

# Netherton CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103841
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	308436
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Barbara Atcheson

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	293
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	89
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Liz Gregory
<b>Headteacher</b>	Suzie Churchill / Andrew Rushton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Highbridge Road Netherton Dudley DY2 0HU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 816895
<b>Fax number</b>	01384 816896

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 October 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large primary school where most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than usually found. The proportion identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. In September 2008, the school combined its two Reception classes and one Nursery class to form an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) unit. The deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher since May 2008 due to the long-term illness of the headteacher. The assistant headteacher has been acting deputy headteacher since September 2008. The governing body runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is emerging from a period of uncertainty through the good leadership of the acting headteacher, ably supported by his acting deputy headteacher. United in their determination to raise standards and expectations, they have quickly identified what needs to be done and put in place measures that are already leading to improvements. In the past, standards have been low and pupils have underachieved. Children join the school with skills and knowledge below the levels expected of 3 and 4-year-olds, especially in language development and personal and social skills. They now make satisfactory progress throughout the school and unvalidated school data show that standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have greatly improved and are now in line with national standards. The school recognises that still too few more able pupils are not achieving the standards of which they are capable.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They are particularly appreciative of the caring ethos that results in pupils feeling safe and enjoying their time at school. Reflecting the views of many others, one parent said, 'The teaching staff are very approachable and friendly and are very aware of pupils' individual needs.' Strong pastoral care results in pupils' good personal development and well-being. The school is a happy, harmonious community where behaviour is good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are confident that staff will help them when problems arise. Systems are securely in place to ensure that pupils are safe and happy in school, and to support those who are vulnerable or have particular needs.

Teaching is satisfactory, with examples of good and outstanding practice, but these are not yet sufficiently widespread to ensure pupils' good progress throughout. Where teachers' expectations are not high enough and the use of assessment information is not effective, lessons lack sufficient pace and challenge, particularly for the more able. Pupils do not always have clear information about how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve their work and reach challenging targets.

The creative curriculum provides interesting opportunities for pupils to make links between subjects and a varied programme of extra-curricular opportunities helps to enrich pupils' learning. However, because the curriculum is not yet sufficiently adapted to challenge pupils that are more able, too few pupils achieve the higher levels of which they are capable.

The school has a secure view of its own strengths and weaknesses. It does not yet have a strong enough system of monitoring and evaluation at all levels in order to provide a clear basis for planning improvements. Nor are there, more importantly, effective strategies in place to ensure that improvements are implemented. The school has worked hard to address the issues of the previous inspection successfully, particularly with regard to improving the rate of attendance. This, together with better achievement and standards, indicates the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The newly formed EYFS unit provides a very welcoming environment, successfully promoting children's welfare and giving the children the security to become confident learners. Well planned pre-school home visits provide vital links with parents, helping them to become increasingly active participants in their children's learning. Despite the fact that children in the

EYFS make satisfactory progress, the majority enter Year 1 below the expected levels for their age. Relationships are good and this encourages children to have positive attitudes to learning. Staff interact well with children and encourage them in their work. Exciting activities such as making jam tarts for the Queen of Hearts provide children with enjoyable learning experiences, which are well matched to their learning needs. However, there are times when the activities are too long, the pace is too slow, and children become disinterested, particularly at the end of the morning when they are tired. Although the teaching of letters and sounds is well planned and the children are taught in small groups, not all methods are sufficiently interesting to engage all the children and, when this happens, they become passive and disinterested. Leadership and management are satisfactory because the unit is in its infancy and there has not been sufficient time to see the full impact of this exciting new development.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise teachers' expectations and use assessment information more effectively to ensure that lessons provide sufficient pace and challenge for all pupils, but particularly the more able.
- Make sure that all pupils have clear information about how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve their work and reach challenging targets.
- Improve the quality of leadership, including monitoring and evaluation, at all levels so that there is a clear basis for planning improvements, and effective strategies to ensure they are implemented. 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**

Although standards at the end of Year 2 are still below the national average, they have improved this year. As these particular pupils entered the school with skills and knowledge well below the levels expected of 3 and 4-year-olds, this represents satisfactory progress. Unvalidated school data shows that pupils at the end of Year 6 are now attaining standards in English, mathematics and science that are in line with the national average. This demonstrates a great improvement, particularly in mathematics, where standards have been significantly lower than the national average for the past five years. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress, which ensures that they are adequately prepared for the next stage in their education and later life. The pace of progress increases where teaching and learning are lively and exciting, but decreases where pupils experience a higher proportion of lessons that are less interesting and lacking in challenge, particularly for more able pupils. This is the reason why too few attain the higher levels at the ends of Years 2 and Year 6

