

# Newtown Early Years and Infant School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 110217           |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Buckinghamshire  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 356701           |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 22–23 March 2011 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Rob Crompton     |

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>                      | Infant   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3–7  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 188  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                               |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Mark Shaw  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Julia Antrobus                                   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 8 July 2008                                      |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Berkhampstead Road<br>Buckinghamshire<br>HP5 3AT |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01494 783713                                     |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01494 783713                                     |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | office@newtown.bucks.sch.uk                      |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 19 lessons, including those led by nine teachers, early years practitioners and support staff. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors looked at minutes of meetings held by the governing body, curriculum plans, assessment documents and a wide range of other information. The questionnaires returned by 110 parents and carers and 25 staff were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The team investigated the reasons why pupils tend to do better in reading and writing than in mathematics.
- They examined the progress made by pupils of Pakistani heritage.
- Inspectors evaluated the extent to which the school's judgement that the curriculum is outstanding is justified.

## Information about the school

This is infant school and nursery is smaller than average. The pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds; the majority are White British but a quarter are of Pakistani heritage. Around a third of pupils speak English as an additional language and most are at the early stages of learning English when they join the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most of these pupils have difficulties with communication and language. A few have emotional or behavioural problems. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is within an integrated unit. Forty children of nursery age attend in the morning and learn alongside the children in the two Reception classes. The school has the Healthy Schools award and the Active Mark. A privately managed playgroup shares the building and a children's centre operates on the same site. This provision was 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?**

**2**

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

**2**

## Main findings

Newtown provides a good quality of education. The school has developed excellent relationships with parents and carers and they are overwhelmingly supportive. Their comments included, 'I have always found the staff very approachable any issues are dealt with in a very effective way and I have always been kept informed.'

Pupils make good progress because of effective teaching, underpinned by often good assessment of learning and a well-designed curriculum. They thrive in the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage unit and are extremely well prepared for subsequent work in Years 1 and 2. Levels of attainment have gradually risen in recent years. By the end of Year 2, attainment is broadly average in reading and writing. Lately, pupils have not done as well in mathematics. Current Year 2 pupils are attaining at higher levels due to a successful focus on the subject, although pupils' knowledge of basic number facts remains inconsistent in both year groups. Teachers' marking includes specific guidance for pupils about how to improve their written work but this is much less evident in mathematics. Staff are particularly successful at helping pupils who join the school with limited English to build well from their starting points. Teaching assistants are extremely effective in providing intensive support programmes which help pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress. ♦ They generally play a significant role in supporting different groups in lessons. Sometimes lesson introductions to the whole class are overlong, however, which detracts from the time teaching assistants can spend explaining new work to smaller groups and guiding pupils' learning.

The school's positive and caring ethos has a powerful influence on the way pupils respect one another's feelings and their awareness of what is right and what is wrong. Staff ensure pupils are extremely well cared for, at the same time helping them to keep themselves safe. The school works hard to ensure children attend very regularly but some parents and carers do keep children away from school for trivial reasons.

Highly effective leadership by the headteacher, with strong support from the two assistant headteachers, ensures that all staff strive continually to improve on previous performance. Through thorough self-evaluation, informed by careful tracking of children's progress, the governing body gains a good knowledge of strengths and areas for development. Consequently, strategic planning is sharply focused on specific priorities and how they are to be tackled. Based upon the school's track record in raising standards, it is evident that it has a good capacity to sustain improvement.

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

- Accelerate the progress pupils make in mathematics, by:

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- ensuring that less confident pupils gain a secure understanding of essential number facts before moving on to more demanding work
- ensuring the more-able pupils have further opportunities to tackle more challenging work
- providing more guidance to pupils in how to improve their work
- Develop the consistency of teaching and learning by:
  - involving teaching assistants more frequently in introducing new work and guiding small groups of pupils
  - ensuring all lessons move at a brisk pace and provide a good balance between introductions and opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- Encourage all parents and carers to ensure their children do not miss school for inappropriate reasons.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils enjoy learning, achieve and behave well and mostly attend regularly. As children start school, their knowledge and understanding are below those typical of the age group and communication skills are low. Pupils make good progress through the school, so that by the end of Year 2, levels of attainment are broadly average. ♦ Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve particularly well, and are often among the highest attainers. A sustained focus on speaking and on letters and sounds (phonics) helps those with communication and speech difficulties to build well on their starting points. Pupils of Pakistani origin are well supported and generally make good progress.

