

# Inspection of a good school: The Newton Community Primary School

Caxton End, Eltisley, St Neots, Cambridgeshire PE19 6TL

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Inspection date:

23 November 2021

## Outcome

The Newton Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

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 coming to school. They say that it is a friendly place where everyone gets on together. Pupils mix well, regardless of their age or class. This helps to build a strong sense of community. Many parents consider that their child is happy at school. As one parent commented, 'My child runs through the school gate smiling, and comes out of school still smiling.'

Staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils behave well. They reflect the school values, 'Unique, Ambition, Compassionate and Imagination', through their work and play. Pupils enjoy respectful relationships with adults. This ensures that they feel safe and secure at school.

Pupils love to read. Pupils enjoy the stories that adults read to them. However, leaders are using a new approach to teach younger pupils to read. Not all staff understand how to help pupils to become fluent readers.

Pupils speak about what they learn and do at school. They participate in ambitious projects, such as building and racing their own cars. However, pupils do not learn well across the whole curriculum. There have been a number of different leaders who have led the school. There has not been a consistent oversight of how well pupils achieve across different subjects.

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

The school has been without a substantive headteacher for two years. The local authority has brokered support for leadership. These leaders are helping the staff to develop their

curriculum plans. Current leaders acknowledge that there is more to do to improve the planning of subjects. Those responsible for governance receive information from leaders, including the local authority, about the curriculum. However, they do not fully know whether pupils are achieving well across the whole curriculum.

Leaders have carefully considered the content of the curriculum. They have designed the curriculum for teaching to mixed-aged classes. Where subject plans are stronger, they identify the key knowledge pupils need to learn and remember. This means that pupils can recall important information. For example, pupils remembered different kings from the Anglo-Saxon times. They discussed how their local area was settled and communities established during this period.

In subjects such as mathematics, teachers make checks of pupils' knowledge by asking questions. They use this information to address any misunderstandings pupils may have. This ensures that pupils keep up with what they need to know. However, leaders do not know if teachers do this in every subject. Not all subject leaders have a consistent way of checking how well teachers implement curriculum plans.

Leaders have adopted a new approach to teach younger pupils to read. Not all staff have received training in these methods. Some staff do not understand how to help pupils when they become stuck with reading. Staff rely on a limited range of strategies to support these pupils. This means that pupils are not becoming fluent readers early enough.

The special educational needs coordinator is developing her knowledge of the role. She is helping teachers to adapt their plans to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This means that these pupils access the curriculum alongside their classmates. This is not the case in every subject, especially the areas where the curriculum has not been fully designed.

Leaders plan trips and visits that enrich pupils' day-to-day experiences. Pupils have opportunities to access a range of clubs through the after-school care provision. Play performances and choir singing at national events provide different ways for pupils to develop their talents and interests.

The governors have a range of knowledge and skills to carry out the work they have been asked to do. However, there are a significant minority of parents who are concerned about the lack of substantive leadership at the school. They consider that communication has been poor and do not understand how leaders make their decisions. Staff feel that they have been well supported through this period of change. They have created a strong team spirit but still have concerns about how they will be supported in the future.

In discussion with the headteacher, inspectors agreed that the development of the whole curriculum and ensuring that all staff are trained on the approaches for teaching early reading may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. They told inspectors about how they learn to be safe in different situations. Pupils know about the risks when they are online. They readily share any concerns with adults. They have confidence in the staff who look after their welfare.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. This ensures that they are vigilant and alert to any signs of abuse. The checks for those staff employed at the school are thorough and well maintained.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The approaches to teaching pupils how to read are new. Not all staff have been trained in these approaches. This means that some adults do not understand how to help pupils who struggle to read. Leaders should ensure that all adults know how to give the help pupils need so that pupils become more fluent in their reading.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to the leadership of the school, including governors. Senior leaders have not had oversight of the curriculum. Not all subjects have been developed so that they identify the key knowledge that pupils must learn. Leaders, including governors, need to ensure that all the curriculum is planned and that subject leaders have the knowledge and skills they need to lead their areas of responsibility well.
- A significant minority of parents express concerns about the school. They do not understand the decisions leaders have taken to improve the school. New leaders and governors should ensure that there is stronger communication with parents so that they understand how leaders are supporting 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 November 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110717
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200013
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	63
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Interim executive board
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Louise Evans
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Singletery (Interim headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.newtonschool.co.uk">www.newtonschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There is an interim executive board of governors, which was appointed in January 2020.
- A new interim headteacher was appointed in November 2021.
- The school manages the after-school care club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the interim headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector held discussions with the interim executive board of governors, including the chair. The lead inspector also met a representative of the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors scrutinised school documentation, including safeguarding information, school curriculum plans and school development plans.
- Inspectors considered 21 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 17 free-text responses. There were 9 responses from the survey for staff, which were considered by the inspector. An inspector also met with parents as they arrived at school in the morning with their children. There were no responses from the pupils' online survey.

### **Inspection team**

Steve Mellors, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kristian Hewitt

Her Majesty's Inspector

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