

Newtown CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123490
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	380669
Inspection dates	7–8 December 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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stella Whyte
Headteacher	Andrew Hodson
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2007
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited nine lessons, observing five 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 and carers, and with pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, including the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, pupils' work and teachers' planning and marking. Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils were scrutinised. Inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by 69 parents and carers, 11 staff and 70 older pupils.

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

- The progress pupils make in English and mathematics, especially high attainers and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How effectively the school has responded to the issues raised at the last inspection, including the improvement of pupils' investigative skills in mathematics in Years 3–6 and the level of challenge for pupils in Years 3–6, especially for high attainers.
- How effectively leaders at all levels use assessment information about the attainment and progress of pupils to bring about rapid and sustained improvement in their achievement.
- The degree to which leaders and managers actively monitor the impact of the school's actions in bringing improvements in the outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

Newtown Primary is smaller than the average primary school. The largest group of pupils (93%) is of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average; predominantly, these pupils have moderate learning difficulties.

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

Newtown is a satisfactory school where pupils are well cared for and are very happy. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their high attendance and consistently good behaviour. The school works hard to support pupils in vulnerable circumstances so that they achieve as well as their peers and make significant strides in their personal development. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers hold the school in very high regard, and the following comment was typical: 'We are more than happy with Newtown School. It provides a wonderfully caring and learning environment for my children.'

Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception class, and by the time they move to Year 1, they are well prepared for the challenges ahead. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and their attainment in reading and mathematics is broadly average. Their attainment in writing, however, lags behind. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and high attainers, make similar rates of progress from their varying starting points. That said, rates of learning and progress are uneven through to Year 6 because the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Examples of good teaching were observed during the inspection but, overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Strengths in the best teaching include teachers' questioning skills, good links across the curriculum and the use of technology to enhance learning. Some teachers use assessment data well to inform their planning in order to accelerate pupils' learning or adapt activities to better meet pupils' needs. This effective practice is not routine across the school. Lesson observations undertaken by leaders sometimes lack precision, and their evaluations are too generous and not consistently focused on how well pupils learn.

The satisfactory and dedicated leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the school has made sound progress since the last inspection, for example in improving attainment and rates of learning in mathematics, especially for high attainers. All staff know their pupils well as individuals but systems to track pupils' progress, especially for key groups, are not rigorous or sophisticated enough to identify patterns of underachievement across the school. Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have a broadly accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their self-evaluation is sometimes too optimistic and lacks precision. Taking all these factors into account, underpinned by pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and the unwavering support of the school community, the school has a satisfactory capacity to sustain further improvement.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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 levels of attainment and rates of progress in writing by:
 - ensuring that staff confidently understand how to improve pupils' writing by providing a systematic programme of training and peer support
 - monitoring pupils' writing on a frequent and systematic basis to ensure effective progression in developing writing skills
 - reviewing the existing whole-school target on writing to ensure it is appropriately challenging.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that, by July 2012, 80% of lessons are good or better, by:
 - ensuring teachers confidently understand the components of a good lesson, sharing existing good practice, giving staff targeted training and support and monitoring the impact
 - developing more consistent strategies in marking and assessing pupils' work so that pupils know how to move their learning forward with greater confidence and independence
 - seeking out and disseminating outstanding practice in assessment for learning.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - more rigorously monitoring the progress of key groups of pupils so that no pupil or group is left behind
 - sharpening planning to include clear and specific targets with measurable criteria so that leaders and managers, including the governing body, can track precisely the impact of actions and thus more robustly hold leaders to account
 - increasing the capacity of all leaders to understand further the components of effective teaching and learning so that lesson observations are consistently astute and accurate.

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

Children join the school with skills and understanding that are broadly at the levels expected for their age, and the broadly average attainment levels seen in Year 6 represent satisfactory achievement. Key factors in pupils' achievement are their very positive attitudes to learning, alongside their good and sometimes outstanding behaviour. Levels of progress for most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are satisfactory in the majority of lessons. Where lessons are engaging and stimulating, pupils make good progress. For example, in a good Year 4/5 lesson, pupils were thoroughly engaged in recounting

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events linked to the D-Day landings. The teacher ensured that different tasks were well matched to the varied abilities of the pupils and teaching assistants ably checked on pupils’ learning throughout the lesson. Pupils’ writing was expressive, imaginative and evocative. In other lessons, however, pupils typically made less progress, particularly when they were passive learners or the teaching lacked pace and challenge.

Pupils are evidently proud of their school, are very polite and courteous. One pupil commented, ‘I love this school. It’s perfect.’ Pupils play a key role in the development of the school and its community through taking on such tasks as monitoring electricity consumption and inspecting the school site to reduce health and safety risks. They have a good and sensitive understanding of other cultures and faiths and are very respectful towards each other. Consequently, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Bullying and racism are extremely rare and pupils report unequivocally that any concerns they raise are addressed quickly and effectively by the staff. Pupils understand how to keep safe when using the internet and in avoiding risks linked with smoking, drugs and alcohol. They keenly raise funds for local charities and those further afield. Links with schools elsewhere in the UK and Uganda help them to understand the challenges that others face. Despite the relative weakness in writing, pupils’ confident skills in using mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), their excellent attitudes to learning and their high attendance, mean they are well prepared for the challenges of secondary education.

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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
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

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How effective is the provision?

Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and treat them as individuals. Consequently, pupils are keen participants in the learning process. In the better lessons seen, teachers planned effectively for all pupils’ needs, set learning at a challenging pace and created opportunities for pupils to apply their skills with increasing independence. Targets are set in literacy and numeracy so that most pupils know where they are in their learning. They are less confident in understanding what they need to do to move to a higher level, and teachers’ marking does not consistently provide effective feedback or guidance on how to accelerate learning further. Particularly effective learning takes place when the activities are linked to real-life situations or where pupils are encouraged to work on their own. However, this is not the case in enough lessons. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long and teaching assistants are not deployed effectively to make a full contribution, so this valuable resource is sometimes underused.

The curriculum has a satisfactory focus on the basic skills. Recent strategies to improve pupils’ writing across a range of subjects are showing early signs of positive impact, though there is still too much inconsistency in levels of attainment and expectations in writing. A key strength is pupils’ confident and independent application of their ICT skills across the curriculum. Enrichment activities such as sport, art, music and educational visits bring added vibrancy and relevance to pupils’ learning.

Pupils are cared for well and given good support. Strong pastoral partnerships ensure that those pupils facing additional challenges receive focused support so that they attend well, have effective access to the curriculum and make particular gains in their personal development and well-being. Effective transition arrangements within and beyond the school, for example in the end-of-year transfer of pupils from mixed-age classes, ensure that pupils move to the next stage with confidence.

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?

A strong sense of community and common purpose is palpable when you enter this happy and harmonious school. The headteacher is supported by a committed team that shares and contributes to the school’s vision. Leaders and managers promote

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equality of opportunity adequately and any form of discrimination is challenged unequivocally. Pupils with particular needs are well supported so that they overcome personal barriers to learning with confidence. Other groups, however, receive less consistent support in their learning because systems to track their progress and to tune provision to their needs are not rigorous enough.

School improvement planning, informed by adequate self-evaluation, ensures that the right priorities for future action are identified, though the impact of the school’s subsequent actions is not always tracked with sufficient rigour. The governing body has a satisfactory grasp of the school’s strengths and weaknesses but does not hold the school’s leaders fully to account for the attainment and progress of groups of pupils. Appropriate safeguarding procedures meet national requirements and ensure that pupils and staff are kept safe, especially in relation to the everyday running of the school, although some records and policies are not kept fully up to date.

The school has well-established partnerships with other professionals and organisations, which bring added breadth to the curriculum and contribute effectively to the good levels of care, guidance and support. Parents and carers express strong support for the work of the school and the degree to which the school involves them in their children’s education. The school’s links with communities from different contexts, locally, nationally and internationally, ensure that community cohesion is promoted well.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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Children thoroughly enjoy their learning in the Nursery and Reception class because activities are carefully planned and well matched to their individual needs. Children are given many opportunities to be independent and they collect and put away equipment unaided. They make the most of the good balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities, although opportunities are sometimes missed for children to use ICT in lessons or to share their work with their peers. All groups make good progress because of the well-targeted support they receive from all adults. Children cooperate and respond well to each other and to all adults and, thus, make good gains in their personal development. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well through social activities, eating fruit at snack times and through the numerous outdoor learning opportunities provided.

Indoor and outdoor learning environments are well resourced, and adults use regular assessments and observations to inform their planning of activities to ensure they build on children’s skills. All welfare and safeguarding requirements are fully met. Parents and carers are effectively engaged in their children’s learning, for example through the use of home-school books to develop reading skills. Leadership and management are good. The interim leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has an increasingly confident grasp of the data from tracking children’s progress and has ensured that all adults are moving in the right direction to maintain standards and improve provision further.

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

There was an above average response to the questionnaire, and the overwhelming majority of parents and carers were very positive. No significant concerns were raised, either through the questionnaires or during informal discussions with inspectors. The percentage of parents and carers agreeing or strongly agreeing with the 13 statements was never less than 96%, which is consistently high.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newtown CofE 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 118 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	77	15	22	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	80	14	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	44	64	25	36	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	62	26	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	68	22	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	40	58	29	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	72	17	25	2	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)	43	62	25	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	50	72	18	26	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	64	22	32	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	64	22	32	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	67	22	32	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	54	78	14	20	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 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.

9 December 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Newtown CofE Primary School, Shrewsbury, SY4 5NU

The inspectors really enjoyed their recent visit to see you at work. Thank you for making us so welcome. All of you spoke very positively about your school life.

Your school is a satisfactory school that takes good care of you. You clearly enjoy school. Your parents and carers are equally happy. You make satisfactory progress overall, although we think that with extra help you can do even better, especially in writing. These are the aspects that we thought were particularly good.

- Your behaviour is consistently good and you get on really well together.
- Your confidence in using ICT to support your learning is good.
- Your high attendance contributes significantly to your enjoyment of learning.
- You feel safe and secure and demonstrate excellent attitudes at work and play.
- Your contribution to the life of the school and its local community is good, especially as Eco Warriors, Knights in Yellow Vests and school councillors.
- The school offers you a broad range of after-school clubs and visits, which improve your physical, creative and personal development.

The whole school community at Newtown rightly wants the school to be even better, and to help make this possible we have asked the staff and governing body to:

- raise your levels of attainment and progress in writing
- improve the quality of teaching across the school, including teachers' assessment and marking and the accuracy of your targets for your next steps in learning
- improve the systems to track your progress as you move through the school, and take a closer and more careful look at how the school is working to ensure that all of you achieve as well as you can.

We hope that you will all continue to play your part in making Newtown an even more successful school.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Ewing
Lead inspector

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