

Nettlebed Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123037
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	292564
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2007
Reporting inspector	George Rayner

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	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Timothy Lewis
Headteacher	Mr Bob Worsell
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002
School address	High Street Nettlebed Henley-on-Thames RG9 5DA
Telephone number	01491 641328
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This village school is much smaller than most primary schools. Although there is some variation in pupils' home circumstances, they are overall more advantaged than usual. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none are currently at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average overall, but is above average in Year 3. Since the last inspection, the school has moved into completely new buildings, adjacent to the old school.

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 good school. The school is fully committed to providing a secure, happy community for pupils to learn and grow up in. It makes good use of its small size to provide a true family community. It utilises its village setting to ensure that links with the local community and pupils' families provide continuity in their care and feeling of belonging. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils show their enjoyment of school by their very good attendance and the very good behaviour of the great majority. They make their own, significant contribution to the harmony of the school community by being considerate of each other and by offering a helping hand to any pupils who need this. Pupils know how to be healthy. They say that they love the superb school grounds and make full use of the opportunities that these offer for strenuous exercise, exciting exploration or peaceful reflection.

The school acknowledges that, since the last inspection, much of its attention was at first taken up in planning for the move to the new accommodation and then settling in. This meant that, for a period, there was not enough attention paid to raising standards. During the last two years, however, there has been a significant change and the school has become more effective in ensuring that the possibilities provided by the excellent facilities are fully exploited for the pupils' personal development and academic achievement. The headteacher is providing a clear direction in this, which is shared well by his colleagues. During the past two years, considerable improvements have been made to the quality of teaching and learning, curriculum and procedures for tracking and supporting pupils' progress. The impact has begun to be seen on pupils' standards, most obviously in the recent much improved Year 6 results in national assessments.

Following the improvements, good teaching and learning, supported by a good curriculum, are leading to good achievement for pupils. Children's standards on entering the Foundation Stage vary from year to year. Most children meet the standards expected for their age although, each year, several are below expectation in their language and communication skills and in using numbers. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage by quickly learning how to find things out, both independently and working together. By the time they enter Year 1, they are secure in all of the main learning areas. Progress continues to be good in Years 1 to 6. The current pupils approaching the end of Year 6 have reached above average standards in English, mathematics and science. In almost all respects, the school succeeds in ensuring that there is no great variation in the achievement of different groups of pupils. The only exception is that the most able pupils only achieve satisfactorily in their writing, because they do not always get work which challenges them. This contrasts with their good progress in other subjects.

The school has an accurate view of what it needs to do to improve further. This and its recent track record show a good capacity to improve. The school has accurately identified that, as key figures in this, subject leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring teaching and learning in their areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of the most able pupils in writing.
- Increase the involvement of subject leaders in monitoring teaching and learning in their areas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Following good progress in the Foundation Stage, children's personal and social skills are above average and those who started with weaker language and number skills have caught up well. Pupils achieve well throughout the school to reach above average standards by Year 6. Most can write in interesting ways for a variety of purposes. The progress of the most able pupils is satisfactory in writing. While they become proficient writers, they do not always make the fullest use of their ability by for example, producing highly imaginative writing. Pupils develop a good range of mathematical skills and can use these well to solve problems. In science, they can carry out their own investigations, although they do not always record the results well. Because their individual needs are efficiently identified and effectively provided for, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make as good progress as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils understand why it is important to live healthily. They enthusiastically eat the fruit and vegetables that the school provides daily. Pupils live active lives. The school's excellent outside play areas, including a walled garden and artificial all-weather pitch are highly popular places for strenuous play. So, also, is the climbing apparatus, but pupils say, 'We know that you have to take turns on that, to make sure that the smaller children have their fair share.' The school council devised the rules for ensuring this. In a few areas, pupils are a little reluctant to take up the opportunities that the school provides. This has resulted for example in some after-school clubs being cancelled. In most areas of school life however, pupils join in well. This is shown by their contribution to the success of the school choir. Pupils diligently carry out roles such as school councillors and 'buddies', caring for younger ones. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy finding out about peoples' lives in other places and know that these are often less privileged than their own. They willingly take part in charity activities to raise funds for those who are not as lucky as themselves. Good progress in their main subjects and learning to work effectively, whether independently or in teams, prepare pupils well for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In most lessons, teachers set clear expectations for pupils' effort and behaviour, but in a relaxed way. The good relationships thus generated promote pupils' personal development, by encouraging them to be willing workers, and their progress by ensuring a good pace of learning. Teachers plan interesting activities that succeed well in engaging pupils. This was seen in a lesson for Reception and Year 1 pupils, in which mathematics problems were presented as challenging and exciting practical tasks, which the children greatly enjoyed. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that, although all classes have pupils from two different year groups, learning is pitched at the right level for all ages and abilities. Although, in almost all respects, teachers make good use of assessment to ensure that their lessons meet pupils' needs, they do not always provide challenging enough writing tasks for the most able. Teachers use marking well to encourage pupils and to suggest how they could improve their work, but do not always

