

Newtown Early Years and Infant School

Berkhampstead Road, Chesham, HP5 3AT

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Newtown is a friendly and welcoming school. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Parents and carers are very happy with the school and its staff.
- The headteacher, ably supported by a well-informed governing body, has improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Assessment information is used well to identify areas for improvement and to provide effective extra support for pupils who need it.
- Children get a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They gain confidence and settle in quickly. Interesting activities are planned for them that ensure they learn well.
- Pupils' make good progress and their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is rising and in line with the national average.
- Teaching is typically good. Teachers plan activities that engage pupils and they expect them to work hard. Teaching assistants are deployed to good effect. Pupils' work is assessed regularly.
- Pupils enjoy school. They get on well with each other and their teachers. They have good attitudes to learning and they behave well.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs are supported well to make good or better progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Occasionally, teachers do not plan activities that have a clear enough purpose, which restricts pupils' progress.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- The outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not planned well enough to ensure all children, particularly the most able, make progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors, together with the headteacher, observed pupils of all ages engaged in a range of activities in different subjects. They also looked at pupils' written work in all classes and learning journals of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, the headteacher and other school leaders. A discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to a group of pupils and informally with other pupils in lessons and around the school. They listened to pupils reading and talked to them about their reading habits.
- Inspectors examined several of the school's documents. These included: the school's own evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan; information about pupils' progress and the support given to disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs; evidence about the quality of teaching; and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- The inspector took account of 76 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), one letter and two emails from parents and carers, and the views expressed by parents and carers as they arrived at school. Twenty two questionnaires returned by staff were analysed.

