

Newton's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102319
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	355173
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Gordon Ewing

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Mills
Headteacher	Lynn Lowe
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 18 lessons, observing 14 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the governing body, members of staff and groups of pupils. Informal discussions were conducted with some parents, carers and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, including the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, pupils' work and teachers' planning and marking. Inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by 173 parents and carers, 34 staff and 113 older pupils.

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

- The relative rates of progress through the school of all pupils in English and mathematics, and especially higher attainers, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those of White British heritage.
- The steps taken since the last inspection to improve attendance and reduce the persistent absence of a few pupils.
- How effectively leaders at all levels monitor the quality of teaching and ensure that assessment information is used effectively, and the impact of the strategies to improve the quality of teaching and to secure consistently good rates of learning.
- The rigour and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and its effectiveness in setting a challenging agenda for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

Newtons Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average. The largest group of pupils (60%) is of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average; predominantly, these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties or specific learning difficulties. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

A breakfast club, managed by the governing body, runs daily for up to 60 pupils.

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

Newtons Primary is a good school. Pupils are treated as individuals and good pastoral care ensures that they learn as part of a harmonious and cohesive community. The school's motto, 'Together we reach our personal best,' is being realised through the leadership's effective drive to improve the quality of teaching and to raise levels of attainment and progress for all pupils. One pupil commented, 'I try my best and my teacher really helps me'. The school is held in high regard by the very large majority of parents and carers, who have appreciated the smooth transition at leadership level following the appointment of the new headteacher. One parent summed up her experience of having three children at the school, 'I am extremely happy. It's a fantastic school'.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because their needs are quickly identified and met well. They continue to make good progress because teaching is good and, as a result, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Initiatives to improve attainment in writing, introduced since the last inspection, are having a positive impact, especially in Years 3 to 6. However, rates of progress in Years 1 and 2, particularly in writing, are more variable because some children leave the Reception classes with below-expected skills in language and communication and are not fully prepared for the more formal approach in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive individualised support, which is finely tuned to their needs and, consequently, make good and, sometimes, outstanding progress in their learning. Higher attainers and pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar rates of progress to that of their peers. Within this positive picture overall, the progress of a significant proportion of White British boys, though satisfactory overall, lags behind that of other pupils. Attendance is improving steadily and persistent absence is reducing because the school works hard to encourage parents and carers to send their children to school regularly. That said, there is still much to do because the attendance of some White British boys is not good enough.

Pupils are well cared for because staff really know their pupils individually. However, some aspects of the school's approach to safeguarding are not sufficiently robust. Pupils behave well, concentrate and persevere in lessons and have very positive attitudes to learning. Relationships are strong so that pupils confidently share their ideas, for example, with their talk partners, and work well in groups and independently. Teachers do not consistently use assessment information to adapt lessons on a day-to-day basis so that activities are accurately tuned to pupils' pace of learning. Targets are set for groups of pupils but these are not checked consistently and many pupils do not know their targets in English with confidence. Teachers' marking, though positive and regular, does not consistently provide pupils with effective guidance on how to advance their learning further.

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The new headteacher, ably supported by her leadership team, has an accurate view of the strengths of the school and where improvements are needed. Initiatives to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching are paying dividends as levels of attainment have been rising more consistently. Strategies to monitor and evaluate the work of the school are effective, although the outcomes are not always used systematically to target support and training on key areas. Given the mostly good outcomes for pupils, the school's accurate self-evaluation, the leadership's success in improving key aspects of provision and the strong collective spirit that pervades the school community, the school demonstrates a good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the good practice from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1 in order to improve pupils' communication, language and writing skills, by:
 - visiting other effective settings to observe good practice and develop a transition action plan for September 2011
 - arranging opportunities for Reception class teachers to work alongside Year 1 teachers in order to plan and develop good practice
 - introducing a new writing programme into Years 1 and 2 and providing training and support to all staff
 - developing further the assessment of pupils' starting points each term and monitoring their progress frequently through lesson observations, scrutiny of work and assessment tasks.
- Build on recent successful initiatives to improve further the attendance of all pupils to at least 94% by July 2012 and, especially that of White British boys, by:
 - providing more boy-focused activities at Breakfast Club
 - extending the role of the home-school support worker to work closely with the families of those particular boys whose attendance is not good enough
 - widening strategies to engage and support families and for promoting and rewarding good attendance
 - focusing on the achievement of White British boys at pupil progress meetings.
- By January 2012, improve the use of assessment and teachers' marking to support learning so that pupils' attainment and progress improve, by:
 - reviewing and improving the existing assessment and marking policies to ensure consistency across the school
 - sharing existing good practice and training staff in the effective use of assessment for learning including formative marking, peer- and self-assessment
 - incorporating assessment for learning objectives in performance management
 - undertaking focused monitoring of assessment books and teachers' marking on a half-termly basis.

