

Newtown Primary School

Clifton Road, Exeter, EX1 2BP

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From their starting points, pupils of all abilities make good progress.
- The experiences children have in Reception give them a very good start to their education.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, particularly those who attend the Speech and Language Centre, do well because of the very good support they receive.
- By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are high.
- Teaching assistants are very skilled at helping pupils of all abilities to achieve well.
- Pupils try hard because they like their teachers and they want to do well.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school because they enjoy the interesting ways in which they learn.
- Pupils behave well. They feel safe because they are looked after well.
- Leaders, including governors, have high aspirations for the school and are working together well to make the school even better. As a result, the school is improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to make sure that pupils make rapid progress in every year group.
- Pupils do not have chances to practise in different subjects what they have learnt in English and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always tell pupils how to improve their work when they mark books.
- Teachers and leaders do not make as much use as they could of the information they have about how well pupils are doing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons and parts of lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, parents, carers and pupils.
- The inspector took account of 49 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as views of parents and carers from discussions in the playground and from three letters received during the inspection.
- Information about how well school leaders know how good the school is and their plans for school improvement, as well as assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, teachers' planning, pupils' work, safeguarding procedures and examples of the targets teachers are given as part of their performance management, were examined.
- The inspectors analysed 20 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Gary Kirkley

Additional inspector

Helen Matthews

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Newtown Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (those eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those with a parent or carer in the armed forces) is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is lower than the national average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.
- The school has a Speech and Language Centre for eight pupils from Reception to the end of Year 3.
- The headteacher was appointed to the school in April 2013.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards set for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding learning by
 - making sure that teachers always tell pupils how they can improve when they mark their work
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise the skills and understanding they have learnt in English and mathematics through their work in different subjects
 - making better use of information about how pupils are doing to set even more challenging targets for pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- During their time in school, pupils make good progress and by the time they leave, they reach standards which are above those expected for their age so they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- When children enter Reception, their skills are below those typically found for their age, especially in communication and language. They make good and sometimes outstanding progress because the teacher has very high expectations and the pupils have a wide range of experiences in all areas of their learning.
- Children develop their basic skills well. During a writing activity, the pupils used the correct pencil grip and were forming their letters accurately, which puts them in a strong position to become fluent writers. By the time they enter Year 1, a higher than average proportion reach a good level of development.
- From the very start, pupils are helped to become confident readers. They use their knowledge of phonics (the sounds letters make) well when they are both reading and writing.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 are variable. However, school records, including test results, show that pupils make good progress from their starting points, though the percentage who reach expected levels is sometimes below the national average.
- Pupils of all abilities, including the most able, make good progress during Key Stage 2, especially in reading and writing. Their attainment has improved steadily over the last three years and standards in reading are much higher than seen nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because their needs are quickly identified and plans are put in place to help them catch up any lost ground.. This is because the work they are given suits their abilities and all adults know just how to help them develop their skills and understanding.
- The needs of pupils who attend the Speech and Language Centre are met very well. The pupils spend most of their time in the mainstream classes, where all pupils learn to use sign language. As a result, they develop their confidence in communicating with their peers as well as the adults who work with them. Pupils benefit from a range of additional provision, including speech therapy, special programmes and additional small group and individual teaching. All of these elements combine to help them make very good progress. Parents are delighted with the progress their children make, exemplified in a letter received by inspectors which stated, 'Our child is achieving a great deal more and progressing further than we dared to think possible as a direct result of the first class teaching he receives.'
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium achieve well and the extra help they have for their social, emotional and academic development enables them to catch up. The pupils who left the school in 2013 did better than their peers in writing and mathematics but the number of pupils is very small so results can vary year on year.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say they learn well and it is fun. When talking about the things they particularly like about the school, one of the oldest pupils said, 'Each teacher has a special thing about them; they each have a spark.'
- Pupils learn well because teachers set work with different levels of challenge. In a lesson in Year 3, the pupils were fully involved in drawing bar graphs based on data they had collected from each other. Most pupils were able to use the graph paper well without help, while some less able pupils received effective support from teaching assistants or were using practical ways to record their own findings.
- Teachers use questioning well to develop pupils' understanding and they use follow-up questions to make pupils justify their answers. Often, pupils have the chance to discuss their ideas which

gives them the chance to consider different answers, to use the technical vocabulary they are learning and to practise their speaking and listening skills.

