



Inspection report

# Newton Ferrers CE Primary School

**Better  
education  
and care**

Unique Reference Number 113413  
LEA Devon  
Inspection number 273541  
Inspection dates 7 and 8 February 2005  
Reporting inspector Mrs S Kara HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of School	Primary	School address	Dillons
School category	Voluntary Controlled		The Green
	<i>Diocese of Exeter</i>		Newton Ferrers
Age range of pupils	5 to 11 years		Plymouth
			Devon
			PL8 1AS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01752 872 630
Number on roll	66	Fax number	01752 873 907
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Reverend T Deacon
Date of previous inspection	May 2003	Headteacher	Mrs C Sealey

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Age group	Published	Reference no.
5 to 11 years	11 March 2003	273541

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## Introduction

When Newton Ferrers CE Primary School was inspected in May 2003 it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (HMI) subsequently visited the school on four occasions to monitor its progress, and reinspected the school in February 2005.

### Description of the school

Newton Ferrers CE Primary School is a small, isolated, village school on the south coast of Devon. The number on roll is 66 and has declined steadily in recent years, a pattern reflected more widely in many Devon villages. The school has a strong link with the church and plays an important role in the life of the community. All of the pupils have English as their mother tongue. The number of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and the proportion entitled to free school meals are below average. While 13 of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, representing a proportion that is above the national average, none has a Statement of Special Educational Need.

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## Overall effectiveness of the school

In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

Newton Ferrers is a much-improved school where the pupils achieve well. The leadership and management are very good; the headteacher is an excellent leader and manager. The school has been transformed into a vibrant centre for learning where all of the staff and pupils live up to the school's vision of 'reach for the stars'. Standards have risen rapidly and are well above national averages. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and is permeated by a creative approach to the curriculum, founded on enjoyment in learning. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and often excellent; they are proud ambassadors for their school. The challenge of mixed-age classes has been turned to advantage, with the pupils welcoming the variety of adult support.

### Improvement since the last inspection

The inspection of May 2003 required the school to address issues concerned with the leadership and management, the quality of teaching and learning, the strategies for literacy and numeracy, relationships with parents, the curriculum and assessment. There has been good progress in relation to all of them.

### Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to improve is very good. The headteacher is strongly focused on raising standards and improving the pupils' approach to their work. She has been well supported by the staff, the governors and the local education authority (LEA). The thorough procedures for monitoring the school's performance and tracking the pupils' progress are good. The staff and governors thoroughly evaluate all of their actions. There are some concerns about the school's budget, partly because of the falling roll, but mostly because of the high cost of running and maintaining the unique building. The LEA is working closely with the school to ensure that it is appropriately funded.

### What the school should do to improve further

The school's development plan recognises the areas where improvement is needed. However the key priorities are to:

- continue to improve assessment and marking;
- continue to develop the range of styles by which the pupils can demonstrate their learning.

## Achievement and standards

Standards have risen rapidly and are now well above national averages, after several years of below-average results. The pupils enter the school with average and above attainment. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and, by the time they start Key Stage 1, they are reaching standards that are well beyond those expected for five-year-olds. The standards in the recent national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above the national average, with the results in mathematics in the top five per cent of schools. At Key Stage 2, the results in national tests were also high, with scores in science being better than those in English and mathematics. Value-added measures also showed that the pupils made good progress during Key Stage 2.

In lessons the pupils achieved and exceeded expectations for their age because the teaching was well planned and of high quality. The Foundation Stage pupils, for instance, correctly spelled short words based on letter sounds while the Year 2 pupils wrote interesting sentences that were punctuated with capital letters and full stops. In Year 6 the pupils wrote in complex sentences that were appropriate to the audience, converted kilograms into grams and knew the angles of triangles and rectangles. At the time of the 2003 inspection the provision and standards in information and communication technology were below average; both have risen and standards are at least average.

## Personal development

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and often excellent. The system of rewards and sanctions is clear, though the latter are rarely used. The pupils have a very positive attitude to work and have a love of learning. They work very hard from the minute they come into the school and often have to be persuaded to go out to play. Outstanding displays celebrate their attainment and also record their work-in-progress in a particular project or investigation. The pupils are confident working independently, or in groups. The very effective strategy of 'response partners', whereby pairs of pupils share their ideas and questions, is a feature of almost every lesson and has raised the pupils' confidence and skill in speaking and listening. The quality of relationships in the school is exceptional. Both of the large mixed-age classes are taught by more than one teacher and this, combined with the school's open-door policy to families and the community, means the pupils are used to relating to a range of staff and adults.

Attendance has improved from 93.7 per cent in May 2003 to 96.1 per cent, a figure that is well above the national average. This reflects the pupils increased interest in learning as well as the school's efforts to promote good attendance.

