

Newbold School

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number	867/6004
Unique Reference Number	110141
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Inspection dates	12-13 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Martin Bradley HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

This inspection of the funded nursery education was carried out under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and framework Act 1998.

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Newbold School is a Seventh-day Adventist primary school with 75 children aged between three and 11 years. The school seeks to work towards high academic standards, to encourage the children to develop a personal commitment to the Christian faith and to help them to develop a set of moral principles within the Adventist Christian ethic. The school was founded in 1941 and moved to its present site in 1945. It is on the same campus as Newbold College, the senior Adventist university college for the Trans-European Division of the church, which receives students from all over the world. The majority of children come from families associated with the church. As a result, the school experiences a significant level of pupil turnover, with few children going through all classes from the Nursery to Year 6. A recent change in the school's leadership has led to some radical changes in the school's approaches to teaching and learning as well as a general review of policies and practices in all areas.

This was the school's first inspection leading to a published report. The inspection of funded provision for three and four year olds took place at the same time as the school inspection and the present report includes the findings of both inspections.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education provided at Newbold School is good overall. It is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and is good by the end of Year 4. In the upper end of Key Stage 2 it is outstanding. Children's progress reflects the developing quality of education and is good overall. By the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of children achieve at levels above national expectations. The quality of the curriculum and of the teaching is satisfactory overall. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It underpins the work of the school, is understood by the children who, as a consequence, are able to apply it to their daily lives in school. The school's self evaluation is good and generally accurate. It reflects the hard work of the acting headteacher during the present year, supported by the staff and parents, in developing policies and practices to enable the school to meet its objectives more effectively.

Quality of education

The quality of education is good overall, although it ranges from satisfactory for the youngest children to outstanding for the oldest. A major strength of the school is the outstanding way in which the children's attitudes towards each other as well towards their learning is underpinned by their faith and the related ethos of caring, concern for others and an eagerness to learn. By the upper end of the school, the children have made particularly good progress, although only a minority of the current Year 6 pupils have attended the school from the pre-school class. Throughout the school considerable attention is given to developing the core skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics. Creative and investigative aspects, although taught, are less effectively developed.

The curriculum in the classes for the youngest children – the 'pre-school' (Nursery) and 'Foundation 2' (Reception) - is satisfactory as is the quality of teaching. Planning and assessment for the youngest children uses the early learning goals, although relatively little use is made of the Stepping Stones which lead towards these. Daily plans mainly deal with topic work and do not pay sufficient attention to the ways in which free play and more structured activities are to be used to promote particular aspects of children's learning. Limited use is made of assessment to inform future planning in all aspects of the curriculum. Teaching in both classes is generally satisfactory. The adults seek to support the children, but their roles are not sufficiently clearly planned to make full use of the classroom resources' potential to challenge children. In the Foundation 2 class, the National Curriculum is followed, especially for literacy and numeracy. The children are able to deal with abstract ideas and have good speaking and listening skills. At times the teaching slows down the pace of their learning and does not encourage their creative thinking. However, the children make at least satisfactory progress in acquiring basic skills. Resources in both Foundation Stage classrooms are not always readily accessible to the children.

In Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 an increasing number of children make good progress. This is supported by good teaching which consistently values their ideas and contributions. Assessment is used effectively, and half termly targets are set for children in English and mathematics. The children know their targets and appreciate their value in improving their work. Targets are regularly reviewed. The acting headteacher is developing an assessment framework based around pupils' targets, although these are not fully integrated into subsequent planning in all classes. The current absence of such a framework does not meet the regulatory requirements. At present little use is made of statistical data when planning future work. From Key Stage 1 upwards, the children feel increasingly confident in voicing their opinions, whilst remaining polite and considerate towards one another. Adults value the children's views and ideas and this supports their learning. Some parents noted that the homework set in some classes does not always match the work done in class, leading to limited challenges in the work set for some children.

In the oldest class, Years 5 and 6, which had also been joined by two Year 4 pupils for mathematics at the time of the inspection, work becomes significantly more rigorous and the children's rate of progress increases. The children know and apply their targets effectively. The quality of teaching and assessment is consistently high and is generally outstanding. The children's already good skills and attitudes towards work improve further and their achievement is raised to good, and occasionally outstanding, levels. In 2006 all children attained Level 4 in the Key Stage 2 national tests, with the majority attaining Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. This is above national expectations.

The school curriculum is extended by a good range of clubs including sports, choir, art and craft, 'mind lab' and board games. Peripatetic music teachers provide lessons in the flute, violin, recorder and piano.

Overall, resources are satisfactory. The development of a computer suite provides the opportunity to extend work in this area next term. Good use is made of most of the outdoor areas for physical development.

Many children join the school from overseas and have English as an additional language. They make particularly good progress in learning English and are able to express themselves well – as one child who had been learning English for just over a year, noted in Assembly when asked how someone felt about not being involved in a game 'she must feel that she does not have the skills to join in.' The school is developing a programme of support for these children in order to enable them to benefit even more from class work. Children with additional learning needs and/or difficulties are well supported, although the teaching assistants are not always sufficiently briefed on their role in class: the newly developed policy on their role has yet to be fully implemented. The acting headteacher has recently taken on the role of coordinating the work with children with additional learning needs and/or difficulties.

Children do not attend on Friday afternoons, however, the school has adjusted its weekly hours to ensure that it meets the recommended weekly total teaching time.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

This is a major strength of the school and is consistently outstanding. It underpins the school's ethos and supports its academic work. Assemblies promote the children's moral and spiritual awareness effectively, as well as their consideration for one another. Behaviour is outstanding. The children not only know how to behave towards one another, but also develop an understanding of why this is appropriate. The school is particularly successful in meeting its aims in these regards.