- Reading is taught well, beginning with the high priority given to developing a secure understanding of phonics, to the more sophisticated skills practised by the oldest pupils. Displays around the school encourage a love of reading, and the opening of the new library is anticipated by the pupils with great excitement.
- Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to the learning of pupils of all abilities. They are highly skilled and they complement the work of the teachers very effectively.
- Pupils know what they are expected to learn because teachers share this information with them so that pupils can link the new learning with what they already know. Marking often helps pupils by pointing out what they have done well and what could be better, but this is not consistent.
- Most teachers have high expectations of pupils of all abilities, including the most able. Information about how well pupils are doing is collected regularly but some teachers are not yet using this information to make sure that their expectations are high enough and that the targets they set for the progress of individual pupils are sufficiently demanding.
- Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons because the teachers make learning interesting. The whole school plans around the same termly theme and the pupils suggest things they want to find out about as part of the topic.. However, not all teachers exploit pupils' enthusiasm by building opportunities into the topic work to practise the skills learnt in English and mathematics. This means that teachers miss opportunities to give pupils, particularly the most able, longer pieces of work to extend their learning even more.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They come to lessons ready and eager to learn and inappropriate behaviour never interrupts learning. When, occasionally, pupils become distracted, a gentle reminder is all that is needed to get them back on track.
- Pupils say that the way teachers deal with behaviour is fair. They feel that pupils who always behave well are recognised and rewarded. There have been no exclusions for more than three years, which shows that the school's systems are working well.
- Around the school, pupils are polite and considerate. They take pride in their work and their school. They want to please their teachers because they like and respect them.
- The oldest pupils were keen to share how they enjoy being role models for the younger pupils, especially the opportunities they have for reading to them. They said that they used to have jobs as litter pickers but that this is not needed any more.
- Behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes is good. Pupils enjoy a range of physical activities, including ball games and space hoppers. There is plenty of space for them to run around but pupils manage their own behaviour well and some choose to sit in small groups to talk.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and most parents agree. The site is very secure and is well looked after so that the pupils feel they have a responsibility to look after it too. Staff receive regular training on keeping pupils safe and they know what to do if they have any concerns.
- Pupils say that there is hardly any bullying or name calling of any kind, but that if anything does happen, problems are always sorted out.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when they are using the internet. The regular visits of the Life Skills Bus teach them about 'stranger danger', road safety and how to deal with situations they might meet as they get older.
- Attendance has improved significantly in the last year and is now in line with national averages. The amount of persistent absence has more than halved because of the good systems that the school has introduced and because the pupils want to be in school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is very well supported by other leaders in school, including governors. All leaders know how good the school is and what they need to do to improve it further, and that they are making a difference.
- Middle leaders are fully involved in driving forward improvements in their areas of responsibility and they recognise that the training they have had has helped them to develop their skills.
- The school's aims are currently being reviewed. The views of staff, parents and pupils are all being considered so that the school can move forward with a common purpose.
- Since starting at the school, the changes that the headteacher has made have built on the good practice already in place. Improvements to the quality of teaching, rising standards at the end of Key Stage 2 and higher attendance all demonstrate that the school has the capacity to continue to improve. Leaders have not yet ensured, however, that teachers always make enough use of assessment information to set pupils sufficiently high targets.
- Parents are supportive and nearly all the parents who responded on Parent View recommend the school to others.
- The gaps in the achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are closing but this remains a focus area for the school and is included in the performance management of teachers. This shows that every opportunity is being taken to promote equality of opportunity and tackle any potential discrimination.
- Learning across subjects such as history, geography and the arts is good. Pupils' enthusiasm is encouraged through the visits and visitors linked to the termly themes. Many pupils learn musical instruments and there is a wide range of clubs. Pupils' cultural understanding is well developed through the link to a school in Senegal as well as through the contributions made by different families who come from different traditions. All these experiences contribute well to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- The school has made good use of the additional funding for the improvement of sport and physical education to buy new resources, to provide more opportunities for sports activities and to improve teaching. All pupils benefit from swimming lessons and fully trained playtime leaders encourage active games on the playground. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in outdoor pursuits at a specialist centre and a wide range of clubs is available after school. As a result, fitness levels have improved and pupils are able to excel because of higher expectations.
- The local authority has an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness and provided good support during the transition to the appointment of the headteacher.
- The school's systems for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have high aspirations for the school and make sure leaders are doing their job well. They have undertaken training, including how to use information about how well pupils are doing, to make comparisons with similar schools nationally. They know that teaching has improved through their visits to the school and through the information the headteacher gives them and they make sure that any underperformance is tackled. They check that only the best teachers are rewarded by progression through the pay scales. They have taken particular interest in the way that the pupil premium is used to raise standards and whether it is making as much difference as it should to pupils' academic, social and personal development. They manage the budget very carefully and are determined to make sure that the school will continue to improve.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113083
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	440996

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Lloyd
Headteacher	Ruth Jones
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 November 2010
Telephone number	01392 255540
Email address	admin@newtown.devon.sch.uk

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