

Newker Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131233
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	381319
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Alison Thomson

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	492
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr N Fawcett
Headteacher	Mr MJ Frazer
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 15 teachers and 20 lessons, and held meetings with the members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and analysed 121 questionnaires from parents and carers, 111 from pupils and 42 from staff. The team also looked at documents and policies, including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils, information the school had collected about the pupils' attainment and the school's records of its monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning.

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

- The current attainment and rates of progress to establish whether there are differences, particularly among the more-able pupils.
- The effectiveness of teachers challenging pupils in lessons and involving them in assessing how well they are learning.
- The effectiveness of all leaders' monitoring and evaluation, particularly subject leaders, in bringing about improvements as quickly as possible.

Information about the school

Newker is a much larger-than-average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion of those pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has many awards, including Healthy School status and Activemark and also the International Award for the promotion of learning about other cultures. There have been some changes in staffing since the previous inspection, including the headteacher, who has been in post for just over a year. Separate childcare provision shares the school site, but this is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate 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

Newker Primary is a good school, where outcomes for pupils are outstanding. This is because achievement is outstanding and there are strengths in pupils' personal development, including their excellent understanding of the extent to which they feel safe. The school provides excellent value for money and is a very inclusive school where care, guidance and support, and also safeguarding, are outstanding. The highly positive response of the parents' and carers' questionnaire reflects the school's excellent engagement with them. The following comments from parents and carers are indicative of this, 'I cannot praise Newker School and its staff highly enough, they are doing a fantastic job with my daughter.' and 'The staff cannot do enough for the children, a brilliant school, well done!'

Since the previous inspection pupils' attainment has remained high overall and has improved in mathematics, an area highlighted for development at the previous inspection. The progress of all groups of pupils, including the more-able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good. Pupils are known well as individuals and they told the inspectors that their teachers really care about them and are very interested in their views.

Pupils are polite and welcoming. Their good behaviour, along with above average attendance, plays a significant part in their learning. They know their targets and how to improve their work. Teaching is good with some outstanding features, but occasionally teaching does not enable pupils to apply their basic skills in literacy and numeracy well enough or sufficiently stimulate their interests. In addition, best practice in teaching is not shared well enough to influence further improvements. As a result, although attainment is high progress is good rather than outstanding.

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school. In the short time he has been in post, he has responded to the views of parents and carers and improved the school's engagement with them. Staff are strongly supportive of the school and say that they are proud to work there. The school's evaluation of its performance is effective in that strengths and areas for development are known well. Members of the senior management team are effective in their roles but those of subject leaders are not yet as well developed in securing improvement. As a result, improvements are not occurring as quickly as they might do. Nevertheless, pupils' sustained high attainment and the improvements that have occurred, along with the cohesiveness

of the staff and the determination of the senior leadership team, mean that the capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate the rate of learning and progress by:
 - sharing the best practice in teaching so that all teaching is good or better
 - providing clear success criteria in all lessons so that pupils can assess for themselves more easily how well they are learning
 - ensuring that pupils have as many opportunities as possible in lessons to apply their basic skills and stimulate their interests as much as possible.

- Improve aspects of leadership and management in order to accelerate improvements, by:
 - developing the role of subject leaders
 - carrying out lesson observations with a closer focus on the learning that is taking place.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils enjoy being challenged in lessons and this helps their attainment to be high. Year 6 pupils were seen making outstanding progress in an English lesson where they extracted evidence from complex text in order to describe a character. Understanding words such as 'diminutive' exemplifies their high attainment well. Similarly, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils enjoyed the challenge of the 'rolling dice game' to help extend their learning. Pupils' good behaviour and cooperation also play a strong part in their learning. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson, 'talk partners' were seen exploring well together the meaning of phrases. Children enter the Nursery with a variation in skills, and overall these are slightly above those expected for their age in most areas of learning. Their good progress means that they leave in Year 6 with attainment that is high.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. This is helped by their high attainment in literacy and numeracy, good information and communication technology skills and above average attendance. Pupils feel extremely safe and secure in school. They enjoy taking on responsibilities. For example, pupils in Year 2 take very seriously their buddy roles, helping the younger children. The school council plays a prominent part in school life and has a good say in what happens in school, such as its involvement in helping to write a booklet on safety for pupils. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities to take part in sporting activities and clubs and this contributes to their good understanding of being healthy, recognised in national awards. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although their understanding of minority-ethnic cultures, reflecting those that exist in the United Kingdom, is not as strong as other aspects of their cultural development. When asked to describe their school, one pupil said, 'You get a good education here and the teachers are nice and friendly'.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	1
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 skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school is rightly proud of its outstanding care, guidance and support and pupils describe it as 'family-like'. Pupils are known well as individuals. Teaching assistants provide excellent proactive support that enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to have full access to lessons and activities. This ensures that they make equally good progress to their peers. There are good procedures to ensure attendance is above average, such as following up individual absences quickly. Preparation to move to secondary school is very strong, with regular visits by pupils to help them gain confidence.

The curriculum is tailored well to the needs of different groups of pupils, with tasks adapted well for the more-able and for the less-able. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are being embedded within other subjects increasingly well and more and more subjects are being integrated into topics. However, currently, there are not enough imaginative activities in some lessons to really stimulate the pupils or to help them apply the basic skills they have learned. There are many enrichment activities and a wide range of clubs on offer. Year 5 pupils told the inspectors how much they were looking forward to their imminent residential visit where they would need to make their beds and explore the surrounding area.

