

Newnham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121848
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	292239
Inspection date	1 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Chris Kessell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Esther Searle
Headteacher	M W Collins
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2003
School address	School Hill Newnham Daventry NN11 3HG
Telephone number	01327 705053
Fax number	01327 705053

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Newnham Primary is a small rural school. All pupils are of White British origin. Approximately half of the pupils come from the village of Newnham. The remaining pupils travel from other local villages or the nearby town of Daventry. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Newnham provides a satisfactory quality of education, with good features that include good provision for pupils' personal development and well-being. The school is a happy and harmonious community. In the words of one pupil, 'Everybody knows everybody else and the teachers are really nice and reassuring.' Relationships are strong and the pupils are self-confident. Parents are pleased with the school: 'A warm friendly environment' and 'an approachable friendly staff' are typical comments. A significant minority of parents choose to send their children to the school because they appreciate its caring culture and 'smallness'. Both pupils and parents are particularly pleased at the availability of the headteacher at the beginning and end of the school day.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. For most pupils this represents satisfactory achievement. Effective leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and good teaching enable the youngest learners in school to make a good start to their education. Teaching is however, satisfactory overall. Pupils enjoy their learning and classes are managed effectively. Too often, though, teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve are not high enough. Teachers' planning does not always take into account the different learning needs of the pupils.

The school's good curriculum is enriched well by additional activities and after school clubs. These are enjoyed and appreciated by the pupils. The pastoral welfare and care of pupils is good. New pupils settle in well and in the words of one pupil, they 'quickly become one of us'. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Although the care element is a strong feature of the school, the academic guidance provided for pupils is inconsistent. Pupils know very little about their learning targets. Teachers' marking is often supportive but does not always provide sufficient information on how to improve and move onto the next stage of learning. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress and setting challenging targets are too informal and often lack rigour. The school acknowledges this as an issue and has purchased a computer system that will allow pupils' performance to be monitored more regularly against realistic but challenging targets.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has been successful in developing a school where pupils' personal qualities are developed well and pupils feel safe and well looked after. Some aspects of management are inconsistent, particularly the monitoring of performance and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The headteacher acknowledges that he needs to manage his time differently to ensure that these are covered more rigorously. The school has improved satisfactorily since its last inspection. Improvements in information and communication technology (ICT) resources and in curriculum provision illustrate this, along with significant developments in the school's accommodation. The school is well placed to carry on improving.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Set pupils more challenging targets and rigorously monitor their progress through regular assessments.

- Raise teachers' expectations in planning work that recognises pupils' individual needs and making their marking more effective.
- Implement a timetable for assessment, monitoring and target-setting so that performance is monitored more thoroughly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school has small year groups which can cause some year-on-year variation in standards. However, trends over time show that pupils leave the school in Year 6 with above average standards in English, mathematics and science. For most pupils, this represents satisfactory achievement in relation to their starting points. In 2006, pupils did significantly better in mathematics than in English. Fewer pupils reached the higher Level 5 in English because pupils did much better in reading than writing. The school has identified this as an issue and has implemented a number of strategies to improve pupils' writing. It is too early to judge the impact of these initiatives.

Children join the school with levels of skills and knowledge that are similar or slightly above those expected for their age group. They make good progress during their year in Reception and generally begin Year 1 at higher levels than normally expected. These standards are maintained in Years 1 and 2, so that pupils achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities helps them to make steady progress so that they are able to achieve the same as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' good personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are effective in preparing the pupils well for the next stage of their education and future lives. They listen maturely to others' points of view and show good teamwork. Pupils are friendly, confident and get on well with each other. Behaviour is good and the pupils show a good understanding of the needs of others. A parent identified 'the good care older pupils show the younger ones'. Pupils say that bullying is rare although they recognise that 'friendships occasionally become on and off'. They feel safe and secure and are prepared to show initiative and take on responsibility, for example, working independently in small groups or confidently discussing their work activities. Pupils take health and safety matters very seriously. They are pleased that there is 'lots of fruit and water' available for them and can accurately explain the importance of this provision. It 'helps us concentrate'. Pupils take responsibility for refereeing football matches in the designated 'football area' to ensure safety and fairness. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community, for example, singing at village events and taking part in the annual village 'litter pick'. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy all that it has to offer. This is reflected in the levels of attendance which are above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils' satisfactory achievement is a result of satisfactory teaching and learning. Pupils are interested in their work and enjoy their lessons. Classroom relationships are strong, with pupils listening to their teachers and each other carefully. Questions are answered enthusiastically

and maturely. In English and mathematics, teachers group pupils so that they are given work that is appropriate to their individual needs. However, there are inconsistencies in this approach and groupings are not always precise enough. This often affects higher attaining pupils who are not always challenged effectively. Teachers' expectations are not always sufficiently high, which at times prevents pupils from making good progress. Pupils find marking supportive and appreciate being told when they have completed something well. However, marking does not provide pupils with sufficient guidance on how to improve or move to the next stages of learning. This is particularly the case for the older pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school curriculum is effectively organised across a two-year programme to ensure that mixed-age classes are catered for. Foundation Stage provision is strong. Many visits to places of interest, visiting speakers and out-of-school activities enrich the curriculum well and encourage the pupils' good personal development. For example, Years 1 and 2 pupils undertook a woodland visit and successfully followed this up in their English work. The pupils recognise that they are given many opportunities to exercise regularly through the school's physical education curriculum that includes swimming and sporting clubs such as football and netball. Pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

It is evident when visiting the school that it has a very caring culture. This results in pupils feeling safe, well looked after and secure. Good relationships between adults and pupils mean that pupils are not afraid to ask for support. One pupil said, 'I'm not safe, I'm very safe.' The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well organised and the school has a good reputation for supporting their needs and other vulnerable pupils. Academic guidance is less effective and is not contributing to improving pupils' achievement. The school does not set clear academic targets for its pupils so that their progress can be regularly assessed. Pupils do not always understand their learning targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is admired and respected by the pupils and parents particularly for his good pastoral care. All staff have taught in the school for a long time and know the pupils well. Subject leadership is satisfactory. Parents are very supportive of the school community and most appreciate the regular opportunities that they have to meet staff. The headteacher has a fairly accurate view of the school's effectiveness although self-evaluation can be too generous. Monitoring is too informal and lacks rigour. Data for the school is analysed but not enough is done with the information available to identify shortcomings in provision.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has changed significantly over the few years and is relatively inexperienced. Governors are currently developing their roles and becoming more involved in strategic planning and self-evaluation.

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Annex A

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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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	2
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	2

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?	2
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.

Annex A

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

2 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newnham Primary School, Newnham, NN11 3HG

I am writing to thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed chatting to you about the school, watching you work in your classes and meeting with Year 6 and members of the school council. Here are some of the things I found out.

The school is providing you with a satisfactory education. It has some good features. You enjoy being at school and the staff take good care of you. This makes you feel safe. The youngest children get off to a good start in Reception. By the time you leave Newham, most of you reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. For most of you this represents satisfactory progress. At present, the staff do not track your progress as well as they could do, so I have asked the headteacher, teachers and governors to improve this and also prepare a timetable so that they know when to assess your work.

You enjoy your lessons and behave sensibly. There are times when some of you could be given harder work and the teachers' marking could be of more help to you to improve your work. I have asked the staff to look at this. Your headteacher is good at making the school a pleasant place to be in. You and your parents appreciate that he is around at the beginning and end of the school day.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Kessell Lead inspector