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

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Pupils' achievement is good and their enjoyment of school is evident in their improving attendance and positive attitudes. Rates of progress for almost all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are good in most lessons. In particular, the sensitive support given by staff and pupils to those with physical and sensory disabilities ensures that they make really secure progress, socially and academically. Pupils' enthusiasm is infectious and they really enjoy their learning when activities are motivating and challenging. For example, in learning Spanish, debating important issues in literacy and exploring number patterns in mathematics. In a good Year 2 literacy lesson, whilst studying nonsense poems, pupils eagerly looked for patterns to find meaning in the challenging vocabulary. The teacher used probing questions to check and extend their understanding and to ensure the pace of learning was appropriate. The teaching assistant worked closely with a small group of pupils to ensure they made similar levels of progress to their peers.

Pupils know how to keep safe, healthy and active. They understand the dangers of drugs, alcohol and smoking, as well as how to deal with unsolicited emails on the internet. Pupils report that, on the rare occasions when bullying and racism occur, they are dealt with 'swiftly and calmly.' They are very confident that if they have concerns, there is always an adult on hand to help. Pupils, particularly those in Years 3 to 6, take on additional responsibilities and make a significant contribution to the life of the school and the local community. For example, the school council has played an important role in designing and making a mosaic for a community energy project, establishing a school allotment and raising funds for sports equipment for clubs and break-times. Peer mediators and positive play leaders have a pivotal role in ensuring pupils make the most of their free time and in building strong relationships across the ages. While aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, the school has yet to establish sustained links with communities from different contexts within the United Kingdom and beyond. The very popular breakfast club is a hive of activity and plays a key role in helping pupils improve their attendance and in starting their day in a positive frame of mind. Relationships are strong because pupils show consideration and respect towards each other and demonstrate caring and sensitive awareness of others' needs. These strong attributes contribute to the sense of harmony and community throughout the school. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the challenges of their future adult lives.

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	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
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	3
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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and use effective questioning to boost understanding and raise expectations. They have a clear view of individual pupils' needs and learning preferences so that the majority of lessons are stimulating and engaging. One pupil's comment, 'The staff are really nice and they help me with my learning,' mirrors the views of most. Where this is particularly effective is in the support given to potentially vulnerable pupils whose progress is, at times, outstanding. The close working relationship with teachers and teaching assistants ensures that their support to those pupils who find learning challenging is sensitive and boosts the impact of the teaching. New approaches to assessment are beginning to bear fruit. For example, in some pupils' assessment folders for writing, teachers are regularly checking pupils' understanding, providing guidance on how to take the next step and encouraging pupils to assess their own work against very clear learning objectives. This good practice, however, is not replicated consistently across all classes.

The curriculum is broad, balanced, imaginative and effectively planned to ensure good coverage and progression. It is adapted well to meet most pupils' needs. Effective use is made of specialists, for example, in physical education, music and Spanish, to supplement the good range of experience across the staff. Cross-curricular links are being established, especially involving literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology.

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Enrichment activities are varied and have a high take up. A good range of visitors and visits enhance the curriculum bringing greater relevance and depth to pupils' experiences.

