

New Mills Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112597
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378517
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Cupit
Headteacher	Claire Whetstone
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 11 lessons taught by nine teachers. A detailed scrutiny of pupils' work in mathematics was carried out. Inspectors held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, groups of pupils and some parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 106 parents and carers, 104 pupils and 14 staff.

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

- Do all groups of pupils achieve well enough, especially in mathematics?
- How good are the opportunities to promote pupils' creative and cultural development?
- Do all teachers make effective use of opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and independent learning skills?
- What is the impact of the actions taken since the previous inspection to improve the quality of education?

Information about the school

New Mills Primary is smaller than most primary schools. A very large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. These pupils have a range of difficulties, including speaking, moderate learning and social and emotional difficulties. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is made in one Reception class.

The school has Healthy Schools status.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

New Mills Primary provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Pupils thrive in most aspects of their personal development and well-being because of good care, guidance and support which have been maintained since the last inspection.

Children get off to a satisfactory start in Reception. However, while there are strengths in provision, children have too few opportunities to initiate their own learning or to develop their speaking skills in carefully structured activities. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that by Year 6 attainment is average and their achievement is satisfactory. There is some unevenness between pupils' rates of progress in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2. School leaders have worked successfully to develop the curriculum to improve pupils' skills in writing. Recent efforts to raise pupils' attainment in mathematics have had limited impact and some pupils have difficulty in solving problems due to weaknesses in their reasoning and calculation skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Teaching is usually planned appropriately to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, particularly in English. However, inconsistent use of success criteria and marking restricts opportunities for pupils to learn independently, assess what key skills they have acquired and take full responsibility for their learning.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in the rising rate of attendance. Most pupils behave well and the very few pupils who display challenging behaviour are managed well by the staff. Good arrangements for safeguarding, especially with regard to site security and the tracking of pupils whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable, ensure pupils are safe in school. Pupils have useful opportunities to learn about their local community, but their awareness of the diverse cultures and faiths within the United Kingdom is less well developed.

The senior leaders' realistic appreciation of strengths and areas for development in provision is reflected in their accurate self-evaluation and well-focused key priorities. Since the last inspection, the roles of middle leaders have been enhanced, thereby enabling them to play a fuller role in reviewing pupils' progress and in contributing to whole-school development. These factors provide the school with a satisfactory platform for further improvement. However, some of the responsibilities of senior leaders for implementing and monitoring recent important initiatives are not sharply defined and this is slowing the pace of change.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - refining the curriculum for mathematics to ensure pupils acquire a more secure command of calculation and problem-solving skills
 - providing, by July 2012, a better range of opportunities to increase pupils' awareness of the diverse cultures and faiths in the United Kingdom.

- Improve the pace and quality of pupils' learning by:
 - making consistent use of success criteria and marking to enable pupils to contribute more effectively to evaluating and reviewing their work
 - making better use of teaching assistants during lesson starters.

- Redefine the responsibilities of senior leaders to accelerate the successful implementation of key priorities.

- Improve provision for Reception children by:
 - enabling children to take more responsibility for exercising choice and influencing their learning
 - developing children's speaking skills in carefully structured ways.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Their skills when they join Year 1 are broadly average. Inspection evidence confirms that all groups of pupils make satisfactory progress in spite of some inconsistencies in their progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2. Pupils are responsive when they are stimulated by visual prompts, for example, through use of the interactive whiteboard or through physical activity. Pupils in a Year 3 mathematics lesson were keen to offer suggestions during the lesson starter. They subsequently discussed with each other various options for measuring the capacity of containers and ordering them according to volume. They had difficulty breaking the problem down into manageable chunks and made several calculation errors initially, but resolved some of these after the practical activity. In a Year 2 English lesson, pupils built successfully on a preceding inter-linked dance activity to generate and share creative ideas, and devise their own endings for their stories on an alien. Occasionally during lesson starters, some pupils are less motivated, do not focus fully and are reluctant to advance ideas or pose questions. Pupils with special educational needs, on account of speaking delay, made good progress in an English lesson. They developed the confidence to put themselves in the mind of an alien and provided plausible examples of how the alien might feel on landing on our planet. However, in a mathematics lesson, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities had some difficulty working through a problem-solving task, partly because there were no

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visual symbols to prompt their thinking.

Most pupils enjoy their work, persevere and complete tasks. They usually work productively in lessons, especially during their independent tasks. They report that they feel safe in school, because the site is secure and the staff ensure that they come to no harm. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and are well aware of the key factors which could impair their physical and mental health or endanger their safety. This is reflected in the school’s national award. Pupils are aware of the need to respect cultural differences and have a satisfactory understanding of the lives of pupils abroad. They are less secure in their understanding of the different cultures and faiths which exist in the United Kingdom. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, for example, as councillors, reading buddies and through their ongoing efforts to maintain the planting areas of the school site. Pupils’ average levels of attainment and collaborative skills provide them with a satisfactory set of workplace skills for the future.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage pupils well and relationships are productive. In the best lessons, teachers question pupils well, provide good, ongoing feedback and require all pupils to contribute orally to class discussion. In almost all lessons, activities are carefully chosen to reflect the learning objectives, take account of the needs of all pupils and engage them in their learning during their independent work. On a few occasions,

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

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not enough use is made of teaching assistants during lesson starters to keep pupils fully alert and to extend their speaking and listening skills. Sometimes, success criteria are less clearly established for pupils. When these factors combine, the pace of the lesson slows and pupils have fewer opportunities to think creatively about their learning. Teachers’ marking supports pupils’ progress better in writing than in mathematics.

