

# Newfield Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101522
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brent
<b>Inspection number</b>	307718
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Raminder Arora

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	232
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Neil Jackson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Sarah Bolt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 April 2004
<b>School address</b>	Longstone Avenue Willesden London NW10 3UD
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8961 1566
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8961 8517

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average size primary school with a full time Nursery, serving a multi-cultural, inner city area of north-west London that has a significant refugee population. Nearly all pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest group being Black Africans, mainly Somali. Over a half of all pupils' first language is not English and many are at early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. These are mainly speech and language, moderate learning, and social and emotional difficulties. A considerable number of pupils arrive and leave during the year. The school has been awarded the Active Sports Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement in English, mathematics and science.

Newfield School is much liked by parents and children. However, the effectiveness of the school is inadequate, despite some recent improvements. The school has a legacy of underachievement and standards are exceptionally low by the end of Years 2 and 6. Most groups of pupils underachieve in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Achievement is inadequate because too many pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Relatively few attain the higher levels in national assessments in any subject at either key stage. This stems mainly from weaknesses in teaching in the past and staff instability in recent years. Attendance is low despite determined efforts by the school to improve it, and is one of the reasons that some pupils under-perform. This year, however, there are pockets of better achievement and standards are improving, especially in Years 5 and 6. The school is working hard to overcome the challenges presented by pupils joining at different points in the year, and the staffing situation has now stabilised. Overall, the school provides a satisfactory standard of education and is capable of making further improvements. Although some improvements have been made in addressing the areas identified in the last inspection, there is more to do to improve standards, achievement and attendance.

The leadership team is strongly committed to improvement and, in some respects, has been successful in achieving it. The senior team has correctly identified the main weaknesses that previously impaired pupils' achievement, and a number of strategies designed to bring about improvements are in place. Initiatives such as the 'Big Writing' and the 'EAL Project' for pupils with English as an Additional Language are beginning to raise standards. Pupils' needs are addressed through careful tracking of their progress, targeted support and intervention. However, at this stage it is too early to judge the full impact of newer initiatives. The governors are supportive of the school. They recognise that they do not yet monitor achievement sufficiently well to hold the school to account.

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are satisfactory overall. In particular, staff provide a good level of pastoral care for all pupils, including those with a high level of need. They work satisfactorily with other schools, parents and external agencies in this regard. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning, which is supporting better progress. They show healthy attitudes to diet and exercise. They feel safe and at ease with one another. The curriculum is satisfactory and teachers are strengthening links across subjects to make it more enjoyable.

Teaching and learning are now satisfactory, although previously they had not been robust enough to ensure that pupils made adequate headway in their learning. Inadequate teaching has been eliminated and the headteacher has rightly identified the need for its further improvement as her highest priority. Systems to track pupils' progress effectively are in place. Pupils are set targets for learning, but are not sufficiently involved in the regular review of these to know the next step in learning.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills less well developed than is typical for their age. They have particular difficulty with language, and limited personal and social skills. The staff plan interesting activities with 'hands-on' experiences which children enjoy and this supports their progress. Children settle to routines and gain independence in the available activities, but some are left to their own devices, so do not settle or sustain learning. There is sometimes an imbalance between adult-directed activities and those chosen by children which does not guarantee children's full involvement. The enhanced use of outdoor areas is having a positive effect on the development of children's skills in all areas of learning. Effective use is made of a programme that relates sounds to letter shapes and supports children learning to read and write. The records provide a coherent picture of each child's development over time. By the time they join Year 1, most children are still below what is expected for their age. The new approach to making the curriculum fun also involves parents fully in their child's education. As a result, improvements can be seen in children's progress.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Raise all teaching to the level of the best, by involving pupils more fully in assessing their own learning.
- Enhance the skills of governors so that they can monitor effectively and hold the school to account.
- Build on the good relationships with parents to improve attendance.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

Standards are exceptionally low and pupils' achievement is inadequate. Slight improvements were noted in the test results of 2007, especially in science at Key Stage 2 and reading at Key Stage 1, but the overall results remained too low in all subjects. Standards are now showing signs of improvement, mainly due to improved staffing and the emerging strengths in teaching. Pupils are beginning to make faster progress also due to well-focused interventions to remedy weaknesses. This is especially true of many pupils joining at different times in the school year. Pupils' writing skills are the weakest across the school and therefore a key priority for development. Strategies such as the Big Writing are beginning to make a difference, but there is much ground to make up.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils are proud of their school because, as one girl said, 'It feels like a community and a family where we make decisions together.' Although pupils enjoy school, too many do not attend regularly and this is having a negative impact on their standards. Some parents take their children away on holiday during term-time which has an adverse effect on attendance levels. Pupils behave well, interact positively with adults and peers, and make newly arrived pupils feel welcomed. Pupils feel safe. 'We can go to the 'Place 2 Be' if worried', said one. They are fully aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles and value the range of clubs and activities, many of which involve sport or exercise. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