The confidence pupils' develop in the Early Years Foundation Stage in 'having a go' is evident in their enthusiasm when tackling written work. Pupils of all abilities in Year 1, for example, were keen to write the start of an adventure story. They showed a good understanding of fantasy stories. One wrote, 'One day a bad boy went into space and was throwing asteroids at the earth ♦' The most-able pupils in Year 2 acquire very good spelling skills, accurately spelling relatively difficult words such as 'badger', 'kitchen' and 'thumb'. In recent years, the levels of attainment in mathematics reached by the end of Year 2 have not matched those in English. Current Year 2 pupils are doing better but some pupils' overall grasp of basic number facts, such as the different ways of making 10, is variable. This means they sometimes struggle to tackle other calculations, such as  $16p + 4p$  or  $10-3$ .

Pupils' secure knowledge about the importance of keeping safe and healthy reflects the Healthy Schools status and Active Mark. During discussions with inspectors, they explained the importance of a healthy diet and the value of their daily fruit snack. They showed a good awareness of how to avoid potential hazards by the roadside and in the kitchen. Pupils actively and enthusiastically raise money for the school, through cake sales, supermarket vouchers, 'fit for fun' sponsorship and ♦ participation at the May Fayre. They keenly support many charitable causes. Older pupils take responsibility for keeping the school tidy by 'wombling' outside and encouraging other children to pick things up.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| 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        |
| <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>   | 3        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>2</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?

Good relationships underpin the teaching and learning. Most lessons move at a brisk pace because teachers structure them well and skilfully engage all groups. Using tracking information and 'on the spot' assessment, teachers generally pitch work at the right level for each group. Setting by ability in mathematics in both year groups aids this process. Work for the more-able pupils is usually demanding, although, occasionally, opportunities are missed to set them tasks which fully test their skills in mathematics. Conversely, pupils sometimes find numeracy work beyond them as they lack the necessary grounding. Pupils are aware of their targets in literacy and teachers provide good feedback in their marking of written work. Marking in numeracy is supportive but does not generally point out how pupils can improve, or include a further challenge when they get everything right. The skilled support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and development. Their level of confidence in engaging pupils and managing behaviour is used to good effect during the daily phonics groups. Pupils' learning is also enhanced when they support groups during class lessons. However, when teachers spend too long introducing lessons to the whole class, support staff do not play such an active role in supporting pupils' independent work.

A wealth of opportunities, including a wide range of visits, visitors and clubs, make learning fun. Curriculum guidelines promote good links between subjects, for example including graphs of the results of practical work on forces, writing instructions in a variety

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of contexts and using the internet to search for information about past and present dwellings. The effective 'Funky Phonics' scheme is differentiated 17 ways across the school from Nursery to Year 2 so that it meets the needs and abilities of all pupils. Speech and language sessions, some led by bilingual staff, provide good support for those pupils needing additional help.

Children enjoy opportunities to celebrate significant cultural occasions such as Eid, Christmas and Chinese New Year. Regular visitors from different faiths and groups talk in assemblies. Such activities make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' academic and personal development. Some aspects are fairly new and not yet sufficiently embedded to promote outstanding outcomes and, for this reason, the curriculum is judged good rather than outstanding.

Staff pay close attention to all aspects of care and guidance, working collaboratively with families when required. One parent or carer wrote, 'Newtown has taken exceptional care of my son and his needs they have encouraged him to thrive in all areas. The school does not only see the disability in my son but also the great ability.' Pupils with emotional or behaviour problems are helped sympathetically to overcome barriers to their learning and personal development. One member of staff is the 'children's ambassador', providing excellent support in helping them take a full part as possible in lessons.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The use of assessment to support learning  | 2        |
| <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>1</b> |

## How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership team makes every effort to ensure all pupils do as well as they can. Staff share this ambition and feel valued. Their work is closely monitored to identify strengths and to provide further training to address any weaknesses. Pupils' progress and attainment are tracked meticulously. The system allows immediate analysis of how different groups are performing, such as boys, girls, pupils with different ethnic backgrounds and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This illustrates the school's strong commitment to equal opportunities and to avoiding any discrimination. The governing body, working closely with senior staff, monitors the school's provision and the outcomes for pupils carefully through well-focused self-evaluation. Development plans are detailed and well founded. The governing body ensures that policies for the safeguarding of pupils are implemented effectively. They regularly undertake risk assessments and ensure that child protection policies are implemented. Safeguarding has a very high priority in the school.