The curriculum promotes most aspects of pupils’ personal development effectively. A range of visitors and theme days, such as on the Victorians and the Second World War, enliven pupils’ learning. Residential visits to an outward bound centre and instrumental tuition offer good opportunities for pupils to acquire new skills. The school’s plans for offering pupils more creative ways to reinforce and extend their knowledge are further advanced in English than in mathematics. They are not sufficiently linked to success criteria in lessons to raise pupils’ achievement significantly. The curriculum is satisfactorily adapted for pupils who need or who would benefit from extra support for their learning, including one-to-one tuition. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not always clearly identified in lesson planning and the impact of intervention strategies is not analysed sharply enough to ensure these pupils make good rather than satisfactory progress.

Pupils are well cared for and trust the staff who are well acquainted with their individual needs to act in their best interests. A particular strength of provision is the quality of help offered to looked after pupils and others whose domestic circumstances may make them vulnerable. Effective links with external agencies have been firmly established to support them and their welfare is closely recorded and tracked. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 who attend the nurture group, sometimes on account of behavioural reasons, benefit from structured activities that are carefully designed to enhance their capacity for learning. The school promotes and monitors attendance carefully, for example, through its use of text-messaging services, and has succeeded in increasing rates of attendance substantially in the last 15 months.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders are forward-looking and have taken advantage of two recent departures from the teaching staff to re-assign staff to different year groups to challenge them to extend their skills and practice. These new arrangements are working well. Senior leaders have worked effectively to enable middle leaders to

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become more accountable for pupils’ progress and to have a greater influence on school development. Lesson observations are clearly focused on the quality of pupils’ learning and progress. Consequently, leaders have a secure understanding of variations in pupils’ achievement and key priorities. A few aspects of the school’s work are less rigorously monitored and this slows the pace of change. For example, responsibilities for implementing and reviewing the initiatives to provide pupils with better opportunities for working creatively are not precisely allocated.

The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met, including through effective policies and procedures for safeguarding that follow recommended good practice. Its members have a clear understanding of the quality of provision, but some have yet to develop their monitoring roles fully.

The school works well with parents and carers to engage them in their children’s education, for example through participation in homework tasks and the nurture group. The school promotes equalities and tackles discrimination satisfactorily, as reflected in outcomes for pupils. It makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion, but its work is further advanced nearer to home, for example in working towards a local citizenship award, than further afield.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children’s skills and knowledge when they join Reception are usually broadly in line with those expected for their age. Satisfactory leadership and management ensure that children make sound progress over the year. Staff have worked hard to ensure that all children, significantly increased in number this year due to the changed entry policy, have settled well in the class. Children are well cared for, adapt quickly to

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routines and are keen to please. They behave and cooperate well and show due regard for each other’s safety while exercising in confined areas. Secure safeguarding arrangements and risk assessments ensure children’s welfare needs are fully met. The indoor area is well resourced and children enjoy working with the easily-accessible equipment. A strength of the teaching is the teacher’s use of challenging questions to maintain a brisk pace of learning during lesson starters. Opportunities for children to initiate their own learning are sometimes curtailed, which reduces their capacity to learn creatively and independently. As a result children are sometimes reluctant to converse with each other and share ideas. Adults do not step in sufficiently to promote their speaking and listening skills and link these to written forms of language. Relationships with parents and carers are good, but these links are not exploited sufficiently to inform children’s assessment profiles. Other aspects of assessment are satisfactory.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was well-above average. About one third of these responses included written comments. The statistical responses and comments indicate that the large majority of parents and carers view the school’s work favourably. There was no clear thread, either positive or negative, to the comments. For example, some parents and carers expressed dissatisfaction with regard to the school listening to and acting on their views. However, three times as many parents and carers commended the school on this point. Similarly, although the statistical responses indicate some concerns regarding pupils’ behaviour, only one negative comment was received. Inspectors noted that parents and carers were unanimous in their view that the school kept their children safe. Inspectors found pupils’ behaviour to be good, although there were occasions when their attitudes to learning were no better than satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at New Mills 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 106 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 196 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	60	41	39	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	66	62	40	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	47	44	51	48	6	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	47	48	45	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	49	47	44	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	52	49	46	43	4	4	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	46	52	49	3	3	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)	45	42	48	45	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	44	42	55	52	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	33	51	48	9	8	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	34	53	50	11	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	46	43	41	9	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	61	58	40	38	2	2	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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 8 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.



7 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of New Mills Primary School, High Peak SK22 4AY

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school recently, and for sharing your views with us. New Mills Primary is a satisfactory school but there are some good parts to its work.

- You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and feel secure in school.
- You are aware of healthy lifestyles and most of you take lots of exercise.
- You are well cared for by the staff whom you respect for the ways they look after you.
- You contribute well to the school community and work hard to maintain the school's grounds.
- The school has helped you to improve your skills in writing recently.

You make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 6 your attainment is average. We have asked the staff to do the following things to help you learn better.

- In Reception, work better to develop children's speaking skills and to give children more chances for learning independently.
- Improve your calculation and problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Make better use of some aspects of assessment to involve you more in your learning and to help you improve.
- Give you more chances to learn about people of different cultures and faiths in the United Kingdom.
- Make sure senior leaders check very carefully that the important things they are doing to improve your achievement work well.

You can help by keeping up your improved levels of attendance and by concentrating hard at all times.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken
Lead inspector

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