

Inspection of a good school: North Newton Community Primary School

Church Road, North Newton, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 0BG

Inspection date: 18 January 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love going to North Newton School. Their parents agree and would recommend the school to others. Pupils are happy. Caring staff, who know individual children well, keep them safe.

Pupils work and play together well. They say there is no bullying because everyone gets on. They are confident that there will be someone to help them if they need it.

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils do well. They become confident readers and mathematicians. They enjoy studying other subjects, including learning French. Over the last couple of years, there have been lots of changes at the school. Leaders have strengthened the teaching of early reading. Pupils get off to a good start learning their sounds and developing a love of books.

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

Pupils get off to a good start. Clear routines and high expectations support them to become independent. All staff are trained in how to teach phonics. Pupils learn and remember new sounds well. They read books that are well matched to the sounds that they know. They read with confidence and interest. Staff are very clear about which pupils may need more help and make sure they have extra support to keep up. Staff through the school ensure that pupils enjoy a wide range of different books, different authors and genres. Pupils talk with animation about their 'reading challenge'. This encourages them to read more and wider, critically reviewing and writing about what they have read.

The school's mathematics curriculum supports all staff to focus on the learning and application of core skills. There is a strong focus on pupils developing key vocabulary and explaining their thinking from the very start. Pupils show enthusiasm for mathematics. They are confident. Older pupils refer to previous learning to solve new problems. Recent changes have further strengthened pupils' fluency to support their mathematical

reasoning. As one pupil said, 'They teach us until it gets stuck in our heads.' Leaders recognised that the curriculum in other subjects needed strengthening. There is now a clear curriculum structure in place. This covers what needs to be taught in each year group. However, it is early days. In a few subjects, leaders do not have a clear enough understanding of how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum.

Pupils show interest in the activities and subjects they are learning and remember most of the important knowledge they need. However, currently, there is insufficient attention given to what pupils already know. This means there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge and their learning.

Staff know all pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff make sure that additional support or equipment is available to help them. Pupils with SEND are fully involved in school life.

Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly. Pupils are polite and welcoming. Pupils say that they all have 'great friends' and that 'people look after each other'. They enjoy the additional activities that the school provides such as Bikeability and activities week. They are looking forward to a residential trip. They are currently working with the new headteacher to highlight the six themes of the school: safe, prepared, together, achieve, aspire and believe. The school teaches knowledge of the wider world, fundamental British values, different faiths and cultures in personal development lessons, religious studies and assemblies.

Governors have played an important part in ensuring the school remains good through a period of considerable change. They have worked with the local authority to develop their own skills and ensure the school has support. They have correctly identified with leaders that monitoring of the new curriculum is now a priority to ensure that pupils are deepening their knowledge and skills. Staff say they feel well supported and are proud to be part of the North Newton team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders give a high priority to keeping pupils safe. Staff are very clear about their responsibilities. They are able to identify when pupils are at risk of harm. There are good relationships with outside agencies to gain support for families. Consequently, pupils receive the help they need in times of crisis.

All the school's work is underpinned by a strong sense of caring for each other. Pupils say they feel safe, and their parents agree. Parents praise the 'warmth' of staff whom they say are 'nurturing' and 'approachable'.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is new. While pupils can remember activities and topics, they sometimes find it difficult to recall key knowledge and themes. Leaders should continue to refine the curriculum and identify the key concepts that are most important for North Newton pupils to learn and understand.
- In a few subjects, leaders do not always have the knowledge to ensure pupils are learning consistently well. Leaders should ensure that there is regular monitoring of the curriculum to ensure that pupils are effectively deepening their knowledge.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2014.

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.

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	123689
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10268710
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	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kate Bown
Headteacher	Deborah Leach
Website	www.northnewtonprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There are three mixed-age classes in the school.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2022. Before this, the school was led for a year by an interim headteacher and a senior teacher.
- At the time of the inspection, there was a teacher vacancy in one of the classes and the class was taught by a new supply teacher.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with leaders, governors and school staff. They met with the school's improvement partner who represented the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and modern foreign languages. Inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with staff, spoke with

some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors listened to pupils read to an adult.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working in the school. Inspectors considered how well leaders act on concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff about safeguarding practices.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and spoke to parents at the start and end of the day. Inspectors also took into consideration the responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

Stephen McShane, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Hilary Goddard

Ofsted Inspector

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