

# Newlaites Junior School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 112224              |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Cumbria             |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 301719              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 11–12 December 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Maureen Bennett     |

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

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|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary                                         |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community                                       |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 7–11                                            |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                                           |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |                                                 |
| School                                    | 240                                             |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                              |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr Keith Boyd                                   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mr Christopher Barnfield                        |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 1 June 2003                                     |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Langrigg Road<br>Carlisle<br>Cumbria<br>CA2 6DX |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01228 607534                                    |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01228 607535                                    |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 7–11                |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 11–12 December 2007 |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Newlalthes is a large junior school. In 2006, the closure of a neighbouring primary school resulted in an increase in pupil numbers. Very few children come from minority ethnic backgrounds and there are no children who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average but rising, as is the proportion eligible for free school meals. The social and economic circumstances of the families are average overall. Most pupils transfer from the local infant school.

## 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 for its pupils and gives satisfactory value for money. Most pupils enjoy school and behave well and the majority of parents appreciate the support that the school provides for their children.

From broadly average starting points, the pupils make satisfactory progress overall and achievement is satisfactory. Although standards are below average at the end of Key Stage 2, this is partly a reflection of the increased number of pupils who need additional learning and behavioural support who joined the school in 2006. In 2007, the school's results in the national tests were below average overall. The best results were in mathematics and science where the pupils achieved well, but the results in English showed that the more able pupils should have done better. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make inadequate progress.

The pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils understand how to keep healthy and safe. They take on responsibilities and contribute to decision-making through the school council. Most say they enjoy school; attendance has improved and is now average. Pupils take part in a range of community activities and raise funds for good causes. Progress in basic skills is satisfactory and pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage in their education.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although much of the teaching challenges and interests the pupils, in English in particular too little account is taken of the needs of different groups of pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Curriculum provision is satisfactory with better provision in mathematics and science than in English. The English curriculum does not focus sufficiently on the pupils' learning needs and interests and in particular, on the progressive development of skills. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of activities that provide pupils with the opportunity to learn new skills, such as digital photography. The school provides a satisfactory level of care, support and guidance for its pupils. Systems for tracking pupils' progress and for setting learning targets are developing and where they are used well, pupils have a good understanding of what they need to aim for. Health and safety procedures are good and safeguarding requirements are met. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not coordinated well and as a consequence, these pupils do not receive appropriate support to make the progress they should.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership and has brought about improvements in achievement in mathematics, science and attendance with support from the local authority and consultants. The school collects appropriate data about its performance. However, this information is not always used well enough to identify priorities or rigorously followed through to make sure that initiatives are leading to higher standards. Governors are keen to support the school and governance is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Use information from the assessment of pupils' progress to plan work in English that is tailored precisely to the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Improve the English curriculum so that it meets the needs and interests of the pupils and promotes progressive improvement in their skills.

- Rigorously assess the impact of initiatives to make sure they are having a positive impact on the pupils' progress.
- Ensure that the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities meets their needs.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory: it is good in mathematics and science but some pupils underachieve in English. Standards on entry are broadly average, but vary considerably from year to year. The closure of a neighbouring school has also led to higher numbers of pupils who require additional learning and behavioural support and this has affected the school's results in national tests.

The results of the 2007 national tests were below average, especially in English. Current standards reflect a similar picture, though standards in mathematics and science are improving and the pupils are making good progress in these two subjects. In contrast, the more able pupils are not making sufficient progress in English because of some weaknesses in the teaching and the curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make inadequate progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Most pupils enjoy school and their behaviour in class and at playtimes is satisfactory. Pupils are polite and well-mannered in school but sometimes lack confidence and do not readily speak to adults and visitors. Most concentrate well in lessons and try hard. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school council is active and has been successful in raising funds through sponsorship to improve their school. Pupils show responsibility for the wider community and participate in a range of activities within the local community, for example, the Future Champions Golf Festival. Pupils regularly support charities and show concern for others less fortunate than themselves through fund raising, for example the Shoe Box Appeal and support for a school in India. Provision for sport is a particular strength and pupils have a satisfactory understanding of keeping healthy and safe. Pupils say they feel safe but sometimes their concerns are not dealt with quickly enough by some staff. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to work in different groups and this helps them develop skills of cooperation needed for later working life. The school has worked hard to improve attendance supported by the Educational Welfare Officer and this is now average. Pupils' preparation for the next stage of their education is satisfactory because of the improvements in mathematics and science, but pupils' literacy skills are not yet good enough.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Typically, lessons include a lively approach to learning with a range of interesting and relevant tasks that match pupils' different needs well. Stimulating

