



Newfield Park Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103815
Local Authority Dudley
Inspection number 286773
Inspection dates 24–25 January 2007
Reporting inspector Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Whittingham Road
School category	Community		Halesowen
Age range of pupils	4–11		B63 3TP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 818640
Number on roll (school)	337	Fax number	01384 818641
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Lesely White
		Headteacher	Angela Turner
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 24–25 January 2007	Inspection number 286773
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Newfield Park is a larger than average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage although there are small groups of pupils from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. Fifteen pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. The headteacher was appointed in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Newfield Park is a friendly and caring school that provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their above average attendance rate. Parents are very supportive and are pleased about the way the school looks after their children. One parental comment captures the views of many, 'I have found the teachers to be completely supportive of myself and my children.'

Pupils' achievement, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, is satisfactory. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English also make satisfactory progress because of well focused support. Children start school with skills and abilities which are slightly below those expected for their age and reach broadly average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Satisfactory provision in the Foundation Stage enables most children to reach expected levels by the time they start in Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 although more capable pupils do not do as well as they might in writing and mathematics. Satisfactory progress continues in Years 3 to 6 although pupils do not do as well in mathematics and science as they do in English.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support pupils. Relationships are good and pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough and result in pupils sometimes being given work that is not challenging enough. The satisfactory curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of out of school activities and provision for music is strong. However, pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as good as it could be because there are too few planned opportunities for them to be involved in problem solving activities. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, with the school placing strong emphasis on pupils' well-being. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and know they can talk to an adult if they have any worries or concerns. The personal development of pupils is good. They are well behaved and work and play well together. They have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities in school and within the local community.

Leadership and management are satisfactory with the headteacher having a clear vision of how the school can improve. All involved in the work of the school share this vision and a strong team ethos is being developed. However, staff do not use the newly improved procedures for checking pupils' progress sufficiently rigorously to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as each other and at the highest level of which they are capable. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Standards in English have risen and at the end of Year 6 are now above the national average. The role of the senior leadership team has been refined and improved so it now plays a more active role in evaluating the school's performance. Links with others, including the local authority, have been strengthened and this has impacted positively on pupils' learning and staff professional development. The school's recent track record shows the capacity to make any necessary improvements is secure.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their mathematical skills through problem solving activities.
- Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve so that more challenging work is set for them.
- Improve the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures so that the progress and achievement of all pupils are checked more rigorously.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage, children enjoy their activities and the progress they make prepares them satisfactorily for when they enter Year 1. Pupils make good progress in their reading and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2 but fewer than expected achieve the higher level in writing and mathematics. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in English and achieve above average standards by the time they leave. This is because of the high profile placed on this subject in recent years, with pupils having more opportunities to practise their basic skills by writing at length in English and other subjects. However, pupils do not achieve quite as well in mathematics because they do not have enough opportunity to improve their basic skills through problem solving activities. Pupils have satisfactory skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and use them effectively to enhance their work in other subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are confident, outgoing and proud of their school. They are keen to learn and show enjoyment in their activities. Pupils happily take on responsibilities such as being Playground Pals who support younger pupils in the playground at playtimes and lunchtimes. Members of the school council take great pride in their work and feel they make a good contribution to school life by making suggestions for improvements on behalf of others. Pupils show a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and exercising regularly. They also show they know how to keep themselves safe, for example by playing safely together in the playground. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are kind and considerate to others and collaborate well when working or playing. They make good contributions to the community by taking part in a wide range of local events, such as the Dudley Performing Arts Festival. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers use questioning skilfully to develop pupils' learning. This was evident in a mathematics lesson for Year 2 pupils where they made good progress in identifying and ordering negative numbers because of the teacher's expertise. Subject knowledge is secure so teachers explain ideas and demonstrate new techniques confidently. At times, however, teachers do not have sufficient expectation of what pupils can do. As a result, there is a lack of challenge in some activities especially for more able pupils. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and so they are not always clear about how to improve their work. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to assist pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. They also ensure that those pupils at an early stage of learning English are fully supported and included in all lessons. Good relationships between pupils, support staff and teachers and the friendly, caring atmosphere motivate pupils to behave well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage the emphasis is on providing children with practical and creative activities that capture and stimulate their interest. In Years 1 to 6 there is a good balance between the development of pupils' academic and creative skills. The provision for art and music is good and has been recognised by the award of Arts Mark Gold from the Arts Council. Curriculum planning does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to undertake problem solving activities to refine and practice their basic skills in mathematics. The school has already identified the need to offer pupils more opportunities to develop their investigative skills in science. The school works well with others, such as professional sports coaches, to extend the curriculum. There is a wide range of clubs and visits, including a residential stay, that effectively develop pupils' social skills. There is a well planned programme for pupils' personal development, including drugs education and how to keep healthy and safe. Links with the community, such as the local secondary school, help to widen pupils' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral support is very strong with all staff working hard to make sure pupils feel safe and secure. This is reflected in the comment of one pupil who said 'We feel very safe and happy at our school.' Child protection arrangements are good, with all staff aware of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. There are thorough risk assessments in and around the school and for offsite educational visits. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and pupils at an early stage of learning English are given extra support to help them make the same progress as other pupils. This is enriched by the close links with outside agencies that provide specialist help for

individual pupils. The school gives pupils satisfactory academic guidance. Teachers collect a variety of assessment information about their pupils but this is not used rigorously enough to identify the gaps in their learning and to show them how they might improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a good understanding of the needs of the school and is providing strong leadership in taking the school forward. The recently restructured senior leadership team is more actively involved in monitoring the school's performance and so has a better view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Training for subject leaders has given them a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities in developing their subjects. The school's self-evaluation is mainly accurate, for example it has correctly identified the need to develop pupils' mathematical and science investigation skills. Performance management is linked well to school improvement and staff professional development. There are satisfactory procedures in place to track the progress of pupils but these have not always been used to good effect in the past. For example, the school did not realise that some pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities did not achieve as well as they could have last year. This has been remedied by developing the individual education plans to be more focused on setting small, manageable steps for improvement. Also, teaching assistants are now more involved in providing targeted support for these pupils to meet their individual needs. The school is exploring ways of improving its assessment procedures further so that any underachievement can be identified at an early stage and appropriate strategies for improvement quickly put into place. The governing body is supportive and willing to ask questions about the proposals of senior management in its drive to improve the school.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you so much for the warm way in which you welcomed us when we came to your school. We really enjoyed talking with some of you and finding out about all the things you do. We would like to tell you what we found your school does well and how it could improve further.

Newfield Park Primary School provides you with a satisfactory education and is a friendly place in which to work and play. You make satisfactory progress and by the time you leave school at the end of Year 6 you achieve average standards in mathematics and science. Standards in English are above average and you are good readers. Your behaviour is good and you look after others well. Your school takes good care of you. All adults are proud of you and told us you are kind and considerate to others. Your parents are very pleased about the way the school looks after you. You told us how safe and secure you feel in school and how you can talk to a member of staff if you have any worries. You also told us your lessons are interesting and that you especially enjoy doing art and music. You have lots of clubs to join and can go on a variety of interesting educational visits to develop your learning and your social skills.

There are three things we think your school needs to do now to help you learn even better. These are:

- Give you more opportunities to improve your skills in solving problems in mathematics.
- Make sure you are given work that makes all of you think hard, especially those who sometimes find their activities too easy.
- Improve the way the school checks how well you are doing in your work so that all of you do as well as you possibly can.

Thank you for being so friendly and we hope you keep on enjoying your work.