

Newlands Community Primary School

Moore Road, Barwell, Leicester, Leicestershire LE9 8AG

Inspection dates

28–29 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Attainment and progress in English and mathematics have been below average for the past two years. Although rising, pockets of underachievement persist.
- Gaps in the achievement of boys and girls remain, particularly in writing at key stage 1. The progress of disadvantaged pupils has been slower than that of other pupils nationally.
- Too few of the most able pupils have reached the higher standards in their different subjects. More of them are now on track to do so, but this is not the case in each class.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Not all middle leaders track the progress of groups carefully enough.
- The most able pupils do not have enough opportunities to deepen their understanding, try more challenging work or apply their learning in new contexts.
- Pupils do not always understand their targets, so are not always sure how to move on to the next level.
- The persistent absence of a few pupils has risen in the past year.
- The early years requires improvement. The proportion of children that reach a good level of development is not rising quickly enough. Actions to improve boys' reading and writing skills have not been wholly successful.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have established a positive, vibrant culture. Parents have responded positively and enthusiastically to the school's new leadership.
- Leaders have taken determined and robust action to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. Effective partnerships with local schools have strengthened the leadership of the school.
- Actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have been effective.
- Pupils are well behaved. They are proud of their school and determined to do their best.
- Teachers are skilled in developing resilience and encouraging pupils to think for themselves. They are deeply committed to pupils' well-being and personal development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers more regularly provide the most able pupils with work that is more challenging
 - all pupils understand their targets for improvement, and the most able pupils can use these targets to achieve the higher standards in their work
 - pupils of all abilities have more opportunities to develop their writing skills across different subjects.
- Improve outcomes by:
 - raising achievement in writing at key stage 1, especially for boys
 - ensuring that more of the most able pupils across the school, including those who are disadvantaged, are working at greater depth within their subjects
 - accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by working more closely with the families of pupils who are most frequently absent from school, in order to encourage their improved attendance.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all middle leaders contribute equally to school improvement by rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching in their areas, tracking the progress of groups of pupils and providing governors with detailed information regarding pupils' progress
 - increasing the opportunities for teachers and middle leaders to learn from best practice in the learning alliance.
- Improve the early years by:
 - accelerating the progress of children who are not on track to achieve a good level of development
 - further improving the outdoor area, so that it supports children, especially the boys, to develop their reading and writing skills more effectively
 - ensuring that staff in the early years have opportunities to develop their practice by learning from expertise in the learning alliance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have established a positive, vibrant culture. The school's motto, 'Newland cares', is well ingrained in the life of the school. Parents greatly appreciate the headteacher's open, approachable style.
- The headteacher is successfully building a coherent leadership and a strong team ethos. Staff are highly motivated. They understand and support the school's aims, and feel part of the improvement journey. As one teaching assistant commented, 'I feel part of the school and part of what is happening. We collaborate.'
- Following a re-evaluation of the school's work, leaders embarked on a determined journey to remedy its weaknesses, and sought support from a local partnership of schools. These links have been instrumental in bringing about improvements to leadership and to teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders from the Thomas Estley Learning Alliance have worked intensively to support the leadership and teaching of English, in particular. Staff now have a clear understanding of how to assess pupils' writing work accurately, and achievement in writing is rising.
- Teachers and teaching staff value their professional development, and the opportunities they have to reflect on their practice and support each other to improve. The open, collaborative culture is influencing improvements in teaching.
- Many staff have made the most of opportunities to learn from effective leadership and teaching in the learning alliance. However, not all staff who would benefit from this experience have done so.
- The introduction of the 'Going for gold' scheme has created a real buzz around the school. Pupils are very clear about the expectations for their learning and behaviour, and they enjoy competing for the awards. As one parent explained, 'Going for gold really is at the heart of the school, with all children striving to do their best.'
- Leadership of reading is effective. The appointment of a reading coordinator has led to better understanding of pupils' abilities in reading, closer tracking of progress and much-improved teaching of reading across the school. The strategies to raise achievement in reading are proving successful.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve teaching and address any underperformance. Performance management is used appropriately to reward and develop staff.
- The funding for special educational needs is used to provide a nurture session for pupils, and additional one-to-one support, such as speech and language therapy, for those who need it.
- Leaders have been successful in engaging parents more fully in their child's learning. Parents who attend the weekly coffee mornings explained to inspectors how these sessions have been helpful to them in understanding how to help their child with reading, for example.
- The use of the pupil premium funding has not been wholly successful in raising the

achievement of eligible pupils. Leaders have adapted the provision, and some improvements are evident, for example in these pupils' outcomes in reading. Leaders have planned a further review of this aspect of their work.