Potentially vulnerable pupils and families receive strong support from the effective home-school support worker so that these pupils are especially well cared for. Intervention groups have a positive impact on pupils' progress, personal development and self-esteem. Links with outside agencies such as the community police team and health services, further enhance the quality of provision and boost pupils' sense of safety and achievement. Pupils are well prepared for the move to secondary school. However, the transition from Reception classes into Year 1 does not effectively build on the good practice of the Early Years Foundation Stage and opportunities are missed to ensure that pupils' literacy skills are maximised. Attendance is improving but the school has yet to analyse systematically the attendance of key groups and its impact on their achievement. Furthermore, some aspects of safeguarding practice are not managed rigorously or evaluated systematically. Taking into account these limiting factors, care, guidance and support are no more than satisfactory.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders have set a clear agenda for improvement based on effective self-evaluation that involves leaders at all levels. The sense of teamwork is strong and staff have a clear drive and ambition to make the school even better. As one member of staff rightly said, 'The school is a warm, caring community that values people and is constantly looking at ways to improve.' Improvements in teaching are having evident impact on pupils' attainment and progress. The consistent and effective use of assessment data is rightly acknowledged as an important focus for further improvement. Governors are knowledgeable, committed and visible around the school community. They ensure that the school satisfactorily complies with all safeguarding regulations and duties. However, the school has yet to fully adopt recommended good practice across all areas of its work. Consequently, some systems for quality assurance and risk assessment lack rigour and precision. The school is inclusive and promotes equal opportunities with vigour and discrimination is not tolerated. The school provides a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. It plays a positive role within the local community and has plans in place to build links with a broad range of other communities, including those of different faiths and cultures, within and beyond the United Kingdom.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good partnerships with parents and carers are established early and sustained over time. Staff support children's learning and development well. They plan carefully to ensure that good practice is shared and enhanced so that children settle in quickly and make good progress. This is particularly so in their personal, social and emotional development and is reflected in their good behaviour, excellent relationships and respect and care for each other. There is a strong focus on children's welfare, hygiene and happiness. Consequently, children are happy, feel safe and enjoy the numerous activities on offer. They play well independently and in groups. The indoor and outdoor environments are welcoming, interesting and well resourced and there is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. That said, some children are not monitored closely enough so their choices sometimes follow gender stereotypes and opportunities are missed to boost children's writing skills, especially those of boys.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear vision for improving the existing good provision further. She has established a good track record for implementing initiatives effectively and, as a result, children, year on year, are achieving higher levels of attainment across all the expected areas of learning. The strong team ethos and collective spirit across the setting ensure that children flourish, both personally and academically.

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

More than one half of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. This level of response is above average. The responses of the very large majority were positive about their child's overall experience at school. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about the school's management of unacceptable behaviour and the leadership's response to their suggestions and concerns.

With regard to the former, inspection evidence showed that pupils reported convincingly that any misbehaviour was dealt with effectively and swiftly. Behaviour in lessons and around the school was judged as predominantly good and never unsatisfactory.

Regarding the latter, in discussions with parents and carers at the start and the end of the day, inspectors heard very positive views about the school's response to their suggestions and concerns. The new headteacher and her staff were described as always available and approachable. One parent wrote: 'Newtons has always had a team of friendly, supportive staff and always have kept my children happy and stimulated. I am very happy with Newtons.' In written responses and in discussion, parents and carers were also appreciative of the recent and smooth transition at leadership level.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newtons 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 173 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 319 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	119	69	51	29	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	116	67	53	31	4	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	101	58	61	35	5	3	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	95	55	70	40	6	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	93	54	76	44	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	82	47	80	46	7	4	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	76	44	87	50	4	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)	87	50	78	45	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	85	49	71	41	10	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	89	51	68	39	9	5	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	74	43	80	46	11	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	94	54	73	42	4	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	104	60	63	36	2	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	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.



8 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newtons Primary School, Rainham, RM13 8QR

My team of inspectors and I really enjoyed our recent visit to observe you at work. Your school gives you a good education. You all gave us a warm reception and spoke positively about your school life. You told us that you enjoy school and learn a lot while you are there. Most of your parents and carers are equally happy. In particular, we liked these things about your school.

- Those of you in the Nursery and Reception classes make particularly good progress by the time you move to Year 1.
- You are taught well and many of your lessons are stimulating and enjoyable.
- Your levels of attainment are rising, especially in reading and mathematics. We know that you are working hard on your writing but we think that you could do even better, particularly for those of you in Years 1 and 2.
- For many of you, your attendance has improved steadily in the last two years.
- You feel safe and secure and thoroughly enjoy lessons.
- You behave well and work and play as part of a harmonious community.
- The staff work hard to ensure that you develop as well-rounded individuals and develop good attitudes to learning.
- You help to improve your school by taking on responsibilities such as being a school councillor, a peer mediator or a positive play leader.
- The staff take good care of you and you are confident that they are always available to help if you have any worries.

Everyone at Newtons Primary wants the school to be even better and to achieve this we have asked the staff and governors to improve these things.

- Your attendance.
- Your attainment in writing so that the levels you achieve match those in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers' marking, target setting and advice to you so that you know what you have to do to improve your work.

We know that you are keen to do more to make the school even more successful and you can help by continuing to work as hard as you can. We wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Ewing

Lead inspector

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