

Newchurch Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118162
Local Authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	298934
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Colin Richards
Headteacher	Mr Alan Clark-Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
School address	Newchurch Sandown PO36 0NL
Telephone number	01983 865210
Fax number	01983 865210

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

When Newchurch was inspected in February 2006 it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Additional inspectors visited the school on three occasions to monitor its progress, and re-inspected the school in March 2007. The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Newchurch is a smaller than average primary school which currently has falling rolls. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A well below average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year-to-year but is generally average. The school has a below average percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are no pupils with a statement of educational need. Since last September, the school has been led by an interim headteacher. A new headteacher will take up post in September.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Parents and pupils are rightly very proud of the school as in the words of one parent, 'The change in the last year has been fantastic. The whole atmosphere of the school has changed, it is now friendly and welcoming and parents are kept fully informed about everything.' The charismatic headteacher has brought about rapid improvement because of an unrelenting focus on the quality of teaching and learning. He is now ably supported by a dedicated and hard working leadership team who are beginning to influence standards and achievement in their areas of responsibility. Action plans have been implemented, although their impact is yet to be measured. Governance is much improved. Governors now feel confident to ask challenging questions. This is because they have received good quality training and now understand the information they are given by the school and are able to act as critical friends. The school uses its links and partnerships well to enhance provision in the school.

Overall, pupils reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 2 and they achieve well from their average starting points. There has been tremendous improvement in pupils' writing as a result of their involvement in evaluating their own work alongside their teachers. This has produced reflective young learners. However, standards are not as high in mathematics; the school has rightly recognised the need for more systematic support for less able pupils. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and most children reach the goals set for children of that age.

Pupils develop good personal skills and behave well. They collaborate sensibly when asked to work in pairs or groups and were observed encouraging each other so that they produced better work. Pupils take the opportunity to develop skills which contribute to the community. They successfully raise money for a number of charities. Other clubs and activities are keenly supported and the contribution of the school council is valued by other pupils.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are good. Huge improvements in teaching have led to improved standards and achievement, especially for those higher attaining pupils. Relationships are good between pupils and their teachers making them eager to learn. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and offer effective support to both teachers and pupils in lessons.

What the school should do to improve further

* Raise standards in mathematics to match those achieved in writing* Ensure that middle managers check rigorously the impact of their action plans on pupils' progress

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupil's achievement is now good and this includes the higher attaining pupils who previously underachieved. Pupils arrive in the school with skills and understanding which vary from year-to-year but are broadly average overall. They get off to a good start in the Reception class and this continues into Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and mathematics are above average. The earlier legacy of underachievement in writing has been tackled successfully as assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2006 show. Standards in writing are now high and a substantial percentage of pupils reach the higher level 3. By the time pupils

leave the school in Year 4, they continue to make good progress in English, mathematics and science. This is because the school carefully checks the progress pupils make so that they are able to spot those who need extra support or challenge. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is also good. This is because of the support they receive from well-trained teaching assistants and sharply focused programmes of work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Their enthusiasm shines through as they skip or run into school in the morning eager to start work. Pupils said that 'School is cool now' because there are many interesting things for them to do. This means attendance is good as pupils enjoy their learning. Many pupils show a high level of maturity. Members of the school council make significant contributions to the community on behalf of their classmates. In recent weeks, pupils have assisted in the selection process for the new headteacher, chosen the curtains and decoration for the hall and helped to bring about healthier meals. They are also 'playground buddies' to those who do not find it easy to make friends. Pupils are polite and friendly to each other and to visitors. They show good attitudes to learning, mostly behave well and are proud of their school community. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments mean pupils have a clear view of right and wrong, coupled with a sense of tolerance and fairness. Pupils have a clear understanding of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills support fully pupils' future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Much of the teaching is good and is helping pupils to make up lost ground at a fast rate. Teachers use the good quality assessment information now available to them effectively to provide interesting group work that meets precise needs. In addition, teachers use effective questioning to provoke high quality discussion and challenge pupils to think hard in order to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Skilled use of interactive whiteboards captures pupils' interests. Marking is good and gives children a clear idea about what they do well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils also help to assess their own and their classmates work, especially writing and this has contributed to higher standards.

