

# New Town Primary School

School Terrace, Reading, RG1 3LS

**Inspection dates** 15–16 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is below nationally expected standards because too many pupils make inadequate progress and are not achieving to their full potential in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment gaps between differing groups of pupils are not closing rapidly enough.
- Disabled pupils and those with a statement of special educational needs make inadequate progress because the school does not support them well enough in their learning.
- Teaching is inadequate because teachers' expectations of pupils are too low. Teachers do not plan sufficiently challenging tasks. This slows down pupils' progress and particularly limits the learning of the most able pupils.
- Behaviour is inadequate because pupils display poor attitudes to learning. Inappropriate behaviour is not followed up and properly checked.
- Governors have not held the school's leaders to account, and have not been effective in tackling underachievement and eradicating weak teaching.
- Governors and leaders have not checked rigorously enough to ensure that the school complies with safeguarding regulations. Until recently, procedures to keep pupils safe were not robust. Reported incidents were not systematically recorded.
- Early Years children make inadequate progress because by the end of their Reception year most of them are not sufficiently prepared for the next stage in their education.

### The school has the following strengths

- The newly appointed executive headteacher and the head of school have together analysed the school's work and identified what needs to be done to raise standards. Staff support them in their renewed drive to improve the school.
- Important changes have been made to the way behaviour is managed, and this is showing signs of improvement.
- Recently, Reception and Nursery teachers have placed greater emphasis on developing children's communication and speaking skills.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 17 lessons, four of which were carried out jointly with senior staff. They also attended assemblies and observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and breaktime.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and had discussions with groups of pupils.
- Pupils' books from the current and previous school years were checked thoroughly to establish how well pupils learn over time.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views on the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with senior staff, a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke informally to parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's documentation and policies, including those relating to safeguarding, data on pupils' progress, attendance figures and the school's development planning.

## Inspection team

Shahnaz Maqsood, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gianni Bianchi	Additional Inspector
Lynne Thorogood	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with about two fifths being of Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school makes provision for the early years through two full-time Reception classes and a part-time Nursery which is managed by the school's governing body.
- Pupil mobility is high, with many pupils leaving or joining the school at times other than the beginning or end of term.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The previous headteacher resigned in May 2014. The local authority stepped in and, on behalf of the governing body, appointed an executive headteacher on a part-time basis in June 2014. She also leads St John's Church of England Primary School, Reading, and is assisted by a full-time head of school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that teachers assess pupils' achievement accurately and use the information to plan tasks and activities to meet the full range of pupils' needs
  - raising teachers' expectations to provide high standards of challenge for all pupils, particularly the most able
  - providing activities, particularly in writing, that engage and interest pupils, especially boys
  - improving feedback to pupils so they know how to improve their work, and make sure that they respond to advice from teachers
  - check pupils' learning and provide activities to extend it still further
  - making sure that teachers' planning conveys a clear idea of what it is teachers want the pupils to learn.
- Make sure all pupils make good progress by:
  - improving pupils' reading skills, ensuring that pupils get a better grasp of how sounds are related to letters
  - providing purposeful activities in guided reading lessons, with a clear focus on improving skills in reading
  - improving the correct use of punctuation during writing activities
  - improving pupils' skills in solving mathematical problems.
- Improve behaviour by:
  - implementing the policies for managing behaviour consistently across the school
  - ensuring that pupils understand how they are expected to behave, and taking effective remedial action to improve behaviour where necessary.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school, including governance, by:

- carrying out a thorough analysis of the school’s work to identify weaknesses, and introduce measures to resolve them
- using assessment information to find out which groups of pupils are underachieving, particularly those that are assessed as being disadvantaged, and to provide appropriate support to ensure that gaps are closing at a faster rate
- developing the skills of the leaders at all levels to enable them to contribute to school improvement
- closely monitoring the quality of teaching, providing focused professional development, leading to a standard of teaching that is at least good throughout the school
- ensuring that governors develop the skills that help them to challenge school leaders more rigorously.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### are inadequate

- The school's leaders have not addressed the issues raised in the two previous reports with sufficient rigour. They have not shared their vision for directing the development of the school with all staff, and teachers have not been able to contribute effectively to school improvement.
- Middle leaders are new to their roles and have only just begun to receive the support and training to become effective in order to impact on school improvement.
- There is unevenness in the development of measures to improve pupils' performance. Progress is not tracked thoroughly, data is not analysed, and assessments are not moderated to check accuracy.
- Leaders and teachers cannot identify individuals and groups of pupils falling behind. As a result, pupils are not targeted for support where it is needed and do not achieve as well as they should.
- Systems for checking the quality of teaching have not been rigorous. The school's leadership has not ensured that teaching has improved and is at least good or better. Judgements about the quality of teaching have not been based on pupil performance and thus have not enabled improvements in standards. Teachers are not always provided with training opportunities to improve their teaching.
- The local authority has supported the school since the previous inspection, but did not challenge the school quickly enough in relation to the decline in achievement. It provided a team of leaders and numeracy and literacy experts, but this did not make sufficient impact on school improvement, and pupils' progress continued to be slow. A few teachers said they lacked confidence in the local authority so did not report their grievances related to the decline in pupils' behaviour and standards.
- The school's central ethos of providing equality of opportunity has not been satisfied because there is too much disparity in the attainment of the different groups of pupils. There is no obvious discrimination and relations are clearly improving.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils and contributes adequately to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. This aspect of their education helps to prepare them for life in modern Britain, as demonstrated in their respect and understanding of other cultures and religions.
- Staff speak positively of, and support, the newly appointed executive headteacher's plans to improve the school.
- The primary physical education and sport premium has begun to be used to improve the skills of the teachers and pupils.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers without the permission of the monitoring inspector.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors do not have clear understanding of how well pupils are achieving or how well the school is doing compared with other schools. They do not ask challenging questions to find out how well pupils' perform compared with pupils elsewhere, and have not addressed underachievement as a matter of urgency.
  - The governors do not know how the pupil premium is being used and the impact it is having on pupils' achievement and their well-being. Teachers' pay rises have not been based on the performance of pupils in their care.
  - The governors come from a wide range of backgrounds and reflect the diversity found in the local community. They have managed the school's finances well.
  - Procedures for checking effectiveness have not been robust. A designated governor is now responsible for safeguarding, and procedures comply with requirements.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### are inadequate

