

Newfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104982
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	355671
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Eric Craven

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ray Hurst
Headteacher	Mrs Sylvia Evans
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Twelve lessons and 11 teachers were observed. Meetings were held with staff, pupils on the school council, the chair of governors and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's planning, safeguarding documentation and records of its monitoring and evaluation including data about the progress of the pupils. The 26 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed along with 61 questionnaire returns from pupils.

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

- How effectively the school intervenes when it finds that a pupil is underachieving.
- How well the school is tackling the disengagement of a small number of pupils.
- The extent to which the curriculum is a feature of the pupils' enjoyment and achievement.
- How effectively the school gauges the progress the pupils are making.

Information about the school

Newfield School provides for pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties (ESBD). A handful of pupils are currently being formally assessed and all the others have statements of special educational needs. Nearly three quarters of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and six are looked after by the local authority. The vast majority of pupils are boys and virtually all are of White British heritage. It is the only ESBD school in the local authority and as a consequence, pupils come from all parts of Sefton. Six pupils travel from neighbouring local authorities. Most of the pupils are transported to and from school with a small number making their own way. The school has gained a number of awards including the Investors in People award, Healthy Schools status, Dyslexia Friendly School status and the International Schools Award. It is a designated Specialist College for ESBD.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Newfield is an outstanding school primarily because of consistently high quality teaching, an excellent curriculum and the tremendously helpful guidance and support from a very caring staff who work in partnership with parents, carers and other agencies exceptionally well. Parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire overwhelmingly agree. Typically, one said, 'The move to Newfield School has transformed our child's educational experience.'

When most pupils arrive at the school their attainment is low because of the difficulties they have experienced in their education. Staff most often have to deal with difficult behaviour when the pupils first arrive. They do this exceptionally well because of their consistent application of the school's systems married with a calm and caring approach. They quickly create the conditions for learning to take place and once settled the pupils make very rapid progress. As a result, attainment for many when they leave the school is close to what is expected nationally.

Pupils say they feel safe and their parents endorse this view. This reflects the school's excellent safeguarding arrangements. Their understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives is excellent, although a few do not apply this understanding as much as they should. Their behaviour is good and most treat other people with courtesy and respect. They eagerly take the opportunities to make a substantial contribution to improving the school and, through their charitable work, to those in need elsewhere. They develop a good sense of what is right and wrong and they get on well with each other. They have a good understanding of other cultures and overall, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

The pupils are prepared well for life after school because of the school's emphasis on personal and social development and equipping them to take a full part in society which includes excellent work in helping the pupils understand the community of the school and beyond. However, the judgement of how well they develop workplace skills is only satisfactory because of the poor rate of attendance. The school has had success in improving many pupils' attendance in comparison with when they were in their previous schools. For example, three-quarters of the pupils who have joined the school this academic year have improved on their previous attendance, some of them markedly. Nevertheless, there are a few pupils with extremely low attendance who are resistant to the school's determined efforts to support and challenge them to attend more; some of these pupils have disengaged from education.

The school is extremely well led by leaders and managers and the governing body. Staff morale is high and staff at all levels are given and readily take responsibility. The school's systems for checking on how well it is doing and then planning for further improvements are excellent. Staff are extremely vigilant in all they do to ensure all pupils are treated

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fairly and they are very robust in dealing with the rare instances of discrimination. The school has maintained and, in parts, improved its provision since the last inspection in the context of a changing school population where pupils being referred are often more challenging than in the past. The school's capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of attendance so that it is much closer to the national average for primary and secondary schools by:
 - focusing strategies used in partnership with other agencies more on those pupils whose rate of attendance falls between 50% and 80%
 - continuing to challenge and find innovative ways to entice those with intransigent attendance problems to attend more regularly
 - working closely with the local authority to find ways to quickly get pupils back into school when their transport arrangements have been disturbed.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The school's regular assessments of pupils show that they make increasingly rapid progress once they have settled at the school and built relationships with the staff. In the lessons observed this view was reinforced as their progress was never less than good and sometimes better than this. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally rapid progress because of staff's excellent understanding of their needs, very strong assessment arrangements and a rigorous system for intervention that is put into action when a pupil is found to be underachieving. Pupils from other groups such as those looked after by the local authority also do as well. For example, two of these pupils achieved more than five A* to C grades at GCSE in 2010.

The pupils enjoy their education and those interviewed said this was principally because of the very positive relationships they had with staff. In lessons pupils are keen to make contributions, they listen well and most apply themselves industriously to the tasks they are given. They are respectful to staff.

Those on the school council can cite a series of examples where they have made a tangible difference to the school. Their knowledge of other cultures and beliefs is enhanced through the visits they make, the visitors to school and the work they do to raise funds for charities overseas. The pupils are highly aware of how to keep healthy and safe as the school takes these matters very seriously and because they feature well in the school curriculum.

Pupils develop good attitudes toward work; they learn how to work in a team. Their good behaviour positions them well for the future. The achievements and qualifications and the significantly improved attendance of most, by the time they leave school, give them a tangible currency that helps them into the world of further education or work. However, the poor attendance of a few pupils is a real hindrance in this respect. The school works earnestly with its partners and is doing all it can to improve the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent, a few of whom the school has hardly ever seen. The attendance of a very few pupils has been adversely affected when they have exhibited challenging behaviour on the transport to school and the contractors have refused to

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transport them. The school and the local authority's education welfare officer report it can take up to a week for the situation to be resolved.