challenge the best writers to be even more imaginative. In effective partnership with teaching assistants, they use group work well for this purpose.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Foundation Stage provision is well geared to the way in which young children learn by playing and finding things out for themselves. In addition to the full range of required subjects, all pupils study French and Spanish while at the school. Physical education benefits from expert coaching and swimming tuition, ensures that all pupils learn to swim. The new accommodation makes a valuable contribution by allowing more small-group teaching. This has a particular impact on, for example, the provision for pupils with learning difficulties. It has also helped the school to develop very good information and communication technology (ICT) facilities. Good planning ensures effective use of these to give pupils opportunities to use computers to enhance their work across the subjects. The school is extending links between subjects, for example, so that pupils can practise writing in a wide range of different situations. This work is still at an early stage, though. The number and range of after school clubs is satisfactory. However, there is a good programme of visits. These are very popular and succeed well in bringing classroom learning to life and encouraging pupils to be involved in physical, character forming and cultural activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. All pupils' personal needs are very well known to the adults. All procedures for child protection are diligently and effectively carried out. As a result, pupils feel happy and secure. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is carefully organised and ensures that all receive the help that they need. When necessary, the school works effectively with specialist agencies to provide additional high quality support. Over the last year the school has significantly improved the frequency and quality of its procedures to track pupils' progress. These are already starting to ensure quick and effective support for any pupils in danger of underachieving.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Although subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in monitoring their areas, they are working together well as a team to find out about and share good practice. Effective leadership is also securing good teamwork in the Foundation Stage and special needs departments. The results of this are being seen, for example, in the enhanced involvement and skills of teaching assistants. They are developing their expertise to lead in specialist areas, such as strategies to improve reading skills. Governors are well informed, support the school well and are prepared to challenge it when necessary. The school is taking good account of guidance from the local authority in developing its self-evaluation, so that this is now providing an accurate picture of where it needs to improve further. It is using self-evaluation effectively to bring about improvements in teaching, assessment and the curriculum, which are starting to raise standards.

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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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?	2
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?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

24 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nettlebed Community School, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 5DA

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you and I am grateful for the help you gave by talking to me and showing me your work. I was able to see that yours is a good school.

You make good progress in all of your main subjects. By the time you are in Year 6, your standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. You write well and are able to use your skills to solve mathematical problems and to find things out in science. The most able pupils are clever enough to do even better at writing. I have asked the teachers to make sure that they always give you hard enough work, so that you always do as well as you possibly can.

One reason that you do well in your work is that you help your teachers a lot. You come to school regularly, usually behave very well and work hard. Some of you told me that one of the best things about the school is the outside areas. I could see this by how well you all use things like the artificial playing area, the walled garden and the climbing equipment.

The adults care for you very well and I could see that this makes you feel safe and that you are very happy. You are very lucky to have such a wonderful school building. The headteacher and staff know that they have worked so hard getting this that they have not always had enough time left to help you to do even better in your work. They are now working just as hard at this, though. I have asked the headteacher to make sure that the teachers who run the subjects do more checking of how well they are being taught. This will help the school to become even better.

Well done to you all and very best wishes for the future.

George Rayner

Lead inspector