



Newker Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131233
Local Authority Durham
Inspection number 293726
Inspection date 1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Graeme Clarke

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Waldrige Road
School category	Community		Chester le Street, County Durham
Age range of pupils	3–11		DH2 3AA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 3887099
Number on roll (school)	519	Fax number	0191 3891001
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Neil Fawcett
		Headteacher	Mrs Joan Gammon
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection date 1 February 2007	Inspection number 293726
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size primary school which serves a locality which is broadly average in socio-economic character. Most pupils are from a White British background. A well below average number take free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Pupils' development when they enter the Nursery is broadly in line with that expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Newker Primary School provides its pupils with a good education. An overwhelming majority of parents is delighted with their children's progress, that they enjoy school and feel safe. Although a very small number feel more could be done to take parents' opinions into account, much evidence shows the school actively seeks, considers and acts on their views. One parent sums up their views well, 'The staff are dedicated, friendly and most of all caring, and do everything possible to make the school a wonderful learning environment'.

The headteacher promotes a clear philosophy that every child matters in this school. She ensures that, through an excellent curriculum and high levels of care and support, pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. This especially fosters outstanding equality of opportunity for all. The school works exceptionally well to foster pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development from when they join the Nursery. Pupils' enthusiasm, cheerfulness and confidence, in and out of lessons, show that they really enjoy school. They are very aware of the need to keep healthy and take part energetically in physical activities and make sensible choices from the lunchtime menu. They behave impeccably by following routines well and acting politely to one another and adults. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their community and through their school council they actively promote friendship, safe conduct and anti-bullying tactics. They are very well prepared for moving on to the next stage in their school career.

Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. A strength is in teachers' careful planning so that activities closely suit pupils' abilities and holds their interest. Lessons are challenging and pupils work hard. Good quality provision in the Foundation Stage ensures children make good progress in all areas of learning, particularly in their language and personal development. They develop confidence and by the end of the Reception class many exceed the learning goals expected of them. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. The results of teacher assessment at the end of Year 2 show standards have been well above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics for several years. Most pupils sustain their good progress through Key Stage 2 and leave school with above average standards. The 2006 results of national tests for Year 6 pupils were much higher than the national average, especially in English and science. Results in mathematics were average and although achievement is satisfactory some pupils could make better progress.

Leadership and management are good. The governors, headteacher and leadership team work diligently to ensure the school derives good value from its resources. All are involved in evaluating the school's strengths and areas for development. As a result, improvement since the last inspection is good. The school has a clear sense of direction and the capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. From an average starting point children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and do better in all areas of learning than expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. They develop independence and confidence and this stands them in good stead for the next stage of their education.

Pupils also make good progress in Key Stage 1. Results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 show standards are much higher in reading and writing than those seen in most schools and have been for several years. In 2006, reading results, although still well above average, slipped back from 2005. Results in mathematics remained average. The school's careful monitoring of performance spotted this and effective action, including improved teaching of phonics, has raised standards.

Most pupils in Key Stage 2 sustain their good progress and overall standards are well above average. The results of the 2006 national tests for Year 6 pupils in English and science were much higher than usually seen with a high proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age. In mathematics, test results although average were lower than in previous years. Overall, mathematics achievement was satisfactory although not as many pupils reached or exceeded the level expected for their age as they did in English and science. New approaches to teaching mathematics are improving skills with many in Year 6 now making better progress. The school exceeded its challenging target in 2006 for English, but did not reach the target for mathematics.

More able and talented pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make good and often better progress because of effective support. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. When responding to the world around them pupils show sensitivity and concern. For example, pupils showed real appreciation of the environment in their very successful work with a local biologist developing the school grounds.