Good teaching in the Reception class helps children to become confident, enthusiastic learners. That said some teaching remains satisfactory in the rest of the school. This is because pupils spend time practising skills they have already achieved. As a result they become restless and fidgety and do not pay sufficient attention. An outstanding science lesson in Year 4 enabled all pupils, whatever their ability to learn quickly. An imaginative idea, well chosen resources and challenging questioning helped pupils to develop high quality investigative skills. Pupils worked really well and successfully with their classmates to find out why their experiment had gone wrong and to set up a new one.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum, with innovative links between subjects, makes learning purposeful, interesting and fun. There is a good balance of written, practical and oral work in all subjects. The school promotes pupils' personal and health development successfully, placing strong emphasis on physical education and healthy eating. Pupils respond with keen interest taking pride in doing their best and presenting their work well, although there are not always sufficient opportunities for them to use their initiative and creativity.

A rich and engaging practical curriculum in Reception sets a good foundation for the children's future learning. It captures their interest and sometimes amazes them. For example, when the children melted chocolate and poured it on to ice cream they were stunned to discover that it went solid, rather than melting the ice cream.

Specific provision and sharply focused learning programmes enable pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities to overcome their problems and play a full part in lessons. Those who are gifted and talented receive challenging tasks that take their learning forward at a good rate. The school has addressed weaknesses in pupils' writing so that they are now achieving to a high standard, but there is still work to do in mathematics.

Pupils gain a great deal from visitors, including famous authors, trips to places of interest in the locality and from the out of school clubs available to them. These activities bring learning to life and enthuses pupils to want to learn more.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pastoral support for the pupils is of high quality. Parents report that the school is now a more welcoming place and cares for them and their children. One parent wrote, 'The school has a completely different feel to it now, as if it has got its heart back. My children's confidence has soared.' The family atmosphere means pupils are valued and well known to staff. Pupils are confident that adults care about them and want to help them. High priority is given to ensuring pupils' health and safety. Robust child protection procedures and risk assessments help keep pupils' safe. Good links with external agencies, parents and carers contribute well to pupils' learning and well-being.

There are now good systems to assess and track how well pupils are progressing. Pupils know their targets in English and mathematics. They are clear about the levels they are achieving and what they need to learn next. Another parent said, 'I really appreciate knowing my child's targets so that I can work together with him at home and support fully his learning in school.' Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are gifted and talented are also supported effectively by the school in close cooperation with their parents and outside agencies.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. This contributes very effectively to the good personal development and achievement of pupils. The exceptional leadership of the headteacher has led to significant improvement since the last inspection because the focus has been 'on the

things which really matter'. He has shared his expertise in self-evaluation with subject leaders very well. They now know how to identify strengths and weaknesses and formulate action plans to bring about improvement. However, it is too early to check the impact of these plans. He has nurtured a good team spirit which continues to develop well. One member of staff said, 'The headteacher has got the best out of everybody with never a cross word.' His rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has been the key to unlocking the skills and confidence of the staff. The governors are now a valuable asset and they involve themselves fully in the life of the school; they support and offer appropriate challenge. The school has tackled the areas of improvement from the previous inspection well and standards are rising. This, together with the drive and enthusiasm of the staff and pupils, gives the school good capacity for further improvement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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

16 April 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newchurch Primary School, Newchurch, Sandown, PO36 0NL

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. What a pleasure it was for us! We are very pleased to see that you are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. You told us that you really enjoy coming to school and joining in all the activities that are planned for you. Many of you attend after school clubs such as gym, music and dance clubs. You do lots of good work in the community too, such as raising money for charity and your school council has a good influence on what happens in your school. For example, you helped select your new headteacher recently, chose the new curtains in the hall and selected the prizes for your reward stickers. We were impressed by this and think you are quite grown up.

As you know, your school has been receiving some extra help called 'special measures'. We are delighted to tell you that your school no longer needs this help because your headteacher and his staff have made some super improvements which have made your school much better. We think your school is now a good school. This means that it does many jobs well and just needs to improve a couple more things. You have done fantastically well in your writing, so we have asked your school to make sure that you do just as well in mathematics. Also, we have asked the teachers in charge of each of your subjects to make sure that they check whether the new things they have planned for you to do are helping you to learn even better.

I have visited your school three times now and I shall miss coming to see you again, but I'm sure that you will all do your very best to succeed in Newchurch school and I look forward to taking a look at how well you do in your tests this year.

Kind Wishes

Glyn Bradley-PeatLead Inspector