



# Neston Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 126186  
**LEA** Wiltshire  
**Inspection number** 282069  
**Inspection dates** 7 March 2006 to 8 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Christopher Schenk HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Church Rise
<b>School category</b>	Community		Neston
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 9SX
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01225 810478
<b>Number on roll</b>	162	<b>Fax number</b>	01225 810478
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs R Riley
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 June 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs L Davies

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 7 March 2006 - 8 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 282069
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

## **Description of the school**

Neston Primary School serves the villages of Neston and Gastard, and around one third of its pupils come from further afield by parental choice. Pupils are from a variety of backgrounds, though there are few from minority ethnic groups and even fewer who speak English as an additional language. The proportion that are eligible for free school meals and the proportion that have been identified as having special educational needs are both about half the national average.

The school sets out to be innovative and creative. Through partnership with local industry, it was the first primary school in the United Kingdom to link up with the astronauts on the International Space Station in 2003 and the school's Moonbase Project was featured in the educational press last term.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a very good school with some outstanding features. The school's own self-evaluation is accurate, honest and perceptive and judges its overall effectiveness to be good. The school gives very good value for money, using its resources well to help all its pupils to make good progress in their learning. They achieve above average standards overall but standards in English are not as high as in mathematics and science. The pupils' personal development is good. The teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. In this community of learners, pupils, teachers and other staff learn with enthusiasm and independence. The curriculum is outstanding. Pupils are given a particularly good range of exciting and interesting things to do, with careful planning to make sure that all pupils are included and given work at the right level of challenge. Care, guidance and support are also outstanding because the school combines very good pastoral care with well focused academic guidance, enabling pupils to grow in self-confidence as they make progress in their learning. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good.

The school has a very good capacity to improve even further because the headteacher has created a shared vision, a common purpose and a willingness among all staff to learn from each other. Leadership and management at all levels are good, though the headteacher and the chair of governors have identified the need to have a more sharply focused school development plan.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- sharpen the focus of the school development plan and continue to implement it
- raise the good achievements in English further so that they come up to the same standard as those in mathematics and science.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Nearly all pupils start school with the skills and knowledge expected of the average 4 year old. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and creative development. They continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1: by the end of Year 2 attainments in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently above average over the last five years and in mathematics they have risen over the last three years with an increasing proportion reaching the higher level. In 2005, the Year 6 pupils made good progress during Key Stage 2 and achieved above average results in the national tests. However, English results were not as good as those in mathematics and science. English standards are now above average but remain lower than in the other two core subjects. Nevertheless, the pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed through debate, drama and discussion and effectively used to promote their learning. For example, in mathematics the pupils' ability to articulate their thought processes and

share their strategies has a beneficial effect on their mental skills and on their understanding.

These good results have not made the school complacent. The thorough systems in place for tracking progress identify individuals and groups who are not making as much progress as the rest. When this comes to light, effective action is taken to give extra support so that challenging targets can be met.

The results in English, mathematics and science are not at the expense of other subjects. The pupils are confident and skilled in information and communication technology (ICT) and use it well to enhance their learning. Examples of good work were seen in all the subjects of the National Curriculum, and pupils in Key Stage 2 are making good progress in French. Music plays an important part in the life of the school and pupils achieve high standards.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are encouraged to be reflective and helped to grow in self-confidence and self-esteem. They are given a strong sense of belonging to a community of learners and they collaborate with, respect and care for each other well. The school is aware that its pupils have little experience of cultures other than their own. Through subjects like religious education, geography, English, art and music, and through planned themes in assemblies, pupils are made aware of other cultures and are encouraged to be tolerant and respectful.

Behaviour and attendance are good and the pupils' attitudes to learning are outstandingly positive. They are enthusiastic and enjoy the interesting things they are given to learn about. They know how to be healthy and to stay safe. The active School Council is currently organising fund-raising to purchase an electric wheelchair for one of the pupils. Older pupils take on a range of responsibilities and all pupils make a positive contribution to the community. Because they often work collaboratively, and because they have good skills in speaking and listening, literacy, numeracy and ICT, pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding, for example in the work on the story of Pinocchio in Years 1 and 2. Teachers plan carefully for the different ages and levels of attainment within their class. They make sure that pupils cover an appropriate programme of study for their year group. They also make sure that all pupils are given work at the right level of challenge, so that they do not find the work too easy or too hard.

Lessons are taught in a lively way that engages the pupils' interest and enables them all to participate. Teachers have good subject knowledge and share their different skills very effectively. The headteacher's high level of mathematical expertise is put to good use when she gives extension lessons to the best mathematicians, enabling them to reach exceptionally high standards. There are no similar arrangements in English, with the result that talented pupils do not achieve quite as well as in mathematics.