- The appointment of a sports apprentice, funded by the physical education and sport premium, has been effective in widening opportunities to take part in sport. This member of staff works alongside teaching staff to improve their skills in teaching physical education. In addition, the school has increased the range of competitions and events that pupils can take part in outside school.
- Pupils enjoy a rich and varied curriculum that includes outdoor learning in the 'forest school', a philosophy-based approach to teaching and topic work that pupils find engaging. Recognising that achievement in mathematics needed to improve, leaders have recently introduced a new scheme for this subject. It is too soon to judge the full impact of this work, but pupils are enjoying the new way of working in mathematics.
- The school's ethos is successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding. The school follows a philosophical approach to teaching, which challenges pupils to think about themselves and reflect both on their learning and on other matters. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to explore contemporary moral issues in their philosophy lessons, and develop a sense of moral responsibility through fund-raising activities. A strong culture of respect and understanding ensures that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Most of the school's middle leaders have improved their skills in monitoring and evaluating the teaching in their areas, and tracking the progress of groups. The 'self-evaluation snapshots' provide governors with a brief overview of performance in departments. However, not all middle leaders are involved in this work and a few do not track achievement closely enough.
- The local authority promotes a system of schools supporting each other to improve. The school's links with partner schools have been effective in bringing about improvements.

Governance of the school

- Governors are ambitious for the school's further success and have worked with leaders to ensure that leaders at all levels, including governors, have an accurate and thorough understanding of pupils' achievement. Having undergone training in this area, they now hold leaders better to account for raising outcomes.
- The governors' action plan sets out a clear timetable for the actions needed to further strengthen this aspect of leadership. The chair of governors keeps a close check on whether actions have been completed.
- Governors monitor the school's work through the different committees and through their individual responsibilities. For example, the governor responsible for safeguarding met with staff to ensure that they fully understood the revisions to safeguarding legislation.
- The headteacher's report and self-evaluation documents provide governors with an accurate overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are less well informed about the work of leaders who are not involved in the monitoring process.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff keep a close eye on any pupils about whom there are concerns, and these are shared in staff briefing sessions where appropriate. Leaders keep very detailed, highly accurate records of the concerns.
- Leaders have been tenacious in following up concerns with the local authority. They work effectively with other agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need.
- Staff work well to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support they need. For example, they support some pupils to develop their emotional literacy, so that they are better able to manage their emotions. Families are included in this work. Multi-agency support is in place for pupils who need it.
- Risk assessments are thorough. The use of land behind the school as the 'forest school' brings additional risks to pupils' health and safety, but these are well managed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They provide pupils with clear explanations, and work effectively with teaching assistants to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. Learning is typically well planned and organised.
- Teachers use questioning well to develop pupils' thinking. They regularly ask the pupils to explain, justify and extend their answers. Pupils develop good reasoning skills.
- The use of 'hot' and 'cold' writing is useful in prompting pupils to reflect on their work and identify targets for improvement. There are occasions, however, when pupils do not understand their targets, and so are not able to improve their work or move on to the next level. Some of the most able pupils were not clear how they would achieve the higher standards in their writing.
- The teaching of reading, including the reading recovery programmes for pupils who do not read at an age-appropriate level, is successful. During guided reading sessions, pupils work at a level that matches their needs and they receive the support and challenge they need.
- Teachers have worked with colleagues from partner schools to ensure that their assessment of pupils' work is accurate, and is more closely aligned to national age-related expectations. The improved assessment system is enabling teachers to spot pupils who are below the expected levels quicker, and ensure that they receive the help they need to catch up.
- Pupils have responded positively to the new scheme in mathematics and are enjoying the increased opportunities to apply their reasoning skills in a range of contexts and tackle challenging word problems. The scheme is not consistently embedded in all classes, however.
- At times, there is insufficient challenge for the most able pupils. For example, in mathematics, in some classes, the most able pupils do not move on quickly enough to complete work that is at greater depth.