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

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?

Teaching is of consistently high quality. No teaching observed during the inspection was less than good. The school's own lesson monitoring records also show that teaching across the school is invariably at least good and often better. Teachers use assessment extremely well to help the pupils understand the level at which they are working and to check on the progress they are making. The strongest aspects of the teaching are: the high expectations teachers convey to pupils; a swift pace to the lessons; the powerful use of praise to engage pupils and to raise their confidence and self-esteem; the effectiveness of support staff who work in harmony with teachers; the use of technology, such as interactive whiteboards, to enliven learning; and the way the content of the lessons is made relevant to the pupils' understanding and experiences. On occasion there is scope for more challenge to be given to some pupils, which would be aided by more individualised or small group objectives in teachers' lesson plans.

The curriculum is excellent and makes a most telling contribution to the outcomes pupils achieve. It is epitomised by rich opportunities for quality academic learning and qualifications and also personal and social development. It is suitably broad and balanced and designed well to meet the needs of the pupils. It includes a flexibility to be adjusted

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to meet changing needs. Cross-curricular provision is a strength which helps reinforce pupils' learning in various subjects. It is enlivened well by visits and visitors, themed weeks and days, links with schools in other countries and extra-curricular activities including residential experiences and after-school clubs.

The care, guidance and support from staff are outstanding. Pupils are all seen as individuals and are well known by each member of staff. Staff model behaviour, attitudes and communication extremely well. Expectations are high. The school is a relaxed but industrious learning environment as a consequence. The pupils have a lot of confidence in staff and mutual respect is very evident. Staff draw on their extensive links with other professionals and services well to provide a wrap-round support for pupils. The efforts of staff and the importance they convey to pupils about good attendance makes a valuable contribution to many pupils improving on their previous rates. Transition arrangements within school and to life beyond school are strong and help the pupils move smoothly through these potentially difficult times.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is led outstandingly well by a headteacher who encourages staff to play their parts to the full. There is a tangible 'teamwork' approach at the school. Middle managers are clear about their roles and fulfil these very effectively. The school improvement plan is a well-constructed document that takes the school in the right direction. It is regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure its effectiveness. The school also gathers the views of parents, carers and pupils in its evaluations. However, there is room for further analyses of the data gathered from surveys and from the monitoring of teaching and learning to help celebrate what the school is doing well and to influence even more the priorities for future action. The governors perform their role outstandingly well. They are highly rigorous in holding the school to account and fully supportive and committed to the school. There are strong links between areas of the school's work and individual governors which helps to keep them particularly well informed. The school's engagement with parents, carers and other partners is a strength. Communication is regular and staff are keen to support parents in whatever ways they can. Because many of the pupils are known to other services, multi-agency work features prominently. The school has very strong links with other agencies that make a positive difference to pupils. The school's links with mainstream schools are also commendable. The procedures to tackle discrimination and unfairness are robust. The arrangements for safeguarding are excellent and are well managed by the member of staff dedicated full time to this work. Safety is high profile; staff and governors are very cognisant of their roles in this respect; work with

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other relevant agencies is excellent; and the importance of keeping safe is conveyed very well to pupils. Last year, the school identified that it needed to improve its work on promoting community cohesion. This featured prominently in this year's school improvement plan and as a result, community cohesion is now a strength. The school is using its International School status and links with schools abroad admirably to strengthen the pupils' understanding of religious, ethnic and socio-economic contexts. This is a good example of why the school has an excellent capacity to improve further. It does not rest on its laurels. The school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

The response rate from parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire was around the national average for special schools. Those who responded to the were overwhelmingly positive about the school. Where there was disagreement with the questions posed there was no discernible trend or concerns from more than one parent. The responses were most supportive of the view that the school keeps children safe, meets their needs and deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The school's own most recent annual surveys of parents and carers' views gathered a similarly positive response.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newfield 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 26 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 79 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	38	15	58	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	69	8	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	62	8	31	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	54	10	38	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	58	10	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	62	8	31	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	42	13	50	1	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)	13	50	11	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	65	7	27	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	69	8	31	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	54	12	46	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	65	9	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	65	8	31	1	4	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



13 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newfield School, Liverpool, L23 4TG

Thank you for the warm welcome when Mr Ellwood and I inspected your school recently. A particular thanks goes to those pupils we met from the school council.

We found your school provides you with an excellent education. This is because lessons are of high quality, what you are taught is meaningful to you and because the staff support and care for you so well. Almost all of you respond very well to the opportunities given to you to learn and achieve. The behaviour of most pupils is good for most of the time. You respect staff and each other. It was good to see you trying to make a difference, for example, in the fund-raising you do for others. The school helps you gain qualifications but it also helps you develop your confidence and your personal and social skills extremely well. All this happens because the school is very well led and managed by Mrs Evans, other senior staff and governors.

I know many of you have improved your attendance since you have been at Newfield and that is great news. However, there are some pupils whose attendance is very poor and they seem to have switched off learning all together. There are others who do attend but not nearly enough. I have asked Mrs Evans and the staff to have a real drive to improve the attendance of these pupils. If you are not in school you cannot learn. If you are a pupil whose attendance is not good enough please do something about it and play your part in making your school even better. More importantly, do something about it so that you can get as much out of your time in school as possible so you can do really well in college or work when you leave.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Eric Craven

Lead inspector

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