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils behave well and cooperate very well with each other. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means they work and play harmoniously together and are clear in their understanding of the similarities and differences between other faiths and cultures. Pupils enjoy their schooling, feel safe and want to do well. Improvements in attendance during the past year reflect this. Pupils speak enthusiastically about what the school provides, especially the adventure playground, the quiet area in the playground and the range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are clear that there is little bullying or racism and know that if something were

to happen it would be quickly and fairly resolved. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy living. They make a good contribution to the school and its wider community through their efforts in raising funds for charities such as The Children's Society and sponsoring a child in Africa. Most pupils leave the school as well-adjusted young citizens who can make a good contribution in their next stage of education. They are developing their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills satisfactorily and this will help them in their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enjoy lessons and are well behaved. They work well individually and in groups. Where activities match the different needs of pupils and there is a good balance between whole class teaching and individual work, pupils make good progress. However, there are lessons where teachers spend too long in whole class teaching, leaving too little time for pupils to carry out their work. Sometimes information from pupils' prior learning is not used well enough to plan work for different ability groups, especially the more able. Most teachers check how well pupils are learning and encourage them effectively to assess their own progress against the objectives of the lesson. They, and their teaching assistants, provide good support to pupils throughout their learning. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but often not enough guidance is provided for pupils about what they need to do to improve. In some lessons, too many repetitive worksheets are being used and teachers do not expect high enough standards of presentation, resulting in untidy work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The satisfactory curriculum promotes pupils' all-round development and their enjoyment of school. Termly thematic weeks, culminating in a shared assembly, help pupils see how the different aspects of their learning fit together. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the wider world through their personal link with a school in Gambia and a rolling programme of modern foreign languages for older pupils. The level of enrichment is strong, including a good range of musical and sporting activities, which are popular. The school is working hard to provide pupils with the right support to help them overcome any gaps in their learning, but this initiative is only in its infancy and it is too early to measure its success in terms of improved achievement. The curriculum is not yet sufficiently adapted to challenge pupils that are more able.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

The school fully meets requirements for safeguarding pupils and all welfare requirements in the breakfast and after-school clubs. Risk assessments for out-of-school activities are carried out systematically with the guidance of the local authority. However, the assessment of risks for in-school activities are not carried out regularly enough. Pupils are cared for well and staff work effectively to ensure pupils enjoy their schooling. Pupils' social and emotional needs are catered for well and the school makes good links with other agencies to help and support pupils as necessary. Pupils' additional learning needs are identified after they have been in school for

a short time and appropriate support and guidance are allocated to them. The school is reviewing pupils' understanding of their own targets because at present, average and above-average pupils do not know well enough the standards for which they are striving.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The acting headteacher has an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because of the thorough data analysis that he has carried out. He has drawn accurate conclusions based on this data, posing key questions and prioritising points for action. However, although the school development plan is based on the right priorities, the aims are not specific enough to provide a clear basis for planning improvements. There is a comprehensive programme of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning but it is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure the quality improves as quickly as it should. Governors work hard to support the school but do not always have the knowledge and understanding to enable them to ask challenging questions. Good links with parents and other agencies have a positive impact on community cohesion and the school's link with a school in Gambia provides a golden opportunity to engage with a global community.

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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?	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

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Netherton C of E Primary School, Dudley DY2 0HU

Thank you very much for your help and cooperation when we inspected your school. You told us that you very much enjoy coming to school. We think that your school gives you a satisfactory education and has several good features. These are the things we liked.

- You get on with each other and behave well.
- You know how to treat people with respect.
- The teachers look after you very well.
- The school provides some interesting activities for you to do.

The school is working hard to make things even better for you. We have asked the school to do three things to help you.

- Make sure that all teachers expect you to do your best all of the time and to make sure that they use the information they collect on how well you do to ensure that there is always plenty of challenge, especially for those of you who find learning easy.
- Make sure that you have a clear understanding about how well you are doing and what you need to do next to improve your work in order to make sure that you are always doing the best you can.
- Check on the quality of teaching and learning so that the school has a clear plan of how and where to make things even better.

I hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and to try your hardest so that you are successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Atcheson Lead inspector