

Newton's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102319
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	307968
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2008
Reporting inspector	George Rayner

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Linda Mills
Headteacher	Mr John Broadis
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Lowen Road Rainham RM13 8QR
Telephone number	01708 558613
Fax number	01708 554650

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is a little larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. These pupils mainly have difficulties in learning to use language to communicate. Most pupils have White British heritage, although the proportion from ethnic minorities is rising. Several nationalities are represented, with none predominating. Very few of these pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. More pupils than usual join or leave the school other than at the normal times.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It is dedicated to welcoming every pupil, whatever their background and needs, and ensuring that all are secure and achieve well. Parents have very high opinions of the school. They say that it is very successful in achieving its aims, so that their children are happy here and make good progress. The school provides good care, guidance and support for pupils. This is reflected in their good personal development and well-being. Pupils enjoy school and many say that they love being here. They show this by their cheerfulness, cooperation with the adults and their willingness to join in with all that the school has to offer. Most pupils attend school regularly. A minority reduce their opportunities to achieve well by being absent too frequently, however. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating, exercise and their personal safety.

Although pupils arrive with knowledge and skills below expected levels for their age, the school sets them challenging targets, which effectively encourage them to achieve well. Supported by good teaching, a good curriculum and their own positive response, this helps them to catch up. As a result, their standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Although satisfactory, progress is slowest in writing in Years 1 and 2. This means that the foundation for reaching even higher English standards by Year 6 is less firm than it could be. The school's leaders are aware of this and are improving the teaching of writing. This is beginning to raise writing standards by Year 2, but the full impact is yet to be seen.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides an exceptionally clear direction for the school. Staff are very unified in supporting him in securing his goals. This is shown, for example, by the high proportion of staff who have served the school for many years. Systems for self-evaluation have provided a good awareness of strengths and the areas in which improvement is needed. The school's leaders have used these to introduce successful strategies to tackle weaknesses identified by the last inspection. The impact is seen in improvements in all of the key areas where this was needed, particularly in securing higher Year 6 English standards. The track record shows a good capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress from their starting points and are working securely in most of their areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Their weakest area is their capability in using language to communicate, which remains below expectations. The Foundation Stage is very well led. A committed and dedicated team plans thoroughly to meet the needs of all children. The indoor and outdoor areas are attractive, safe, stimulating and very appropriate for the age range. Children play and learn together confidently and thoroughly enjoy their time in the Foundation Stage. High quality resources indoors and outdoors and interesting topics motivate the children to concentrate well. Tasks encourage independence with a good balance of free choice and adult-initiated activities. Regular assessment ensures children's progress is well tracked. In a few instances staff do not have high enough expectations of what children can achieve and this occasionally limits progress, particularly for the most able.

What the school should do to improve further

- Speed up progress in writing in Years 1 and 2.