The quality of teaching is good but some variations exist. Some teaching is outstanding, much is good, but some is satisfactory. Generally, teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and lessons proceed at a good pace. Many teachers ask perceptive questions which challenge pupils and make them think. This was seen to particularly good effect in a Year 6 history lesson where, in addition, the interactive whiteboard was used well to explain the content of the main activity. Most teachers are good at sharing with pupils exactly what they are expected to do in lessons and this helps them make sense of their learning. Where teaching is only satisfactory, this is not so apparent, and so progress slows as pupils are not able to

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

judge clearly what it is they should be learning. Good assessment is evident in nearly all lessons in helping pupils to improve their work, and teachers' marking is clear in identifying and in making clear the next steps pupils need to take in their learning.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear view of how to take the school forward. He has worked well with his senior leaders to identify where improvements need to be made. For example, the school acknowledges that the role of subject leader is not well enough developed. Assessment data on the progress of pupils is collected regularly and is used increasingly well to help identify and redress any underachievement. Leaders are taking steps to improve the quality of teaching but although improvements have been made, monitoring of teaching is not yet focused closely enough on pupils' learning. This is preventing improvements in progress from being as rapid as they could be. Staff morale is high and it is clear that all staff want the best for the pupils. Governance is good. Members of the governing body are involved in the work of the school, some more so than others, and know the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve. Members of the governing body are involved in shaping the direction of the school and are increasingly evaluating their own effectiveness.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school and their engagement with it is excellent. Their views are sought regularly and acted upon. They have particularly welcomed the improved arrangements for the collection of the younger pupils at the end of the school day. Safeguarding procedures are excellent, with very clear policies and secure risk-assessment systems. Health and safety and child-protection arrangements are extremely thorough. Equality of opportunity is good, with there being little difference in the progress of different pupils. In addition, there have been no racist incidents in school, helped by the school's strong focus on respect for others. The promotion of community cohesion within school, locally and internationally, is good, but links with other schools nationally of a different socio-economic or cultural makeup have not yet been fully established, although the school has effective plans to address this. There is a wide range of good partnership involvement, including close links with the local secondary school, which helps to ensure a smooth transition into the next stage in the pupils' education.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding a mbition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children love school, greatly enjoy their learning and gain much in confidence during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children enter the Nursery with a variation in skills, attitudes and knowledge, but overall these are slightly above that expected for their age. They make good progress and, by the time they leave at the end of Reception, their development in the different areas of learning has risen to be above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage setting works very well in partnerships with parents and carers to enhance the children's learning. Children follow well-practised routines, such as sitting down quietly when eating their fruit. Excellent welfare arrangements and relationships with parents and carers ensure children feel safe and secure and settle quickly. Health and safety is given a high priority and is excellent. The environment is stimulating and ensures that children have a variety of engaging and creative activities which sustain their interest. Children were seen entering the Nursery session, all eagerly exploring the activities on offer. Although there are good opportunities for children to develop their spoken language skills, there are relatively fewer opportunities for developing their writing, especially in Nursery where progress in this respect is a little slower. Teaching is good but variable in quality. Generally, adults keep a good overview during the activities that children choose for themselves, appropriately intervening and moving learning on well. Effective learning also occurs outdoors, although the children do not have sufficient opportunities for moving independently between outdoors and indoors at present. Staff, some of whom are new in post, are led well by the Early Years Foundation Stage Leader. They work well together as a team and regularly assess what the children know and can do. These assessments point to generally good progress and are being used increasingly effectively to identify the next steps in children's learning.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About a quarter of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. They were extremely positive about all aspects of the school's work, particularly how much their children enjoy school and the extent to which the school keeps their children safe. The inspectors judged that the extent to which pupils feel safe is outstanding. A very few parents and carers felt that the school did not help them to support their children's learning. The inspectors followed up this concern and found that this was something that the school does well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newker 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 121 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 492 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	82	68	39	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	90	74	31	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	73	60	41	34	3	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	60	41	34	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	80	66	38	31	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	64	53	51	42	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	72	60	46	38	1	1	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)	75	62	42	35	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	73	60	43	36	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	60	50	53	44	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	66	55	50	41	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	80	66	39	32	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	88	73	31	26	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.



29 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newker Primary School, Chester le Street, DH2 3AA

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and we are very grateful for the good contribution you made to the inspection. You believe that your school is a good one that looks after you particularly well. We agree with you.

We particularly liked the way that most of you behave and look after each other. You told us that you like coming to school and that you feel extremely safe there. You said that you like the fact that the adults in school look after you so well.

Although your school is a good one, we believe that it could be even better. We have asked your headteacher to do the following.

- Make sure that your lessons are always interesting and allow you practise your literacy and numeracy skills in everyday situations.
- Ensure your teachers always make clear to you how to check for yourselves on how well you are learning.
- Get teachers to share with each other the things they do best so that all of your teaching is good or better, and have school leaders check more often how well you are learning.

You can help by letting your teachers know if you are not sure how to check you are learning well. You can also help by telling your teachers when you find a lesson particularly interesting and exciting.

We would like to wish you all the best for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your time in school.

Yours sincerely

Alison Thomson
Lead inspector

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