The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and citizenship development is very good. The local Rector is chair of the governing body and is a frequent contributor to the work of the school. The pupils follow a regular pattern of visits to worship in the church, which is also used as a resource for relevant lessons. The assembly was a

heartening occasion and act of worship that also contributed to the pupils' personal development.

The playground has been creatively marked to facilitate games and there is a good variety of outdoor play equipment, which the pupils thoroughly enjoy using. There is a wide range of after-school clubs, run by the teachers and several members of the local community, which contribute to the pupils' understanding of traditional village life and the wider multicultural society. The clubs include different physical activities, as well as arts and crafts and, unusually, a ukulele group.

The pupils are given responsibilities that they fulfil enthusiastically within the classrooms and around the school. They relish the opportunity to talk to visitors and are very proud of their work and their school.

The school values the pupils as unique members of the community and takes great care of their personal well-being; for example, in offering freshly cooked school lunches using local produce, and in the provision for physical education that has been acknowledged by a national award.

## Quality of provision

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since May 2003 and is very good overall. In one lesson the teaching was outstanding, in seven it was very good and in one it was good. Teaching assistants and other adult helpers are very effectively deployed in lessons, in leading small groups and working with individual pupils, and they have made a significant contribution to the pupils' recent rapid progress. The best lessons were characterised by the use of a wide range of teaching styles, a fast pace, and the skilful use of discussion and probing questions that were matched to the pupils' age and learning needs. The teachers frequently checked the pupils' understanding to correct misconceptions and to enforce the main learning points. Imaginative teaching methods developed the pupils' knowledge and understanding and made them think about new ideas, consider the feelings of others and debate points of view. A strength of the teaching was enabling the pupils to evaluate their own learning. In the outstanding Year 5/6 lesson, the pupils assessed their own progress as writers, and in a Key Stage 1 dance lesson the pupils reached a very high standard by evaluating their own and each other's work; their analysis was mature beyond their years.

Planning is a strength of the school. A well-considered four-year curriculum map ensures that subjects are covered in depth and without repetition. The teachers' daily lesson plans match the work well to three broad bands of ability within each class. Good use is made of themed weeks, workshops, visits and visitors. A recent trip to the Eden Project provided the focus for the literacy lessons across the school and during the inspection there were additional lessons on design and technology, based on the theme of bread and sandwich-making. Links between subjects brought coherence to the programme of work; for instance learning in science about the reversibility and irreversibility of processes was applied to the investigation into bread-making. The pupils tasted bread traditionally made in different countries and considered the local availability of ingredients.

After successfully expanding their repertoire of teaching styles, the staff have begun to explore the different ways that pupils learn, and lessons are beginning to include strategies that deliberately draw on sight, sound and touch. Although marking and assessment are satisfactory, the teachers recognise these are areas that could be improved. The retrieval of data on individual pupils is not as easy as the school would like and its use in informing planning at all levels is in the early stages of development.

The new school building was completed in 2003; its innovative design is exploited well to create areas of activity outside of the classrooms. The school has become an exhilarating centre for learning for the pupils and for the wider community. The dedicated computer room, for example, is well used throughout the school day, and after, by the pupils and members of the local community.

## Leadership and management

The school benefits from leadership and the management that are very good. The headteacher has led the transformation of the school with enthusiasm and determination. She is an excellent role model for the school's vision and aims. The staff and pupils have risen to the challenges she has set and they are now more demanding of themselves. All of the teachers have roles as co-ordinators and play a full part in setting the future direction of their subjects.

The governors are regular visitors to the school and fulfil their role well. They recently took part in a day of strategic planning with the staff, helping to determine well-judged priorities. Some of the governors work at the school and have a regular dialogue with the staff and pupils about the areas to which they are linked. The governors have been instrumental in ensuring that the parents' confidence has been restored in the school. The association of parents, teachers and friends helps to enrich the curriculum through a range of support and very successful fund-raising activities; for instance, they have provided interactive whiteboards in the classrooms and a new reading scheme.

The LEA has made a very effective contribution to the school's improvement across a wide range of its work. It has been especially helpful in securing the secondment of an advanced skills teacher and in enabling the headteacher to have a reduced teaching commitment and spend more time on strategic matters.

## Appendix – Information about the inspection

Newton Ferrers CE Primary School was inspected in May 2003 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act; the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in October 2003, and in January, June and November 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of May 2003.

In February one HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Nine lessons and one assembly were inspected. The pupils' conduct was observed around the school and on the playground at break and lunchtimes, and samples of their work were inspected. Discussions were held with the headteacher, all of the teachers, and the governor linked to health and safety. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections, including extensive interviews with the chair of the governing body and the LEA's representatives.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues for improvement in the inspection report of May 2003 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

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