



Nathaniel Newton Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125513
Local Authority Warwickshire
Inspection number 293284
Inspection dates 5–6 March 2007
Reporting inspector Colin Lee

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Victoria Road
School category	Community		Hartshill
Age range of pupils	4–7		Nuneaton CV10 0LS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	024 76392236
Number on roll (school)	187	Fax number	024 76397073
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Jason Arnold
		Headteacher	Pamela Griffin
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2002		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 5–6 March 2007	Inspection number 293284
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized infant school serves an area where levels of social deprivation are above average. Children's attainment on entry is well below expected levels, most notably in their communication skills and their personal, social and emotional development. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There is a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school had an extended period of disruption to school leadership before the current headteacher's appointment.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education and has several good features. It is a rapidly improving school and pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory. Achievement is improving for all pupils, but most noticeably for the more able pupils and those with learning difficulties; both these groups are making good progress. Average-attaining pupils are not quite making such good progress. Standards, which have been below national averages in recent years, are rising. By the time pupils leave the school they are now close to average in reading and mathematics, but slightly below average in writing.

The improvement in achievement owes much to good leadership. In the short time that the headteacher has led the school, she has brought about important changes in the management structure. This has ensured that the senior leaders are having a good impact on pupils' achievement. The procedures for checking on pupils' progress, although only recently introduced, are being used well to ensure that all pupils make consistent progress across the school. Children make a good start to their education because provision, especially the teaching, in the Foundation Stage, is good. By the time they start Year 1, pupils' standards are slightly below expected levels in most areas of learning. They are well below expectations in literacy skills, which is the area of greatest weakness when they start school. Across the school as a whole, teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are strengths in teachers' planning of work but there are also weaknesses in aspects such as the pace of lessons and the quality of learning in different stages of lessons.

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. A high priority is placed on children's personal, social and emotional development as soon as children start in the Foundation Stage. This continues throughout the school, resulting in friendly, happy pupils who enjoy school and work and play well together. The curriculum is good and provides a wide range of stimulating learning experiences that are matched well to the varied learning needs and interests of the pupils. The good care, guidance and support given to pupils contribute well to their personal and academic progress.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and shows a good awareness of strengths and areas for development. The recently implemented, effective strategy for tracking pupils' progress and the improved provision for pupils with learning difficulties, are two of several improvements in a relatively short period of time. This indicates a good capacity for further improvement in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of average-ability pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching through ensuring a brisk pace to lessons, reviewing the time allocation to different phases of lessons and giving pupils clear, frequent guidance on what they will learn through particular activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

By the end of the Foundation Stage, standards, although below expected levels, reflect children's good achievement over the year because they make very good progress in their personal development and good progress in all other areas of learning.

Recent results in national assessments at the end of Year 2 have been below national averages and generally lower in reading and writing than in mathematics. This has been due to low literacy standards when pupils start school and some under-achievement. The proportion with learning difficulties is still high in the current Year 2 but recent assessments show that achievement is improving. Pupils of average ability are not progressing as quickly as those who are below or above average but standards are now satisfactory overall, being at nationally expected levels in reading and mathematics but slightly lower in writing. There is no under-achievement. Any pupils in danger of not making expected progress are quickly identified and helped to get back to the level they should be in relation to their past performance.

The school has had a consistently very low proportion of children who have skill levels above those expected when they enter school. Currently, the proportion of pupils attaining above-average standards by the end of Year 2 is higher than could have been expected, given pupils' starting points. This confirms good progress by the more able pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Staff value pupils highly and this contributes strongly to developing pupils' self-esteem and their positive attitudes to learning. The school places strong emphasis on helping the children to learn how to be good friends and to care for one another. As a result, their behaviour is good because they are keen to please and show that they value and respect each other. Attendance is satisfactory. The school does all it can to encourage good attendance and there has been a steady improvement in recent years. The school council gives pupils an effective voice in helping to improve the school. The pupils say, 'We are here to make the school better'. They say they feel safe at school and that if any incident of bullying occurs, the headteacher 'sorts it out straight away'. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of exercise and diet in healthy lifestyles. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show good respect for the views, values and beliefs of others and the school's participation in a multi-cultural week and a county inter-cultural festival contributes well to this. Pupils make a sound contribution to the community through, for example, singing at local care homes and their involvement in setting classroom rules. They are suitably prepared for life at junior school, and by the time they transfer have satisfactory basic skills to prepare them for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers work cooperatively and productively in year groups, planning together and checking regularly on pupils' progress. The thoroughness of planning produces a good match between the tasks set for pupils and their abilities. The tracking of progress ensures that pupils who need any additional help get it promptly. Teachers throughout the school have good relationships with pupils and manage behaviour well so pupils usually enjoy their lessons and take pride in their learning. The quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory rather than good because there is too much inconsistency in the way lessons are organised. Lessons generally need to proceed at a brisker pace and insufficient thought is given to the amount of time spent on different sections of a lesson. This results in pupils sometimes spending too long sitting on the carpet at the start of lessons and not having enough time to complete written or other practical tasks. This is particularly affecting the progress of the pupils of average ability. While teachers and teaching assistants always remind pupils of their targets in reading lessons, this rarely happens in other lessons. Pupils are therefore not given enough indication of the purpose of their work in terms of, for example, skills that are to be improved by doing an activity. This is a little de-motivating for some pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned for both indoor and outdoor activities and provides a valuable grounding for children's later work. The bright, secure and stimulating learning environment enables the children to become confident and independent learners.