Pupils greatly enjoy school and respond positively to the many exciting and fun opportunities available. One pupil was moved to comment 'I don't want to go home.' This markedly supports their personal development, and is reflected in good attendance, excellent relationships and considerate behaviour evident throughout the school. Pupils feel safe. Their awareness of healthy living is outstanding and has been rewarded with a Healthy School's award. Pupils make sensible choices at lunchtime and enthusiastically take part in a wide range of physical activities. Pupils' exceptional contribution to school life plays a major role in developing their perception of good citizenship. This is extended through their work with many charities, and links with the local authority and their member of parliament. The school council plays a very

influential role in school life. Its present members are rightly proud of their 'playground buddies' and first-aid schemes. The combination of well developed language, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, and many opportunities to develop the skills of working with others ensures pupils are exceptionally well-prepared for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall with some outstanding teaching seen. Good quality teaching in the Foundation Stage helps children make good progress, especially in their language and social development. Good progress elsewhere results from good and sometimes outstanding teaching and the positive climate for learning which extends throughout the school. In the very best lessons teaching is brisk and activities are managed with verve. On other occasions teaching is slower and more methodical but nonetheless effective. Teachers know the pupils very well and provide activities that effectively suit everyone's abilities closely. Much is achieved because activities challenge pupils and hold their attention. Pupils pay rapt attention, contribute willingly and work hard. Practical activities that make learning fun are used very effectively to capture pupils' interests and develop their understanding. Pupils are taught to reflect on what they have learned and are helped to know what they need to do to improve. Support staff are a great asset in helping pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities so that they achieve successfully.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum. The clear focus on equality for all contributes immensely to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Children in the Foundation Stage learn well through very good first-hand experiences, both in and out of doors, which stands them in good stead for their future. Throughout the rest of the school a well-designed programme of National Curriculum subjects and personal, social and health education, evident in all school life, enables pupils to become good learners. The school has several awards for its effective provision for ICT and these skills are promoted well across the curriculum. Educational outings, such as to a residential outdoor centre, and visitors' contributions add to the richness of experience. Many pupils participate in a very wide range of after-school activities, including sport, music, dance, drama, Spanish and ICT, which further enrich their experience.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The atmosphere in the school, which is one of welcome, care and purpose, stems from the way staff give good guidance and support and take good care of all the pupils.

Procedures safeguard children with routines for child protection and health and safety being thorough and fully in place.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive effective support. Outstanding links with outside agencies and parents make a very positive contribution to care these pupils receive. Very good procedures ensure children settle quickly into school and that there is a smooth transition to secondary school education. The school diligently collects information about pupils' attainments and progress twice yearly. Information is used well to set pupils often challenging targets and to monitor their overall progress. However, the school does not review progress as often as it might to identify those pupils who are starting to fall behind and require a boost to accelerate their progress during the year.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management throughout the school play a crucial part in promoting the positive climate for learning that all pupils thrive in and enjoy. The headteacher and leadership team diligently monitor all aspects of school life. Their effectiveness can be seen in good progress since the last inspection. Response to concerns is prompt. By giving more attention to teaching phonics and reading comprehension the slight dip in standards in Year 2 in 2006 has been resolved. Governance is good. Governors are also involved in checking what is happening in school. As a result of this collaboration the school's self-evaluation is accurate, although somewhat modest in gauging the extent of pupils' personal development and the quality of the curriculum. All work together as an effective team ensuring the school is well placed to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

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

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

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?	1
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	1
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

Newker Primary School

Waldrige Road

Chester le Street

County Durham

DH2 3AA

5 February 2007

Dear Pupils

I really enjoyed visiting your school last week. Thank you for helping me when I came into your classrooms and your assembly to see you at work. You were very polite and really helpful. I enjoyed talking to you and I was especially impressed with those of you I met on the school council. It was great to see how much you enjoy coming to school and how much you contribute to school life. I know the staff are all very proud of you.

Your school has a very friendly atmosphere. You are exceptionally well behaved and have very good manners. I am pleased you feel safe and happy because all the adults in the school look after you very well. Many of your lessons are good and some really stand out. You obviously enjoy all the practical activities and I was very impressed with your hard work and the way you like to take part. I also like the way your teachers talk with you about what you have learned and how you can do better next time. You are doing well with writing and especially science. Some pupils did not do so well in mathematics last year. I think you can improve in mathematics and your teachers have already begun to help you to do even better.

Some of you will leave at the end of this year to join a new school. You have many, many opportunities to learn about life at Newker Primary School that will stand you in good stead for the future. I hope that you all do really well.

With best wishes to everyone

Graeme Clarke

(Lead inspector)