



Newton Road Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 132780
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 294022
Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Alwyne Jolly

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Newton Road
School category	Community		Rushden
Age range of pupils	4–11		NN10 0HH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01933 353761
Number on roll (school)	201	Fax number	01933 359456
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	C Goodwin
		Headteacher	Andrew Martin Sears
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2005		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007	Inspection number 294022
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is below the level expected for the children's age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is twice the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with good features which has sustained its recent improvement through a major period of change and significant staff turnover. One parent's comments summed up the views of many, 'I am very pleased with how far the school has progressed and I have faith in the staff that this will continue'.

Good personal development and well-being are at the heart of the school's ethos. Pupils are encouraged effectively to develop healthy lifestyles epitomised by the 'healthy tuck shop' which they run. Management of this real life project by older pupils contributes to their satisfactory preparation for future economic well-being.

The quality of pupils' care, guidance and support is satisfactory; 'Staff will always take on board concerns and take time to listen and advise' observed one parent. Pupils enjoy coming to school, as reflected in their improved attendance. Behaviour is improved and is now satisfactory. Although a few pupils have challenging behaviour, they are well managed by all staff. The provision for the large number of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities has been improved by the employment of teaching assistants and specialists with particular strengths to address their particular needs. Effective measures are taken to ensure safe practices are adopted.

The provision and teaching in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Standards are below average at the end of all key stages but this represents satisfactory achievement, considering the pupils' starting points, and there are clear signs of improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is now satisfactory. The pupils' lack of phonic and word-building skills is a marked weakness which has had an impact on low standards in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Boys' attainment is much lower than that of girls at all ages which has a significant negative impact on overall levels of achievement.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school recognises that more needs to be done to engage the interest of boys and has already introduced a few initiatives in response to that. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved. Good curriculum links ensure pupils contribute well to the community.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has been very influential in the school's improvement and has provided good leadership. He has had effective support from his deputy and governors. However, subject leaders are mostly new to their positions and have not as yet had a significant influence on provision or the quality of teaching. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Focus more clearly on the needs and interests of boys when planning work in order to raise their standards.
- Raise standards in reading by improving pupils' knowledge of sounds and word building.

- Develop the role and influence of subject coordinators so they can raise standards in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are below average throughout the school but this represents satisfactory achievement bearing in mind their earlier attainment. Children in the Reception class make good progress in some aspects of mathematical development and in creative development. However, their ability to link sounds and letters and to use language verbally remains weak. The school recognises the need to improve the teaching of phonic skills.

Despite a slight dip in standards in the Year 2 national assessments in 2006, standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection report, particularly for writing. There is a clear pattern of improvement since 2003 as also shown by current standards. However attainment has remained significantly below average overall, specifically in reading and mathematics for the last five years. While standards in writing are improving, standards in reading are too low. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in mathematics matched the national average but too few pupils attained the higher Level 5 in the 2006 Key Stage 2 tests. Boys do less well than girls when compared nationally, curriculum and teaching strategies have been insufficiently focused so far on their specific needs. In the 2006 national tests, girls' performance was higher than the national average for girls but boys lagged behind other boys nationally. The school met its targets for Key Stage 2 in 2006 and has set appropriately ambitious targets to raise standards in English for 2007.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good overall. The weakest aspect is their limited understanding of the multicultural society of which they are a part. Their social development is enhanced by the many opportunities to work together, in pairs as 'talking partners' or in groups. Most pupils respect each other, work harmoniously together and have good attitudes to learning so that they enjoy school. The personal development of some pupils is enhanced by their involvement in the school council which gives them the opportunity to influence some decisions and plans on school life, such as improving playground facilities.

Behaviour has improved and is now satisfactory. A number of effective strategies, including the appointment of two learning mentors, have ensured there have been no exclusions this term. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved recently as a result of a number of initiatives which encourage pupils to attend on a regular basis, such as a weekly class trophy.