Inspection team

Jim McVeigh, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional Inspector
Patricia Wright	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Newtown is an average-sized primary school.
- There are three classes in the Reception Year and two classes in the Nursery and Years 1 and 2. All children attend full time in the Reception Year and part time in the Nursery. The school also runs a pre-school group and a newly opened children's centre.
- Almost 60% of pupils come from a White British background and just over 20% have Pakistani heritage. There are more pupils than average, around a quarter, who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care) is around 15% and below the national average.
- Almost 20% of pupils are supported through school action. Around 10% are supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs. Both proportions are above the national average.
- The school runs a pre-school and has taken over management of Newtown Children's Centre. Neither of these were part of the inspection.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring:
 - teachers always plan activities that have a clear learning purpose
 - that in planning outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers always take into account what children have already mastered, especially the most able, so they make more rapid progress in their learning.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by providing them with more opportunities to practise their writing skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the governing body share high expectations and a clear vision for the school. They have a sharp and effective focus on raising the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
 - The headteacher is a strong role model for others, demonstrating a fair and professional approach to management and a determination to improve the life chances of all pupils. Recommendations detailed in the last inspection, such as improving achievement in mathematics and attendance and making better use of teaching assistants, have been tackled successfully.
 - The school has judged its own effectiveness accurately and has correctly prioritised the steps needed for improvement. Leaders, including governors, regularly check to ensure that planned improvements are taking place. Staff work closely as a team and share information effectively.
 - Pupils' progress is checked frequently and suitable targets for improvement set. Effective extra support is given to any pupils who are in danger of not making good enough progress. For example, the school ensures that disadvantaged pupils are well supported to make more rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school also makes sure that these pupils can take advantage of trips and school clubs. Pupils have equal opportunities and all forms of discrimination are discouraged.
 - Effective procedures are in place to manage teachers' performance based on the Teachers' Standards. Regular lesson observations and checks on teachers' planning and pupils' work contribute to the clear understanding of the quality of teaching. Teachers and teaching assistants are set challenging targets, including about pupils' progress. Suitable training is closely linked to the school's plans for improvement.
 - Teachers new to the profession feel well supported. Subject leaders are helped to develop their own leadership skills and have important roles in monitoring and training others.
 - The school offers a broad and balanced range of subjects. Topics are used to combine elements of a number of subjects in a way that interests pupils. Topics begin with exciting activities that grab pupils' imagination, such as a whole-school trip to the seaside or to a toy museum. Parents, carers and pupils celebrate achievements together on end-of-topic days. Information on subjects and how parents and carers can help their children at home is readily available.
 - A good number of clubs for music, sport and languages further enrich pupils' experiences. For example, the extra primary school sports funding supports a wide range of physical activities, including football, tennis and gym. The funding helps teaching staff to increase their own expertise in coaching different sports and has increased the number of pupils who participate regularly in physical activity.
 - The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, pupils learn tolerance and respect for people of different faiths and cultures through assemblies and an extensive range of visits and visitors. Pupils develop a good understanding of British values, such as democracy, through the way the school council works.
 - The school engages well with parents and carers, who, overwhelmingly, say that their children are happy at school and make good progress. Breakfast and after-school clubs provide pupils with a safe place to socialise and enjoy educational activities and parents and carers appreciate the support this gives to family life.
 - There is strong drive to support families. For example, a bilingual community worker works closely with families of Pakistani heritage. Parents and carers are encouraged to sit in with their children when they first start school to learn how to help with learning at home.
 - The local authority provides effective support to the school by way of an external view of the school's work and a regular check on the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' work.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body has a wide range of relevant skills and governors undertake regular training. Governors keep themselves well informed about the school's performance, including the quality of teaching, through regular reports from the headteacher and their own focused visits. They regularly ask searching questions to hold school leaders to account. Also, they provide good support to ensure the school is continually improving. Governors set robust targets for the performance of the headteacher.
 - Governors ensure the school makes sound financial decisions. For example, they ensure that teachers are appropriately rewarded for their work and that any underperformance is tackled promptly. They check that the pupil premium is well targeted to have a significant impact on the achievement of eligible pupils. They make sure safeguarding arrangements are fully in place.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils know the school rules and understand the school's rewards and sanctions. They know it is 'good to be green' and that they need to behave sensibly if they want to do well at school. Parents, carers and governors agree that behaviour is good.
- In the playground, pupils play and talk with each other happily. They say they always have someone to play with and no one is mean to them. Around the school, including in some corridors that are quite narrow, pupils are usually polite and sensitive to each other. In the dining hall pupils eat their meals sensibly and in a well-mannered fashion.
- The school records all incidents of misbehaviour fully, including actions taken. There have been few serious racist or bullying incidents. Staff go to great lengths to keep pupils with behavioural problems in school and exclusions are rare.
- For their age, pupils have a good understanding of bullying and its different forms. Pupils say they are confident enough to tell an adult if they are unhappy or someone else is being naughty.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their school and learning. They settle to their work readily and usually complete tasks fully. They work together well, discussing what they are doing sensibly and sharing materials fairly. Pupils say that lessons are rarely disrupted by misbehaviour. However, occasionally if activities are not challenging enough, some pupils become restless and do not try as hard as they could.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The site is secure and visitors are appropriately vetted.
- Pupils are well supervised in all areas of the school and staff are well aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. Pupils say they feel safe in all areas of the school.
- Pupils have learned how to keep themselves safe and how to stay healthy. For example, visiting police officers have talked to them about such things as road safety and 'stranger danger.'
- Pupils like coming to school and staff have worked successfully with some families to promote the need for good attendance. Absences are closely monitored and quickly followed up by the school. Attendance has improved and, in 2014, was broadly average, despite an outbreak of chicken pox during the year. Punctuality is good.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good quality teaching has ensured that pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers have high expectations of the amount of work pupils should do and of their behaviour. They have established good relationships with pupils and developed a good climate in which children can learn. Behaviour is managed well and usually pupils follow instructions promptly.
- Teachers and teaching assistants often use skilful questioning to make pupils think hard. Well-trained and well-prepared teaching assistants are used to support pupils' learning effectively. Bilingual teaching assistants give good support to pupils who have English as an additional language, often using the pupils' home language.
- Pupils' work is assessed regularly. Teachers mark written work frequently, pointing out to pupils their mistakes and celebrating their achievements. Pupils understand the shorthand codes that teachers use in written work and receive verbal feedback on how to improve their work. Teachers check the accuracy of their assessments with colleagues in their own and other local schools.
- Speaking is a strong focus in lessons. Pupils have regular opportunities to improve their speaking and listening skills by discussing their ideas with each other. For example, in preparation for a writing task, a group of pupils in Year 1 were encouraged to explain the steps they were taking to make a sandwich.
- Teachers usually plan activities carefully so they cater for the wide range of abilities in classes. Planned activities interest and engage pupils. For example, pupils in Year 2 worked enthusiastically when planning a story based on a character they knew, focusing on using adjectives, and made good progress. However, occasionally pupils are not always clear about what they are expected to learn in a particular activity, which limits their progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress at Newtown School. Children start school with typical levels of personal, social and physical development and skills in speaking and listening. However, their skills and abilities in reading, writing and mathematics are low.
- By the time pupils leave school in Year 2, pupils' attainment in all three subjects is broadly average. Over the last three years pupils' attainment has been steadily rising and is broadly average. However, they do not do as well in writing as in reading and mathematics. They have too few opportunities to develop their writing skills.
- The school's own programme for teaching phonics (the sounds letters make) is effective in developing pupils' skills and successful strategies in pronouncing words. In the 2013 national phonics screening check, pupils performed above the national average.
- Pupils have good reading habits. The school promotes reading well through such things as book day, where pupils dress up as their favourite story character, library day, which introduces pupils to the local library, and visiting authors. Pupils' reading successes are celebrated at assemblies and they read to adults and borrow books regularly. Parents and carers are given good guidance on how they can support children's reading at home.
- Pupils learn basic number facts quickly through the regular use of short memory quizzes that pupils enjoy and tackle enthusiastically.
- The most able pupils make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school provides activities each day that suitably stretch these pupils. For example, the most able mathematicians tackle work normally covered in junior school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make strong progress, although their attainment varies, being dependent upon their starting points. The school quickly identifies their particular needs accurately and plans effective support and, where appropriate, involves outside professionals such as speech and language specialists and psychologists.
- The school has recognised that a sizeable group of pupils, those of Pakistani origin, have generally not been reaching the same standards as others in key subjects. Their attainment is improving because effective extra support is provided and their progress is monitored closely.
- Pupils who have English as an additional language acquire skills in speaking English quickly. Generally, they make similar progress to their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school spends funds effectively to support and enrich the life experiences of disadvantaged pupils. These pupils are making rapid progress through well-focused extra help. The gap in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics between disadvantaged pupils and others in school and nationally is closing.