and varied resources are used well to promote pupils' learning well, especially through practical tasks. The teaching also includes very positive responses to pupils' contributions and regular opportunities for pupils to explain and justify their thinking. In English, the teaching does not always provide activities that are precisely matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. This results in some work being too easy for some and too difficult for others. Assessment information is not always used effectively to plan tasks or used to guide the learning during the lesson. This also adversely affects the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a generally broad and balanced curriculum. Recent improvements in mathematics, means that it caters more successfully for the needs of different groups of pupils and has a better balance of activities. The arrangements to teach pupils in classes according to their ability are working well. This is not the case in English, where the curriculum is not structured to meet the needs of the pupils in ability groups. Much of the English curriculum is based on content that is not relevant to pupils' needs and interests and it does not build upon their skills systematically. In contrast, the science curriculum is lively and interesting and provides for an effective development of knowledge and skills.

There are interesting whole school curriculum projects that enrich pupils' experiences. For example, there are super choice days, where pupils opt for a range of interesting activities like fencing or digital photography.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The quality of care, support and guidance for pupils at the school is satisfactory. The health and safety of all pupils are paramount and all necessary child protection and safeguarding requirements are in place. Other health and safety systems are established and ensure that pupils know what to do in the event of fire or other incidents. The personal, social and health education effectively raises pupils' awareness of issues such as keeping safe and promotes their personal development. However, expectations for behaviour are not always consistent and pupils do not always receive the same guidance on this. Systems for tracking pupils' progress and for setting learning targets are developing and where they are used well, pupils have a good understanding of what they need to aim for.

External agencies are used well to support the school. Partnerships with parents are satisfactory. Most parents are positive about the school and the support their children receive but some are concerned that pupils' concerns and welfare are not dealt with quickly enough.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and, with the support of the local authority and consultants, has successfully improved standards in mathematics and science, and improved attendance. Current priorities have been correctly identified and plans are in place to address them. Achievement in English, assessment for learning and pupil behaviour have been identified for current development but the evaluation of actions taken for improvement lacks rigour. The school collects a wide range of data but

does not always use the information well enough to track the progress of pupils or different groups.

Governance is satisfactory. Financial management is good. Governors discharge their duties appropriately. Governors are keen to support the school but they are not sufficiently involved in holding the school to account for pupils' achievement and standards. They are fully committed to the school and are willing to seek help and act upon advice. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, but standards in English remain too low. Achievement and standards in mathematics and science have improved. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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## Annex A

## 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? | 3   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection                                                                  | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?                                                         | 3   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements                                                                                                   | 3   |

### Achievement and standards

|                                                                                                          |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How well do learners achieve?                                                                            | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> 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                              | 4 |

### Personal development and well-being

|                                                                                                               |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?                                  | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles                                                         | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices                                                             | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education                                                                       | 3 |
| The attendance of learners                                                                                    | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners                                                                                     | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?                                             | 3 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|                                                                                                                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards                                                              | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation                                                                                            | 3   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 4   |
| 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                                                  | 3   |
| 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

13 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newlaithes Junior School, Cumbria, CA2 6DX

Thank you so much for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and finding out about the things you do. We are pleased you enjoy coming to school and feel safe there and to see that your attendance has improved so much. We particularly liked hearing about your 'superchoice days' and how much you enjoy them!

Here are some of the things you do well:

- you have worked hard to improve in mathematics and science
- you know how important it is to eat healthily and take plenty of exercise
- you enjoy your lessons and you like activities such as playing sport
- most of you behave well and listen carefully in class and walk around school sensibly
- you contribute to the running of the school and make important decisions through the school council.

We have also suggested some ways in which we feel the school could improve. The headteacher and other teachers could:

- enable you to reach higher standards in English
- make sure you have useful targets to help you improve your work
- keep checking how well new ideas are making a difference to your learning
- make sure that you all make good progress in lessons.

Thank you again for helping us so much with the inspection. You can help the school by working hard, listening to your teachers and trying especially hard to improve in English.

We send our best wishes to you all for the future.

Yours sincerely

Maureen Bennett Margaret Shepherd

Lead inspector Team inspector