The curriculum for Years 1 and 2 is adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and the more able, for whom extra sessions are provided. Useful links are being established between English and other subjects that are helping to raise achievement in literacy. Similarly, information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning in mathematics but the ICT links with other subjects are not so well developed. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the good range of clubs that is provided for them at lunchtime and after school. These activities help to build up their confidence and self-esteem. The school makes good use of trips out in the locality and visitors to enrich and extend pupils' knowledge. For example, the Florence Nightingale workshop seen during the inspection provided a wealth of learning experiences in drama, history, art, reading and writing for pupils in Year 2.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school is a very caring and safe place where children feel happy and secure. Health and safety matters are taken seriously and thorough arrangements for child protection are in place. Parents' and carers' very positive views of the school are reflected in one parent's comment that 'staff are all friendly, approachable and helpful and I have every confidence that my child is safe and well cared for at school.'

Pupils are given appropriate guidance on how to improve their work. As teachers implement the new systems for assessment and tracking the pupils' progress, they are getting a more detailed overview of how well pupils are doing and are starting to identify any areas for concern more accurately. Pupils like the individual and group targets that are set in literacy and numeracy because they 'help us to do better work'. There is very good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities that is helping them achieve well. The school works successfully with outside agencies to make sure that pupils get all the help they need.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher, together with other senior staff, represent a strong team knowing exactly what needs to be done to improve pupils' achievement and the quality of education. The range of measures being taken to bring about these improvements is very new but is having immediate effect on pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. This is seen in the way that teachers have been able to eliminate under-achievement and ensure that pupils' progress is consistent across all year groups. There are well-planned strategies to improve achievement further and the focus is currently on the large proportion of pupils falling into the 'just below average' category. The headteacher ensures that all staff and governors are fully involved in the processes of self-evaluation and school improvement planning. This development of collective responsibility has had an immediate effect on the effectiveness of subject leadership. The subject leaders are now given time to carry out a range of activities that enable them to get a clear view of achievement, standards and quality of provision. They identify suitable areas for development, although these are not yet linked strongly enough to the priorities in the school improvement and development plan.

The governing body fulfils its duties well. It is led extremely well by a new chairperson, who brings drive and energy to the role. He has a very good understanding of how the school can improve and also of how the governing body can improve itself. This has led to governors establishing an effective programme of checking on progress against targets set in the school improvement plan.

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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?	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?	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	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	3
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	3
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?	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.

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

Thank you for making us welcome in your school and for talking with us so willingly. We thoroughly enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing you at work. We think your school is doing a satisfactory job in helping you to learn. The school does some things well but could improve in places. The things we particularly appreciated are:

- You are all making progress in your work and the teachers and teaching assistants are helping those of you who find some of the work quite hard to make good progress.
- Those of you who find learning easy are given plenty of interesting things to do that help you make good progress as well.
- You behave well and this makes your school a friendly, pleasant place where everyone helps one another.
- Your teachers work well together at planning interesting things for you to do in your lessons and this is helping you to improve.
- You understand about healthy eating, the importance of exercise and about what are safe things to do at school and home.
- All the adults look after you and make sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The school is led well by the headteacher and deputy headteacher and all the adults, including the governors, work together to improve the school.
- We think your school could get better if:
 - some of you could be helped to make even more progress in your work
 - teachers get you working more quickly in your lessons and keep reminding you of what it is they want you to improve when you do your work.

We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Nathaniel Newton Infant School a good school to be at.