Pupils confidently explain the need for a healthy lifestyle and exercise and are aware of the bad effects of drugs, smoking and alcohol. The introduction of a hot meals

service in 2006 has proved popular. Pupils support a range of charities, which helps their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. There are effective links with local schools and the church so that pupils understand the value of being involved in the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Effective actions have been taken to eradicate any inadequate teaching and to improve the proportion of good teaching, in response to the findings of the last report. The management of pupils' behaviour is consistently good, allowing learning to progress satisfactorily. Assessment information is used effectively to plan lessons. In response to boys' lower attainment, the school has recognised the need to engage them more fully in lessons. Recent initiatives have only had a limited impact on achievement so far but there have been some successful trials at Key Stage 2 with a 'real maths group' to make learning more meaningful and related more to pupils' experiences. The teaching of early phonic skills is not good enough to provide a secure base for pupils to improve their standards in reading, and the school recognises that. The use of whiteboards by teachers offers pupils lively interactive opportunities which they thoroughly enjoy. This was seen during the inspection with one class learning about the features of a myth. Such involvement helped to accelerate their learning. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly, recognising what pupils have learnt successfully. However, there are too few comments on what pupils need to do to improve their work further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced, satisfactorily covering all the recommended areas of learning in the Reception Year and the required subjects in Years 1 to 6. The installation of interactive whiteboards and development of the computer suite has ensured there is better provision for ICT than in the last report, with a corresponding improvement in standards. A range of extra-curricular activities and visits, supplemented by a residential visit for Year 6 pupils, ensures the curriculum is suitably enriched. The school has responded well to parents' requests for these activities. Pupils' personal and social development has been enhanced by them working in teams across year groups on 'theme days'. For example, one focused on creating and running stalls for the Summer Fair, developing skills in leadership and enterprise.

The school recognises that the curriculum does not engage boys as effectively as it could and therefore this has been identified as a priority area in the school development plan.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care of pupils is particularly impressive. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support from knowledgeable teaching assistants.

There are good links with agencies such as the Educational Welfare Service to promote effective care of pupils. Procedures for ensuring the safety and security of all pupils are thorough. Good child protection measures are well understood by staff and there are effective risk assessment procedures. When faced with some difficult groups of pupils there are examples of effective measures taken to avoid exclusion and to reintegrate pupils into regular classes.

There are effective systems in place for tracking pupils' progress. This information is well used to provide pupils with group targets but as yet they do not have individual targets to encourage higher attainment. Insufficient direction is given to target improved standards for boys.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a very accurate picture of the school and recognises what still needs to be done. His good leadership has ensured the improvement identified in the last report has been sustained and pupils' achievement by the time they leave the school has improved for the last two years and continues to do so in the current academic year. Alongside that, all medium- and short-term planning has been reviewed to ensure its effectiveness. The headteacher has been well supported by the new deputy headteacher. They have carried out a systematic programme to monitor teaching thoroughly, with the support of the local authority. This has been part of an effective performance management process which has linked the quality of teaching to pupils' progress. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has piloted the school well through a period of previous decline and uncertainty. There has been a large turnover of teaching staff during the last year and almost all subject coordinators are new to their position. Therefore, their influence upon the standards and provision in their subjects has been limited. The sustained improvement since the last inspection, the good self-evaluation and development plans indicate a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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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	2
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	3
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	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	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 very much for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed our visit and talking to you. We think yours is a satisfactory school with some good features. The leadership and management of your school are satisfactory. We are impressed with the good provision for your personal development. The support, care and guidance you receive are satisfactory. We like the way that the school is beginning to involve you more in helping to make important decisions, such as improving playground facilities. The teaching and curriculum are satisfactory so you make sound progress through the school. We have asked the school to make some improvements in order to help you make the best possible progress.

What we have asked the school to do now

- Plan work so that boys are as interested as girls and do as well.
- Give younger pupils more individual help to understand letter sounds.
- We have asked for subject leaders to have a greater influence on the teaching and curriculum for their subjects.

Thank you again for your help and I wish you all the best for the future.