

Newton St Cyres Primary School

Newton St Cyres, Exeter, Devon, EX5 5DD

Inspection dates

3–4 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Good leadership has made sure that teaching is good and that pupils learn well. The school's leaders use the information about pupils' performance effectively to identify issues, and then tackle them quickly and with determination.
- All groups of pupils make good progress across the school and achieve well. They reach standards which are above average overall and notably high in reading and writing.
- Teachers know what is expected of them and the agreed policies and procedures are used consistently across the school. Reading and writing are particularly well taught.
- Ideas about how to improve teaching are discussed and successfully implemented across the federation.
- The quality of teachers' marking is good. Teachers make sure pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- Children get a strong start in the Early Years Foundation Stage which prepares them well for Key Stage 1.
- The behaviour of pupils is good because they are keen to do the work they are given and readily help each other. Pupils feel safe at school and know how to keep themselves safe.
- The school's emphasis on the importance of being at school has improved attendance which is now slightly above average. Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They validate the information they are given with their own observations.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not do quite as well in mathematics as they do in reading and writing. They do not always have enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills in practical ways.
- The most-able pupils occasionally spend too long doing work which is too easy for them.
- Teachers do not always expect pupils to make the improvements they have suggested when they mark pupils' books, or give them the time to do so.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by one inspector over two days. It was part of a coordinated inspection of two of the three schools in the Exe Valley Federation. The third school was inspected in May 2014.
- The lead inspectors from both inspections met with the governors together to discuss the effectiveness of the support and challenge for the schools.
- The inspector spent the majority of his time in lessons looking at the work pupils were doing. A third of the observations were carried out together with senior or middle leaders. He also looked at the work pupils had done over time in their books and talked to them about their work, their targets and how they knew what they should do to improve.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents provided by the school, including: minutes from meetings; teachers' records about the performance of pupils; the school's analysis of the progress and attainment of pupils; senior leaders' records about their checks on the quality of teaching; and the school's policies and procedures.
- The inspector spoke to groups of pupils about what they thought of the school and met with staff. He considered the views of parents through the 23 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online survey, and by talking to parents informally before and after school. Staff working at the school also completed a survey which was taken into account.
- At the time of the inspection, the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were temporarily being taught by a teacher from one of the other schools in the federation.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average primary school. There are four classes, each of which includes pupils from two year groups. Children in Reception attend school full time.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This funding provides additional support for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. In some year groups, there are no eligible pupils.
- In April 2012, the school federated with two other primary schools, Thorverton and Cheriton Fitzpaine, to form the Exe Valley Federation. Until recently, there was one executive headteacher for the federation. This role is now shared by two people. There is also a head of teaching and learning in each of the schools.
- The federation has a single governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can and will achieve in mathematics by giving them more opportunities to use their mathematical skills in practical contexts.
- Ensure that teachers:
 - give pupils more opportunities to think for themselves about how to improve their work and to respond to teachers' feedback
 - enable the most-able pupils to move quickly on to work which challenges them.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteachers provide a clear and ambitious vision for the school in the context of the federation. The executive headteachers and other senior leaders use the information about pupils' performance effectively to identify and tackle key issues at Newton St Cyres and are ensuring that the plans for improvement are implemented quickly and consistently.
- Teachers at the school are able to share training, support and expertise across the federation. This has led to improvements in boys' writing, for example, and has had a significant impact on pupils' results in national tests. Middle leaders particularly benefit from opportunities to develop their skills and to learn from those in the other two schools. This sharing of skills and experience has enabled them to play an effective role in identifying issues and bringing about improvements.
- School leaders and governors carefully consider how to make the best use of the pupil premium funding. The small number of eligible pupils are given extra support and resources to help their learning and to provide experiences which promote their personal development.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is given a high priority. Pupils said that the federation gives them excellent opportunities to make new friends, for example when they go on a residential trip or play sports with pupils from the other schools. This, they said, makes them feel more confident about going to secondary school.
- The curriculum is well organised to ensure that pupils in mixed-age classes develop the knowledge and skills they should for their age, and that they learn from a wide range of interesting topics. New systems to record and evaluate pupils' progress have been introduced and teachers are becoming more confident in their use.
- A recent focus on Nelson Mandela and the fight against apartheid has given pupils a much wider view of the world and of modern Britain. The school's inclusive ethos, and pupils' positive attitudes towards one another, help to promote equality of opportunity. Discrimination, or extremist views of any kind, would not be tolerated by adults or pupils.
- The primary sport funding is used well to provide expert coaching for pupils in new sports and opportunities for them to participate in high-quality training each week at a leisure centre. It has also funded sport clubs after school and opportunities for pupils to take part in sports tournaments.
- The school buys support from the local authority and uses this to check that senior leaders have prioritised the most important issues and are evaluating the school's performance accurately. The local authority also supports the governors by overseeing the performance management of the executive headteachers. The school has a good relationship with the local authority and a range of other external agencies.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors make sure that they receive plenty of information about the work of each school. They consider this in the light of their own evidence collected through school visits and by talking to pupils, parents and teachers. Governors check that senior leaders are accurately evaluating the quality of teaching and that this is leading to improvements. They have sought training in order to develop their understanding of the data on the school's performance and how pupils' progress is being assessed within the new curriculum requirements.
 - Governors ensure that Newton St Cyres has an appropriate approach to managing the performance of all staff, and that the quality of teaching is taken into account when considering pay awards. This is helping to encourage the best classroom practice and tackle weaker teaching.
 - Together with senior leaders, the governors make sure that policies and procedures are reviewed in a timely manner and that they take account of new requirements. In particular, they check that all the staff working at the three schools are safe to do so, and that all staff understand the procedures for keeping pupils safe and are confident to act if they have concerns.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good because they are eager to learn and like being at school. Their attendance has improved so that it is now slightly above average. The school makes sure that pupils and parents are aware of the impact of regular attendance on pupils' learning and future success.
- Most parents agree that behaviour is good. However, the inspector found that a very small number of

pupils need reminders to ensure their behaviour does not disturb the learning of other pupils.