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Attitudes to learning are not well established and the lack of challenge in lessons results in disengagement and low level disruption which hinders progress.
- Behaviour is not managed systematically and pupils do not know how to behave or what teachers expect of them. A small number of pupils display unacceptable behaviour.
- The school's records show that exclusions are falling, but evidence from the inspection showed that leaders do not deal with serious incidents adequately and, consequently, allow poor behaviour to continue.
- Pupils understand the dangers of the internet and are aware of all forms of bullying. Pupils of different

ethnicities play and work together amicably.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate because records in relation to safeguarding have only recently been put in place.
- Pupils told inspectors that, over time, there has been much bullying and harassment by the older pupils and, as a result, younger pupils did not feel safe. However, the atmosphere in the school has improved, and pupils feel that bullying has now significantly decreased.

### The quality of teaching

**is inadequate**

- Teaching is inadequate because teachers do not plan lessons which take into account the different starting points or ages of the pupils. Tasks and activities are not always appropriately challenging because they are often made too easy for pupils and do not help to deepen their knowledge. For example, in a Year 4 lesson all the pupils had to do the same task, making a moveable animal using split pins. There was limited opportunity for pupils with well-developed skills to extend their learning by moving on to do more difficult work.
- Teachers do not always probe pupils' learning sufficiently, or help pupils to develop good critical thinking skills. For example, pupils were not seen to be given many opportunities to expand their learning and improve their speaking and listening skills through the use of dialogue and debate.
- Teaching assistants do not always provide effective support for pupils with specific learning needs because they tend to tell them the answer rather than allowing them to work the answer out for themselves. This makes learning too easy and hampers their progress.
- Teachers do not plan meaningful tasks and activities which interest and engage pupils, especially boys. Books showed evidence of extensive use of dull and uninspiring worksheets, some of which had not been completed by the pupils. The widespread use of worksheets also limits opportunities for pupils to improve through practising their writing in different subjects.
- Mathematics is not taught well. Work is often too easy and does not build on skills acquired. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, all the pupils were finding equivalent fractions, and even when most of them could do the activity easily, they were not moved on to the next level.
- There is variation in the frequency of marking, some books had not been marked for four weeks. Too much of the marking does not clarify misconceptions or indicate clearly how pupils can improve their work. In the few books in which there was guidance, the advice was not followed up and pupils did not adhere to it in their later work.

### The achievement of pupils

**is inadequate**

- Achievement is inadequate because many pupils are not sufficiently challenged to make the progress needed to reach expected levels of attainment. In Key Stage 1, pupils' progress is weak, especially in writing. Progress is inconsistent across Key Stage 2 and in most subjects. Overall, the majority of pupils do not make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 rose slightly in 2014, but were still below those expected for their age. Standards at the end of Year 2 fell below other pupils nationally in all subjects, but particularly in writing.
- The most able pupils do not do well and many do not achieve the higher levels of which they are capable. Teachers' expectations of what this group of pupils can do are not high enough, and teachers set tasks which are too easy. Teachers informed inspectors that in Year 2, for example, pupils are not 'expected' to achieve the higher standards.
- Disabled pupils and those with a statement of special educational needs make poor progress. Monitoring of this provision has only recently started and insufficient training has been provided for specialist staff. The teaching and effectiveness of interventions provided for this group have not been checked by leaders to ensure that support is tailored to meet pupils' particular needs.
- The progress of minority ethnic pupils, including those of Pakistani heritage, is similar to other pupils, their attainment being below that expected for their age.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics screening check declined in 2014 and was well below the national average. This is because pupils do not have secure knowledge of sounds made by letters. This has impacted on their ability to develop their reading.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress as their classmates. Although gaps are narrowing, they are not closing rapidly enough and vary from year to year. In 2013 their attainment was

two years behind their peers in writing, over a year and a half behind in reading, and a year behind in mathematics.

### **The early years provision**

### **is inadequate**

- The leadership and management of the Early Years provision over time have been inadequate. Children do not achieve the standards they should from starting points that are below those expected of children of their age.
- Teachers' assessment and the tracking of children have not been secure, and teachers have not been able to identify the areas to focus on to enable children to make good progress in their learning based on their individual needs.
- Teaching has not enabled children to achieve well, particularly in their language development last year. By the end of the Reception Year less than half of the children are sufficiently well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Children's behaviour, their manners and the development of their social skills have significantly improved recently, and benefits are currently evident in their learning.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109785
<b>Local authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	445909

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	270
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Malcolm Morrison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angharad Brackstone (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 January 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 9375509
<b>Fax number</b>	0118 9375510
<b>Email address</b>	head@newtown.reading.sch.uk

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