The pupils are resilient and resourceful learners. They have good strategies for coping when they get stuck and are developing habits of perseverance and independence in their learning which will stand them in good stead for many years to come.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. Pupils are given a wide range of exciting and interesting things to do and their experiences are enhanced by visits, visitors and innovative projects like the Moonbase. Underlying this stimulating programme of activities is carefully structured planning, so that the pupils' enthusiasm and interest is channelled into helping them to make steady progress in their key skills and to understand themselves as learners. Teachers make very good use of the links between subjects and encourage their pupils to make connections and to see patterns.

The Moonbase Project, funded by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, enables pupils to develop their collaborative and problem solving skills, using control technology and remote sensing, in an imaginative way. The base is entirely powered by renewable sources of energy, raising pupils' awareness of environmental issues. While innovative projects like this give pupils further challenge, the projects are carefully managed to make sure that the challenges do not generate undue pressure. As one Year 6 pupil said: 'This is a good school: everyone's friendly, new things come in and you get to be involved in new projects, but it's really comfortable and you feel safe.'

Because the school carefully identifies gifted and talented pupils and those with learning difficulties, understanding that some pupils may be in both categories, the curriculum is tailored to individual needs, giving extra challenge in those areas where a pupil has special gifts, and support in areas where a pupil has particular difficulties. Gifted pupils take part in a local eisteddfod and an arts festival and have many opportunities to go on courses run by the local authority. The school provides a good range of sporting, musical and other extra-curricular activities, in which pupils participate with enthusiasm.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The care, guidance and support are outstanding because the school combines a high level of pastoral care with very good systems for academic guidance. There are good procedures for safeguarding pupils and the members of staff with lead responsibility

regularly attend training. Pupils who are vulnerable or at risk for any reason are identified early and given the care and support that they need.

There are clear, simple and effective systems that are used consistently throughout the school for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. They quickly identify pupils who are falling behind, as well as those who are showing particular talents. The co-ordinator for special educational needs carries out further diagnostic assessment and involves outside agencies when necessary. Because the needs have been so carefully identified, the school is nearly always able to provide the support that is required at an early stage. Working with a number of other agencies, the school is providing good support for the integration of a physically handicapped pupil.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The quiet leadership of the headteacher has created a very effective team of people who share values, have a common purpose and learn from each other. The senior teacher plays a key role in supporting the headteacher and building the team. The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator and the co-ordinator for special educational needs also play valued parts in the management of the school. Subject co-ordinators monitor planning and outcomes in their subjects, frequently give help and support to their colleagues informally and sometimes lead staff meetings. The school now plans to develop the role of subject co-ordinators further.

The induction of teachers new to the school is particularly good. Their planning is monitored and their teaching is observed. They know very clearly what is expected of them and they are given any support that they need in order to teach to the high standard that is required in the school. At the same time, they are quickly given opportunities to share their particular expertise with the rest of the staff.

The school's self-evaluation is thorough, honest and accurate. The views of parents and pupils are regularly canvassed and taken into account when making decisions. The response from parents to a questionnaire sent out at the time of the inspection was overwhelmingly positive. Links with parents are very good and the parents' association supports the school well.

The governors play a very full part in the life of the school and make an outstanding contribution to its success. They bring a range of skills and experience to the school, which they share, for example in supporting the innovative projects in which the school has been involved. Individual governors are linked with subjects and liaise with co-ordinators. Recently a governor came into the school to follow an evidence trail to validate parts of the school's self-evaluation and this led to a useful report being written. The chair of governors and the headteacher are working closely together to streamline the school development plan, sharpen its focus and increase its usefulness.

Leaders and managers at all levels, governors, senior managers and subject co-ordinators, have worked together well to bring about improvements in the school, demonstrating a very good capacity to improve still further.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I was impressed by your enthusiasm for learning and by the way that you are able to get on by yourselves. I am grateful to you for showing me the Moonbase, for letting me attend School and Class Councils, and for inviting me to see the dress rehearsal of your play about Pinocchio. I think you are getting on well. I particularly like your confidence in using computers, the way you listen to each other and say what you think clearly and sensibly, and your enjoyment of music.

I think your teachers are very good at planning exciting and interesting work that helps you all to make good progress in your learning, giving you extra help for the things that you find difficult and extra challenge in the things that you are good at. I think they look after you well and tell you how you are getting on so that you know what you need to do next in order to get better.

Your teachers are also good learners and they keep on thinking of ways to make the school even better, and the governors help them very well. I have asked your teachers to carry on with their plans for further improvement and I have also asked them to make the good results in English even better so that they are as good as the results in mathematics and science. You will help them to be able to do this by continuing to work hard with enjoyment and enthusiasm.