- Improve the attendance of the minority of pupils who are frequently absent.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well so that, by the time they leave Year 6, their standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils write interesting stories and are increasingly broadening the range of styles that they can use to carry out a variety of tasks. They become competent in mathematical skills and are starting to use these independently to solve problems. In science, pupils are able to find things out for themselves through investigation. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good overall, but satisfactory in writing. This is because many Year 2 pupils find it difficult to describe their experiences in writing of any length. Their progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6, however. Because their needs are identified carefully and they are given effective additional support, pupils identified with difficulties in communicating make as much progress as their classmates. The most able pupils also make generally good progress, although this sometimes slows, because, while they are often well challenged, this is not always the case.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. One typified the positive views shared by many in saying, 'Teachers are really nice people who sit with you to make you happy, everyone always smiles here.' Although a small number occasionally misbehave, the great majority of pupils behave well and cooperate willingly with adults and each other. They contribute willingly to school life. Peer mediators and monitors are well-trained, take their roles seriously and value the skills that they have learned for helping others. Pupils enjoy learning about the customs of their classmates from other cultural backgrounds and they respect these. Their progress in literacy and numeracy contributes well to pupils' levels of confidence and good preparation for their futures. Involvement in the Area Regeneration Project helps them to understand the important issues for the locality. Whilst most pupils attend school regularly, the overall attendance rate is affected by a minority who are absent too often.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers set clear expectations for effort and behaviour and succeed in generating good relationships. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them and are eager to learn. Teachers use questioning well, for example by asking open-ended questions that encourage pupils to think. They often plan what might otherwise be unexciting routine tasks in interesting ways that succeed in engaging pupils. This was seen in a Year 3 and 4 class, when pupils enjoyed practising their mathematics skills to work out how much change they should expect when shopping. When pupils are working individually, teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively to ensure that any having difficulty with receive the help that they need to be able to keep up with the pace of work. Teachers usually plan well to ensure that all pupils can cope with the level of work and the most able are challenged. This is not fully consistent, however. In a few lessons, the challenge for the most able pupils is not high enough when, for example, they spend too long on easier work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Carefully planned topics ensure that pupils in the mixed age classes do not repeat work, but build on their prior learning. The recently introduced initiative for cross-curricular writing is beginning to link different subject areas successfully, to give pupils more opportunities to be creative. For example, the characteristics of persuasive writing were used to good effect in history when pupils pleaded for a divorce in the role of Henry VIII. Good support for individuals, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, ensures everyone can participate fully in the planned curriculum. Specialist visiting staff for physical education and music add creative stimulus to the curriculum. Good displays provide a motivating, attractive, environment. Computer numbers are lower than in many schools of this size and several are nearing the end of their useful life. This limits pupils' opportunities to use them to support their learning in different subjects. The well-attended clubs enhance opportunities for taking part in sport and cultural activity.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Child protection procedures are secure and carried out diligently. All pupils are helped to build confidence and self-esteem with the result that they feel happy, confident and secure. A well-attended early morning club encourages pupils to start the day with a healthy breakfast. Links with outside agencies, such as those providing health visitors and educational psychologists, provide effective additional support for pupils who need this. Very good links with secondary schools ensure a smooth transition to the next stage in education. Parents say that the school works very well in partnership with them in caring for their children. They are confident that they will be kept fully informed of any issues. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully and they are increasingly being encouraged to become more responsible for their own learning by evaluating their own progress. Each pupil's progress is carefully tracked and the information is used so that those in danger of falling behind their targets are quickly helped. However, teachers are not using marking consistently well to guide pupils on how to improve. Some guidance is good but, on occasions, marking consists of little more than ticks.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy work together cohesively, as do the senior and middle managerial teams. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This has been particularly effective in sharpening up understanding of how to improve English standards. Monitoring is not yet fully consistent, however. Not all subject leaders are regularly involved in obtaining first hand information on teaching quality in their subjects by observing lessons, and procedures do not always ensure that good practice is shared between staff. Several governors have expertise in education or management, which they use well to support the school and challenge it when necessary.

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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?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 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	3
The behaviour of learners	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newtons Primary School, Rainham, RM13 8QR

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and we are grateful for the help you gave by talking to us and showing us your work. We were able to see that yours is a good school. Your parents and carers agree and many of them said really good things about your school.

You make good progress in your learning. Although many of you know less about English and mathematics than many children of the same age when you enter the school, you catch up well. This means that your standards in these subjects match those in most schools by the time you leave Year 6. This also helps you to make good progress in science. Your teachers plan good lessons and work hard to give you things to do that are both useful and interesting.

You told us that you are very happy here and we could see that for ourselves. You help your teachers a lot, because you behave well, work hard and are willing to join in with all of the things that they plan for you. This is an important reason why you do well.

The headteacher and staff know how to make your school even better. We have asked them to make sure that they do two things as quickly as possible. The first is to help those of you in Years 1 and 2 to make faster progress in writing. This will help you to do even better in Years 3 to 6. The second is to find ways to raise the attendance rate. Although most of you come to school regularly, a few are absent too often, so that they miss out on all of the good things in the school. You can help by only staying off school if you really have to.

Well done to you all and very best wishes for your future lives.

Yours sincerely

George Rayner

Lead Inspector