The early years provision is good

- Generally, children enter the Nursery with little previous experience of literacy and numeracy but at typical levels of development for their age in the other key areas. Children achieve well, particularly in personal, social and physical development and in communication and language.
- Adults frequently engage in conversation with children and skilled bilingual staff ensure that children who have English as an additional language are well supported. Consequently, children quickly develop their speaking and listening skills. Well-planned learning opportunities, including regular activities using phonics, enable children to make good progress in early reading skills and mathematics, though their achievement in writing is lower.
- Home visits by staff and close involvement of parents and carers help children to quickly settle into the school's routines. Children feel safe and secure because they are well looked after by adults. In the caring atmosphere, they behave well, following instructions and answering questions sensibly. Children from different cultural backgrounds work and play together harmoniously.
- Teachers and other adults work closely together to plan a range of activities and strategies that successfully promote children's development of knowledge and skills in the key areas of learning. Adults regularly observe children engaged in activities, either ones they chose themselves or ones led by teachers, to check on their progress. The learning journals provide good records of children's progress and include parents' and carers' own observations. They help staff plan suitable learning opportunities for each child.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Leaders ensure children are safe, happy and

make good progress. The inside area of the department is well organised and provides a stimulating environment to develop children's curiosity and imagination well. The organisation of the outdoor area is less successful in providing activities that maximise the learning opportunities for all children, particularly the most able.

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	110217
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	443785

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Danny Talhadas
Headteacher	Julia Antrobus
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2011
Telephone number	01494 783713
Fax number	n/a
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