds at a good pace
  - learning time is maximised and learning proceeds at a good pace.
- Build on the current procedures to promote the importance of regular attendance to parents and carers and the local community, and raise attendance to at least average levels.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils are now entering Year 1 with above-average attainment because of recent improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enjoy their experiences at school and show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their visits to interesting places such as Bristol Zoo and Englefield Estate. Pupils told an inspector, 'There are lots of activities you can join in here.' ♦♦

National test results, school assessments, a range of pupils' work and the lessons seen indicate that attainment is below average in Year 2 and average by Year 6. Pupils' attainment and progress are improving, particularly in Years 3 to 6. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of pupils who attain higher than the expected Level 5 by the end of Year 6. However, not enough pupils are attaining the higher Level 3 by the end of Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of focused provision for them. Most pupils at an early stage of English acquisition make good progress in language development because of the specialist support they receive. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. ♦

Most year groups make good progress in speaking and listening because of the regular opportunities they have to discuss their learning, particularly in pairs.

In a good English lesson in Year 6, pupils expressed their ideas as they looked at texts about different species of animals. The good emphasis placed on speaking and listening is having a positive impact on pupils' performance in writing. However, in a small minority of lessons, pupils made limited progress in applying speaking skills because they spent too long listening to the teacher. Year 6 pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) well to draft and edit their work and enhance presentation. ♦ They make rapid progress in solving problems because the tasks are suited to needs. Pupils apply knowledge and skills well.

Pupils show considerable respect for the different backgrounds and cultures within the school. In assemblies, pupils demonstrate a very clear understanding of important values such as equality and fairness. Pupils choose healthy foods and participate enthusiastically in a range of physical exercise. They feel well cared for at school and are secure in the

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knowledge that there are always trusted adults to support them. Pupils willingly take on additional responsibilities such as serving on the school council. Older pupils help the younger ones. Pupils support those less fortunate than themselves by raising funds for a range of appeals and charities. ♦ Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next steps in their education. They work well with others and make satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy skills.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. There are examples of good and outstanding practice, particularly in years 3 to 6. Pupils responded very well to teachers' high expectations. Teachers' instructions and explanations are clear, informative and promote learning well. Questioning is often used effectively to challenge the pupils and check their knowledge and understanding. However, in a few lessons, questioning is limited and does not extend pupils' thinking and language. There are some good opportunities for pupils to discuss their work, but in a small minority of lessons, pupils spend too long listening to the teacher and their interest and participation decline. Opportunities are sometimes missed to illustrate key learning points through the use of interactive whiteboards and demonstrations. In most lessons, assessment is used well to match tasks to pupils' abilities so they are challenged and make good progress. However, activities are not always sufficiently demanding for the more-able pupils, especially in

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Years 1 and 2. Teaching assistants usually provide effective guidance and support to pupils who need extra help with language or numeracy.

The curriculum contributes very well to pupils' personal development. Effective steps to improve provision in English and mathematics have had a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Well-planned support programmes are provided for pupils needing additional help with language, literacy and numeracy. The teaching in German and French clubs contributes well to pupils' cultural and language development. Health education and the range of physical activities provided contribute well to pupils' healthy lifestyles. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument and their enjoyment and learning are enriched by a wide range of additional clubs, visits and visitors. Popular clubs include art, cooking, dance, football, French and rugby. ♦ A successful residential visit to the Isle of Wight for Year 6 pupils provides interesting outdoor activities and helps to build team and social skills. ♦

Pupils and their parents and carers acknowledge the well-organised, safe and secure environment provided. Staff know the pupils well and establish good relationships with them. Pupils at an early stage of learning English receive specialist support and most make good gains in the acquisition of English. There are clear policies and procedures to promote good behaviour. The school has robust systems to monitor and promote good attendance. However, a small minority of parents and carers do not fully support school policies. For example, they ignore the school's advice and take their children away for extended leave, and this has an adverse impact on their academic progress. The school strives to find effective ways of promoting the importance of regular attendance. In partnership with other agencies, it is successful in supporting the pupils and their families who need extra help. Pupils and their parents and carers appreciate the well-run breakfast club, which provides a calm start to the day and prepares pupils well for learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is firmly focused on raising achievement and creating a positive climate for pupils and staff to learn and work in. Staff have worked hard to bring about the necessary improvements. Self-evaluation by senior leaders is effective. The most pressing priorities for improvement have been clearly identified and successful steps have been taken to improve pupils' progress, raise attainment, accelerate pupils' acquisition of English, and improve assessment and tracking of pupils' attainment. Teaching and