- Pupils like the opportunities they have to take on responsibilities such as helping in the library or being members of the school or eco-school council. Older pupils take pride in being friends with younger pupils and helping them to play happily or sort out differences. Pupils and parents spoke very highly of the opportunities for art, music and performing, such as the recent production of Panto Pandemonium the previous week.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good because everyone understands their responsibility for making this a positive, helpful community. Pupils know what they can do to help keep themselves safe and they feel confident that any worries they report will be dealt with quickly.
- Pupils said that bullying of any kind is very rare. If it did happen, they felt confident that it would be dealt with quickly as soon as they raised the issue with an adult. When pupils very occasionally fall out with each other, they generally know how to sort it out by talking about it, and they know that adults will help if necessary. While records are kept about any incidents or concerns, these are not always as well organised as they could be.
- Pupils are well trained about how to stay safe when using the internet or when out and about near roads or water. Parents said that their children feel safe and are keen to come into school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers know the pupils well and make good use of the information they have about how well they are doing to plan interesting tasks. They have very good knowledge about the subjects they are teaching and share this across the federation.
- The school recently focused on the teaching of writing, and particularly on how to encourage younger boys to get excited about writing. Resources and topics which particularly interest boys were introduced and the writing of all pupils improved as a result.
- Improving the teaching of mathematics has been a more recent focus. While new approaches and resources are being introduced, these have not yet had as much impact as those used in literacy. Teachers and pupils say that the quality of the homework set in mathematics has improved because of the online resources, but pupils do not get enough opportunities to use and extend their mathematical skills in practical tasks.
- A strong emphasis on improving the quality of marking has been successful and teachers make sure that the comments they make when they mark pupils' work tell pupils what they need to do next. Pupils acknowledge the comments teachers make about their work and use their 'polishing pens' to make corrections. In many cases, teachers give pupils the time and encouragement to make these changes, but this good practice is not yet evident in all classes.
- Pupils said that teachers make learning fun and that they are usually challenged just the right amount by the tasks they are given to do.
- Teaching assistants are well informed about what is expected of them and they make a very positive contribution to the learning and the behaviour of pupils. They support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs effectively because they are well trained and know a lot about the particular needs of those they support.
- The use of computers and technology is a strength of the school, and teachers are exploring new ways of using these resources to make learning effective. The teaching of computing is particularly good. For example, pupils in Year 5 and 6 made rapid progress because they were given lots of opportunities to explore learning for themselves, within an exciting project.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- By the end of Year 6, pupils have reached standards which are above average. In 2013, results in national tests fell slightly. Quick action by the school meant that standards returned to more typical levels in 2014, although those in mathematics, which were also above average, were not quite as high as those in reading and writing. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is also above average.
- From their different starting points, all groups of pupils make good progress across the school. At times, their progress is rapid, such as in reading because of the excellent grounding pupils get in phonics (linking

letters and the sounds they make). More recently, pupils' progress in writing has speeded up because of the school's efforts to make sure pupils have exciting experiences to write about and the confidence to be bold in their writing.

- Work seen by inspectors in pupils' books and the teachers' tracking of pupils' performance show that among the current cohort good progress is typical.
- The most-able pupils make good progress because they generally get work which is suitably challenging. Occasionally, they have the chance to tackle work beyond the usual topics, which gives them an insight into more complex issues. However, in a few lessons, the more-able pupils are expected to complete too much work that is simple for them before moving on to more challenging tasks.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress because they are well supported. They get the help they need in lessons, as well as additional support which develops the skills they most require. This support is carefully evaluated and checked to make sure it is effective.

The early years provision

is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are included in a class with Year 1 pupils. Teachers and assistants go to great lengths to ensure that these children have access to appropriate activities and resources, although the space available for them alongside the rest of the pupils in the class can make this quite difficult.
- Children come into Reception with levels of knowledge and skills which are in line with those typical for their age. Phonics and writing are exceptionally well taught and children quickly develop a love of learning in these areas. Their use of numbers and their ability to identify shapes, space and measures are also strong. By the end of Reception, children are well prepared for Year 1. Most are very confident and have achieved well.
- The children in Reception benefit from contact with older pupils in Year 1. Because they listen to them talking and, during free-flow activities, interact with them, many of the younger children develop advanced vocabulary and communication skills.
- Any children with additional needs are quickly identified by knowledgeable adults, and are helped to overcome whatever difficulties they may face.
- Children are kept safe because adults are well trained and provide children with a listening ear, or reminders to be careful, when they need it. Children behave well and readily fit in with the school's routines and expectations; again, seeing the example of older pupils helps this to happen quickly.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Together, the adults keep up to date with developments and look at ways to make sure children get the best possible opportunities.

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	113104
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	444148

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	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marian Beresford
Headteacher	Heather Perry and Glynis Harris Executive Headteachers
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2008
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