- There are too few opportunities to practise writing at length in subjects other than English. In science lessons, pupils learn the appropriate scientific vocabulary and are able to write up their experiments fluently. In other subjects, however, writing tasks are not sufficiently challenging.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- At the heart of the school's approach is a strong emphasis on character and values. The school's philosophy-based approach to teaching is successful in enabling pupils to be confident to ask questions, seek help and work together to find solutions.
- Pupils know they can succeed, because teachers are effective in teaching them how to be resilient and persevere when they find learning challenging. They enjoy working together to find ways to 'get out of the pit' when they are stuck.
- The rich curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well. Pupils across the school benefit from the outdoor learning opportunities provided by the 'forest school'. Opportunities to take part in sporting activities have increased, but lack variety.
- Pupils are very articulate about different forms of bullying, and why they are wrong. As one explained, 'We care about everyone here, no matter what their beliefs or anything else, everyone is a friend.'
- The school's nurture group provides effective support to pupils who are experiencing difficulties, or find classroom learning difficult.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the school's 'Going for gold' scheme, which encourages the highest standards in their work and behaviour. The scheme has brought about many improvements to behaviour.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and well behaved. They are proud of their school, and keen to make a contribution to it. Many of the older pupils in particular carry out leadership roles. For example, before school, some of the Year 4 and Year 5 pupils read together with Year 1 pupils and children from the early years class. Pupils who take part improve their confidence in reading and develop good social skills.
- Conduct around school is exemplary. Pupils move sensibly between classes, behave well at lunchtime and display excellent manners in the dining room. As one pupil explained, 'Everyone is kind here.'
- Attendance at the school has traditionally been high. However, this has dipped in the past year, due to the persistent absence of a few pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment and progress in 2016 across a range of measures indicated underachievement. By the end of key stage 2, pupils made less than average progress in mathematics and reading, while their progress in writing was well below average. At key stage 1, the proportions achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below national levels.
- Current information shows that greater proportions of pupils in both key stages are now meeting age-related expectations. This represents good progress from their starting points, and means that they are better prepared for the next stage of their education. However, some disparity remains in the progress made by different groups. At key stage 1, boys continue to lag behind the girls in writing.
- Improved consistency in the teaching of reading has led to more pupils meeting the expected standard for their age. A greater proportion of the most able pupils is on track to meet the higher standards in this subject.
- Across the school, the most able pupils do not make consistently strong progress, however. At key stage 2, higher proportions are working at greater depth in their different subjects, but this is not the case in all classes.
- Achievement in mathematics is improving. Pupils have responded with enthusiasm to the new schemes of work in this subject, and are making better progress.
- Improvements to teaching, and improving outcomes, mean that pupils are now better prepared for the next stage of their education. In addition, the successful teaching of resilience and character provides pupils with a good platform to take on new challenges.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving, as a result of changes to the way these pupils receive support. Improved teaching for these pupils means that they are better able to keep up with their peers in class.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not reaching the same standards as other pupils nationally, and the differences are not diminishing quickly enough. In some classes, they are performing well, but this is not consistent. Actions to raise their achievement have not been completely successful.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The proportions of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of the early years, though rising, remain below national levels. Not all children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The gaps in the achievements of boys and girls are not closing quickly enough, particularly in writing. Changes to the outdoor provision mean that there are now more opportunities for children to develop their writing skills in a range of contexts. However, the limited range of stimuli outside means that children, especially the boys, do not always have a clear purpose for writing, or a clear model to copy. This slows their progress.

- Safeguarding is effective in the early years. Children settle well and develop positive relationships with each other, and with the adults who care for them. As in the rest of the school, staff place a strong emphasis on children's personal development. The relevant welfare requirements are met.
- The early years is a busy, thriving environment where children behave well. They are enthusiastic learners, keen to share and talk about their learning with adults and visitors. Parents are encouraged to join in their child's learning journey, and many make a positive contribution to their child's learning. Workshops for parents, for example on helping their child to read, have been well attended.
- Support for children is appropriate and helps those who need it most to make good progress. For example, children who have speech and language difficulties receive intensive support in the mornings, and constant encouragement from staff to 'use their words'. They are making steady progress in their learning.
- The use of the pupil premium funding has been effective in targeting support at children who have weak reading skills. Disadvantaged children are not catching up with their peers across all areas of the curriculum, however.
- The teaching of reading has become more effective in the past year, as the reading leader has worked with the early years team to improve this aspect of their work. From their different starting points, children are now making better progress in this aspect of their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	119984
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10023232

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	281
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Ratcliffe
Headteacher	Simon Flint
Telephone number	01455 844369
Website	www.newlands.leics.sch.uk
Email address	admin@newlands.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 January 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum on its website.
- The school is an average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- One third of the school's population is eligible for the pupil premium. This is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than that seen nationally.
- The school has an average proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and representatives from the Thomas Estley Learning Alliance. The lead inspector spoke by telephone with an external consultant working with the school. Inspectors met formally with three groups of pupils and spoke informally with others in lessons and around the school. Inspectors also spoke with parents as they brought their children to school.
- Jointly with school leaders, inspectors observed learning in a range of subjects across the school. They looked at pupils' work in English, mathematics, topic work and science, and visited the 'forest school' on the school grounds.
- A range of documentation was considered, including the school's self-review and planning documents, information about the attainment and progress of current pupils, records of attendance, behaviour and safeguarding, examples of the monitoring of teaching, information regarding performance management and minutes of the meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 responses to Parent View and the 27 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Deirdre Duignan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christopher Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Aileen King	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Oliver	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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