is good. Pupils develop good awareness of other races and cultures through planned themes, for example, International Week and celebratory assemblies. Pupils enjoy contributions to the school as school councillors and playground youth leaders, and to the local community, for example, the Big Clean in Brent.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Although teaching is now satisfactory, it is not yet good enough to overcome the legacy of underachievement. Pupils are still not making fast enough progress due to gaps in their understanding from previous years. However, teaching and learning are now monitored closely and significant improvements have been made in a short period of time. These improvements are motivating children to want to learn. In the best lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6, pupils know what they are expected to learn and activities are well matched to their needs. Pupils are inspired and enthused by the teacher's secure command of the subject and challenged to use expressive language in their work. Most teachers know their pupils' needs well and exert firm but friendly control, so pupils work productively as a result. In lessons that were only satisfactory, there was insufficient participation by pupils, a lack of challenge, or too long spent just listening to the teacher, resulting in some pupils losing interest. Teaching assistants provide appropriate support that enables the groups of learners that they work with to make better progress. Teaching has strengths such as the good use of interactive whiteboard technology in lessons.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum has improved and is suitably planned to meet pupils' needs. Some changes have been made to reflect weaknesses in pupils' attainments, for example, there are now increased opportunities for practical investigations and problem solving. Drama and Italian are taught on a regular basis and support pupils' speaking and listening skills. Better use is made of the information and communication technology across other subjects. Appropriate links are planned between subjects to make learning more meaningful. More work is planned to closely match the interests and backgrounds of pupils, for example in music. The topic-based approach to the curriculum has been developed so it is more creative and enjoyable. Special weeks such as Book Week, science and mathematics weeks provide enrichment, as do the many visits and visitors. The personal, social and health education programme pays appropriate attention to the development of safe and healthy living. Pupils participate in a range of clubs, for example, football and the garden club, which support their personal development.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school has pupils from widely differing backgrounds and provides a good quality of pastoral and emotional support to all of them. The 'Place 2 Be' and the 'Place 2 Talk' provision is a good feature. The school's systems for promoting good behaviour ensure that pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Those pupils learning English as a new language are given appropriate support enabling them to make satisfactory progress in acquiring the language. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements. There have been improvements to systems for assessing pupils and monitoring their progress, and these

are helping to inform staff about how pupils are achieving and identify those who need additional support. Pupils who start at school other than at the usual time are well supported to integrate them into the community. Year 6 pupils receive good advice about transfer to secondary school. However, most pupils do not receive sufficient guidance on their next steps or how to improve their work, and target setting is not used comprehensively enough to drive up standards at a faster rate.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's leaders and managers are bringing about the most needed improvements working in challenging circumstances. As a result of the headteacher's clear direction and energy, the new leadership team is focused on raising standards and accelerating progress. All staff are involved in the school's self-evaluation to identify the strengths and areas requiring action. They are clearly guided to promote pupils' achievement and maintain the school's ethos. Much effort is going into addressing under-performance through a more robust termly tracking and monitoring system. This is enabling the school to identify and respond to pupils' needs in a timely fashion. The school is very inclusive. Staff have worked very hard to help all pupils, whatever their background, to make better progress. However, there is still some way to go to raise achievement to satisfactory levels. Subject leaders are now beginning to effectively monitor the work of their colleagues and pupils' progress. However, some long-term vacancies and absences have limited the overall impact of this level of leadership. The governors are supportive and aware of the school's priorities for improvement. However, they do not hold the school to account sufficiently, and their visits to monitor the effectiveness of developments are too scarce. Although not yet as effective as it needs to be, the school is heading in the right direction to ensure improvements.

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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
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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	2
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	4

### 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	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
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?	Yes

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

06 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newfield Primary School, London, NW10 3UD

Thank you for the help you gave us with the recent inspection of your school and for the friendly way you received us. We think that your school provides you with appropriate standard of education. However, we do not think the school is doing as well as it should, and we have given it a notice to improve. We believe that with your help, the school could do much better and that the standards should be higher with all of you making better progress, especially in English, mathematics and science. Most of you told us that you are happy and enjoy coming to school.

Things we really like about your school are:

- you listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and you are willing to work hard in your lessons
- your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school
- you learn to work and play well together and help each other
- some of you are proud to be playground youth leaders and look after new pupils as they arrive
- everyone at school looks after you well, so that you are safe and happy and your parents are very pleased
- the headteacher and staff take good care of you to ensure that you are safe at school.

These are the things that we think could be better:

- the standards you reach in English, mathematics and science could be higher
- teachers could make sure that all their lessons help you make the best possible progress
- you could improve your attendance by not taking time off school to go on a holiday
- the governors could improve their work to make your school even better in the future.

We think that everyone at Newfield can work together to do these things. I hope that you go on enjoying all the things you do there that help you to learn and be happy.

With best wishes

Raminder Arora

Lead Inspector