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Notice boards, newsletters and the website keep parents and carers very well informed of what is going on in school and identify opportunities for them to help and be helped. A termly 'parents council' provides ample opportunities for parents and carers to seek information and air their views. Close links with the on-site play group and children's centre contribute to the excellent induction arrangements and to the school's highly effective support for families. Strong partnerships with the junior school and other neighbouring schools enable the sharing of effective methods and joint training. The school increasingly hosts visits by teachers to the integrated Early Years Foundation Stage unit. ♦

Community cohesion is promoted effectively, not least by the harmonious atmosphere, where pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get along with one another. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own locality and different countries and cultures is developed well through visitors, curriculum topics and celebrating religious festivals.

*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:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 2        |
| <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>1</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>2</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>2</b> |

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make very good progress from their starting points as they enter Nursery or Reception. By the end of Reception, levels of attainment are at least line with those expected. Children's personal development is particularly strong and most children who start with very little English make great strides in speaking, and subsequently in developing early reading and writing skills.

There is an extremely calm, purposeful and stimulating environment for learning; a hive of activity pervades as children thoroughly enjoy the wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. During one session, children were busily engaged as building workers. Wearing knee pads and hard hats, they built houses made from replica bricks, 'mended' the tricycle



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track and 'wrote' lists of materials. 'Oh no, we've forgotten the door!' exclaimed one, and the whole group sustained their efforts to correct this. The excellent support by their teacher in encouraging without spoon-feeding ideas is typical of the high quality interventions made by all adults. Adults excel in asking pertinent questions which promote children's thinking and learning. Children confidently engaged inspectors in conversation and were eager to show them round and discuss what they were doing.

A daily focus on letters and sounds provides a very secure basis for developing children's reading and writing skills. Some of the more confident Nursery and Reception children work alongside much older pupils in Years 1 and 2 during phonics sessions, which ensures they are well challenged.

All staff contribute to the regular recording of children's development and use this information to track their progress through the year and to monitor the outcomes. The strong partnership with parents and carers is evident in the warm relationships and informal rapport shown as parents and carers accompany their children into school. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage keeps the provision under review, identifies areas for further improvement, and provides an excellent role model for colleagues.

*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**

The number of questionnaires received was well above average, with around three quarters of families responding. All parents and carers felt their children enjoyed school and all except one were happy overall with their children's experience. A few parents expressed concerns. These were thoroughly explored during the inspection. The inspection findings endorsed majority views.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newtown Early Years and Infant 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 110 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 188 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |   | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | % | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 71             | 56 | 39    | 35 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 63             | 57 | 47    | 43 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress  | 64             | 58 | 41    | 37 | 5        | 5 | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 68             | 62 | 34    | 31 | 5        | 5 | 1                 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 72             | 65 | 38    | 35 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 58             | 53 | 45    | 41 | 7        | 6 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 57             | 52 | 50    | 45 | 2        | 2 | 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) | 55             | 50 | 45    | 41 | 6        | 5 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 62             | 56 | 41    | 37 | 6        | 5 | 1                 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 53             | 48 | 53    | 48 | 3        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 38             | 35 | 62    | 56 | 9        | 8 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 60             | 55 | 45    | 41 | 4        | 4 | 1                 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 73             | 66 | 36    | 33 | 1        | 1 | 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](http://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"><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.**



25 March 2011



Dear Pupils



### **Inspection of Newtown Early Years and Infant School, Chesham HP5 3AT**



Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed watching you work and play happily together. You get on well with one another and with all the adults.



The school is providing you with a good education. You told us that you enjoy learning because your teachers make sure you have exciting things to do. Inspectors agree that this is the case. Those of you in the early years unit have a great range of things to help you learn and we were really impressed with how all the adults keep a close eye on what you are doing and how you are getting on.



The adults care for you extremely well and help you if you have problems. Those in charge of the school are working really hard to make it even better. They have some really good ideas. There are two things that we have asked the adults to do in order to improve the school:

- Help you to learn basic facts to help with your numeracy work and make sure those of you who are good at mathematics have lots of opportunities to practise your skills and become even better
- Organise lessons to allow more time for you to work in small groups with your teachers and their assistants.



You can all play your part by continuing to try your best and work hard. A good idea is to make sure you can instantly remember the different ways of making 10, such as 9+1, 8+2, 7+3, and 4+6. This will help when you have to work out 17+3, 24 + 6, 26 - 4 and so on. Try these!



Thank you again for your help and best wishes for the future.



Yours sincerely



Rob Crompton

Lead inspector

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