

Inspection of a good school: Newberries Primary School

Newberries Avenue, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 7EL

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 November 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time at Newberries Primary School. They say that they are safe, and adults ensure that they are well cared for. Pupils make use of charts in each classroom to let their teachers know how they are feeling each day. They value the friendly atmosphere and the positive relationships they share together. One pupil described the school as, 'a happy community where pupils like to learn'.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They generally behave well in class. However, there are a few occasions when they fidget and become restless. This is because teachers do not insist that pupils listen carefully to what they are being told.

Pupils say that they enjoy learning. Their teachers make lessons enjoyable and interesting. However, some curriculum plans do not include the important information that pupils need to know. Pupils are not always able to remember what they have previously learned.

Pupils love to read at Newberries. They speak excitedly about their favourite authors and books. Despite this, some younger pupils do not develop their reading skills quickly enough. There is a new approach for teaching early reading but not all adults understand how to teach this well.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have a clear vision for the curriculum. The school's values, 'play, learn, achieve and grow together', are at the core of their curriculum plans. Leaders have a strong focus on promoting pupils' social and emotional development through the subjects that are taught. Curriculum plans broadly outline what pupils are expected to learn. Staff say that they receive the help and support needed to adapt and teach subjects as leaders intend.

In subjects where leaders have designed a well-considered curriculum, teachers are clear about the key information that pupils need to learn and deepen their understanding. Teachers carefully check that pupils have remembered important knowledge. For example, in geography, pupils recalled the key features of maps so that they could then plan their own. This is not the same in enough subjects. Some subject plans are not complete. Teachers do not have all the knowledge to help pupils remember and get better over time. They do not provide pupils with clear explanations. At times, teachers do not have strong subject knowledge. Pupils are not able to recall the knowledge or understand what they need to complete more demanding work.

Leaders have recently adopted a new approach to teaching phonics. In Reception, children make a good start and quickly recognise how to use their knowledge of sounds to blend and read simple words. Not all adults have received appropriate training in the new approach to teaching phonics. When adults hear pupils read, they do not consistently check that pupils say sounds correctly. Pupils who struggle do not have the right books to help them practise the sounds that they know so they can get better at reading.

Leaders provide appropriate support to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well. Teaching assistants offer sensitive and careful care, especially for pupils with complex needs. Leaders advise teachers how to adapt their plans so pupils with SEND can learn as well as possible. Pupils with SEND access the same learning as their classmates.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn about important values. Pupils learn about compassion, tolerance and respect through their 'value assemblies', and they demonstrate these values through their work and play. Pupils say that bullying is rare, but they willingly share any concerns through 'what I want the teacher to know' boxes placed in every classroom. The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed some of leaders' plans for pupils. Leaders are planning to reintroduce extra-curricular activities and clubs.

Governors know the school well. They challenge leaders to check how the school is performing. However, there are a significant minority of parents who consider communication is weak. They do not understand why leaders have made certain decisions. Governors are working with leaders to improve the information they provide to parents.

In discussion with the headteachers, the inspector agreed that all subject plans should be completed and that teachers should understand how to implement leaders' plans successfully. It was also agreed that all adults should be trained in the new approaches to teaching phonics and that communications should keep parents well informed. These aspects may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that keeping pupils safe is an important priority for all staff. Adults are well trained in safeguarding. They are alert to the risks pupils may face. Leaders use external agencies effectively to offer support for families and prevent concerns from escalating. They check that all information about the suitable recruitment of staff is in place.

Leaders teach pupils about the risks when using the internet. This information is shared with parents so that they understand how to support their children when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some curriculum plans do not include all the detailed and important knowledge needed to help teachers build pupils' understanding over time. Pupils are not remembering the important content they are taught in the long term. Leaders should ensure that they have designed the key knowledge that is in the right order to help pupils know and remember more in all subjects.
- Not all teachers have secure subject knowledge. This means that the curriculum is not implemented well, and pupils do not get better across the whole curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the training and support so that they understand how to teach each subject effectively.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching early reading. Some adults do not understand how to ensure that pupils use their phonics accurately. Some pupils who find reading difficult do not have books that help them to practise their sounds. This means that younger pupils who struggle to read are not making quick enough progress. Leaders need to ensure that staff are well trained in their new approach to early reading and that books are matched to the phonics that pupils know.
- A significant minority of parents consider that leaders do not communicate well when they have concerns. This means that the reasons for leaders' decisions are not clear to all parents. Leaders and governors should ensure that there are strong systems of communication so that more parents have greater confidence in the work of the school.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2011.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	117303
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10200011
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Ginsberg
Headteachers	Ness Peters and Anna Traxon
Website	www.newberries.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2020.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider based at Warren Dell Primary School.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector had discussions with the co-headteachers, the deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, and the assistant headteacher.
- The inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector had a telephone conversation with the school's improvement partner, who represented the local authority.

- For this inspection, the inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, history and mathematics. There were meetings with subject leaders, lesson visits, and pupils' work was scrutinised. The inspector was joined by one of the headteachers, the assistant headteacher or the subject leader while carrying out these activities. The inspector also spoke to pupils about their learning and with class teachers.
- The inspector reviewed the school's single central record and safeguarding information. Other school documents were scrutinised, such as records of the minutes of governors' meetings, the self-evaluation document and the school's development plan.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at playtimes.
- The inspector considered 66 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, along with 50 free-text comments. The inspector also met parents as they brought their children to the school. The inspector took account of 23 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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