The children enjoy coming to school. They are well prepared for their future economic well being through fund raising, such as for new carpeting for the hall, for Great Ormond Street hospital and other charities, as well as at the school fete. They

are able to keep accounts and to work out profits for such events. The children develop a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services. Their cultural development is enhanced by considering life abroad, although not all classes make sufficient use of the children's own diverse backgrounds for this.

Years 2 to 6 are represented on the recently formed School Council. The Council's recommendations are considered by the staff and they have identified concerns which are now part of the school's development plan which the acting headteacher has devised. The value placed upon their views and opinions supports further their confidence and social development.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school, along with the pupils through the School Council, promotes the welfare, health and safety of the children satisfactorily. This is an improving situation as the outstanding issues are addressed. Fire precautions have been upgraded this year. Policies for risk assessments for outside visits have been written and implemented, along with all other welfare and safety policies. As yet the school does not have a three year plan to fulfil its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act, 2002.

Pupils are aware of healthy eating and, from the pre-school class, are encouraged to bring fruit for their snacks and as part of their lunches. They have also begun to develop their awareness of Fair Trade issues. Most classes have access to drinking water throughout the day.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school uses the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Education Department procedures for recruiting and checking staff. These are good practices and are effectively applied, including for staff who come from outside the United Kingdom.

School's premises and accommodation

The school occupies purpose-built premises on a large college campus. The accommodation is generally satisfactory. Although the regulations regarding facilities for children who are ill are not fully met, they are satisfactory given the small size of the school. Similarly, the toilet and washbasin facilities are satisfactory given the numbers attending the Foundation Stage and the current gender balance in Key Stages 1 and 2.

The two youngest classes do not have a separate, fenced play area. The present outdoor area poses safety problems and is next to some bicycle racks and the staff car park, which pose potential hazards.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school meets nearly all the regulations regarding the provision of information for parents, carers and others. Some policies, devised during the present year are in the process of being implemented and are not yet made available as a matter of course. Several parents noted that they received relatively short notice of changes to planned events or of new events. Whilst this cannot be entirely avoided, the school has sought to improve its administration during the present year.

Children's reports are provided annually. They give information on the themes which have been covered and indications as to how well the child has done. Statistical information is given in a separate report summary; however the comments do not suggest ways in which attainment can be raised.

Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints procedures fully meet the regulatory requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- put in place a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from such assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- make appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for the youngest children to play safely (paragraph 5(t)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e))
- provide particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs and for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that the school's policy on the use and deployment of teaching assistants is fully implemented
- review planning, teaching and evaluation in the Foundation Stage, monitoring children's progress through the Stepping Stones and developing more independent creative play.

Inspection of funded nursery education

Effectiveness of the funded nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children experience different activities. Overall, they explore a range of satisfactory resources, although these are not always inspiring enough to extend or challenge them. Staff do not create a busy and stimulating environment necessary to fully support all areas of learning. Whilst children do make satisfactory progress in their learning, some areas are not well developed. In particular, children do not have sufficient opportunity to experiment and be creative, as staff have a tendency to be over directive. Current planning and assessment systems are not effective enough to ensure that activities and resources are used well to promote progression and challenge in children's learning or to track their progress through the stepping stones. Staff deployment is not always effective. On occasions, because all staff deliver directed activities at the same time, there is no-one to guide and extend children's learning through play.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered effectively. Children learn to respect others and develop good awareness of right and wrong. They mix with children from many parts of the world and have opportunities to develop their knowledge of different countries and cultures. Staff create a calm environment which encourages children's good behaviour. Children with learning difficulties and those who are learning English as an additional language receive appropriate support. The needs of all children are met.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents receive some information about the curriculum. There are systems to inform parents about children's achievements and progress, although currently, they do not contribute formally to the records staff keep on their children.

Key issues identified at the last inspection have received generally satisfactory attention. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There have been recent changes in the leadership of the school, which have resulted in an evaluation of existing provision and the identification areas for development. The acting head has vision and demonstrates a keen desire and commitment to improve nursery education. Consequently, systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and children's learning are evolving but are not yet sufficiently well developed to ensure that all aspects are covered or that there is consistently good practice at all times.

Recommendations or actions to improve the funded nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of the nursery education the registered person should take account of the following recommendations:

- develop further staff awareness of the Foundation Stage and their role in supporting children's learning in particular during free play and use of the daily routine
- improve planning and assessment procedures to track children's progress through the stepping stones and use the information gathered to best effect in short term planning to ensure activities and resources are used well to promote progression and challenge in children's learning
- provide more opportunities for children to experiment and express their own ideas through free creativity
- continue to develop systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching within the Foundation Stage and the provision of nursery education to meet children's individual learning needs and ensure a well rounded curriculum across all areas.

School details

Name of school	Newbold School		
DfES number	867/6004		
Unique reference number	110141		
Unique reference number (funded nursery education)	EY291605		
Type of school	Seventh-day Adventist		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1941		
Age range of pupils	2-11		
Gender of pupils	MI		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 41	Girls: 34	Total: 75
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 10	Girls: 4	Total: 14
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of children receiving funded nursery education	Boys: 12	Girls: 6	Total: 18
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,820		
Address of school	Popeswood Road Binfield Bracknell Berkshire RG42 4AH		
Telephone number	01344421088		
Email address	newboldschool@hotmail.co.uk		
Acting Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Eastwood		
Proprietor	South England Conference of the Seventh Day Adventist Church		
Reporting inspector	Martin Bradley HMI		
Dates of inspection	12-13 June 2007		