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learning are effectively monitored and developed by senior staff. Inadequacies in teaching have been eliminated and most lessons seen in years 3 to 6 were good or better. ♦

The effective governing body has a clear understanding of the school's performance and priorities for improvement. It is supportive, provides constructive challenge and contributes well to the school's drive for improvement. Considerable attention is placed on safeguarding. Policies and practice to protect and safeguard children are of good quality and fully meet requirements. All staff are well trained in this important area and safe practices are promoted effectively through the school's curriculum.

Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. Discrimination is tackled very well, but senior leaders are aware that not all pupils have equal access to consistently good provision. Pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths is promoted extremely well through the curriculum. There are productive partnerships with primary schools in Reading, Swindon and West Berkshire. Pupils from all schools benefit from working with others from different backgrounds and cultures. Global partnerships are less well developed, but establishing these has not been a key priority for the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Outstanding leadership and management have resulted in considerable improvements to this area. The Early Years Foundation Stage is now a major strength of the school. Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. Their language and social skills are often particularly low. Children settle very quickly into school because of the good induction arrangements and the very positive partnership with parents and carers, who are given very helpful guidance on how to support their children's learning and development. High-quality relationships between adults and children, and the



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particular attention given to care and welfare, enable children to make exceptionally good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

Children are inspired and motivated by the exciting range of learning activities provided. Teaching is often outstanding and children make rapid gains in all areas of learning. There is an effective blend of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. Children have very good opportunities to explore, be creative and work independently. Assessment and record keeping are very clear and the resulting information is used effectively to plan teaching and learning. Adults skilfully integrate language development into all activities so children make outstanding progress in this area. There are good opportunities for children to acquire and practise early writing skills. They gain and apply numeracy skills extremely well through a range of practical activities. Good use is made of the outdoor learning areas and children make considerable progress in creative and physical development. The ICT resources are used well but some are old and wearing out. The school has clear and appropriate plans to improve both hardware and software.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

**Views of parents and carers**

Most parents and carers who returned questionnaires are happy with their child's experience at the school. They are particularly pleased with the sense of enjoyment, safety in the school, information provided about their children's progress, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour, leadership and management, and how well the school responds to suggestions and concerns. During this inspection, inspectors found that leaders and managers are doing a good job of improving the school. It is effective in meeting the needs of parents and carers, and responds appropriately to their concerns.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at New Town 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 inspection team received 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	63	18	35	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	54	23	44	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	50	23	44	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	40	27	52	4	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	44	27	52	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	46	23	44	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	50	23	44	2	4	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)	25	48	21	40	3	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	38	27	52	4	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	42	25	48	5	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	40	24	46	6	12	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	44	22	42	6	12	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	42	26	50	3	6	1	2

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



20 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of New Town Primary School, Reading, RG1 3LS**

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school, giving us your views and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we have found. Yours is a satisfactory school. There are some good and outstanding things.

These are the school's main strengths.

- Children get off to a fantastic start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. ♦
- You enjoy school and the activities provided.
- A good range of learning activities is provided, including clubs and visits. ♦
- You get on very well with each other and behaviour is good.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- You feel safe at school because teachers and other adults take care of you and provide good guidance and support.
- You show a first-rate understanding of different cultures and faiths.
- You make valuable contributions to the school and to the wider community.
- The school is led well by your headteacher, and she receives good support from other senior staff.

We have asked the headteacher and teachers to do a few things to improve areas of the school's work.

- Some of you are capable of reaching higher standards, particularly the more able, in Years 1 and 2.
- In some lessons, you could be making more progress. We have asked teachers to always make the purpose of the lesson clear to you, to match the work more carefully to your abilities, especially for those of you who find learning easy, and to ensure that each lesson moves on at a quick pace.
- Attendance needs to improve because too many of you are missing out on the activities provided, and this can affect your progress. ♦

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and by making sure that you attend regularly. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector

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