

Newtown Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103924
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	308456
Inspection date	15 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Field

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	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Siobhan Harley
Headteacher	Karen Jones
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2005
School address	Anne Close off Dunkirk Avenue West Bromwich B70 0ES
Telephone number	0121 5578504
Fax number	0121 5209834

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress made by learners in Key Stage 1, and the effectiveness of school monitoring and how well findings are used to inform improvement priorities and planning. Evidence was gathered from observations of pupils at work and play, discussion with staff, governors and pupils, scrutiny of documentation and an analysis of parents' views. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Newtown Primary School serves a local community in which levels of social and economic disadvantages are high. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds but a small proportion are from a range of other backgrounds, mainly Indian, Pakistani and Caribbean. A very small number are learning to speak English as a new language. The proportion of pupils identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Newtown is a good school. The ethos is happy and purposeful with very good relationships that help pupils feel safe and secure. The school's child protection arrangements are robust and reflect its strong commitment to inclusion. All safeguarding checks and staff vetting fully meet requirements. Pupils new to school, including those recently arrived from overseas, identify that a warm and friendly welcome has helped them settle in well. Most pupils have very positive attitudes to their studies, behave well and build good social skills that help them prepare successfully for the next stage of education. The school's work with parents and a range of external providers is an outstanding feature that enriches the quality of education provided and results in pupils enjoying school. Many gain benefit from a range of 'added extras' such as multi sports, first aid, silk painting and 'ugly bugs' fashion designing. Parents hold very positive views about the school and appreciate the caring and family atmosphere that underpins the good personal development of their children and nurtures a strong 'can-do' attitude. Within this supportive and inclusive environment, pupils achieve well to reach standards that are at the level expected for their age by the end of Year 6. Around a third attained the higher Level 5 in the 2007 national tests and surpassed very challenging targets. Current standards in Year 6 are not quite so high but reflect continuing good achievement from the pupils' below average starting point. The work in books and observation of lessons show good progress being made by most pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school is tackling effectively the slower progress of a large group of lower attaining boys in Key Stage 1 through well matched tasks, additional support and carefully chosen resources. The school recognises the need for some of the more able pupils to be set more demanding work, particularly in mathematics, and in the questions they are asked in the opening part of lessons. A strong push on phonics is proving very positive in supporting better reading and writing across the school. Good teaching is enabling pupils to learn successfully and to develop good basic skills. Classrooms are lively, stimulating places and pupils work with enthusiasm because they are interested in their studies. They build good self-esteem from the encouragement given and strong emphasis on positive praise. Occasionally, the pace of lessons slips and results in a few more able pupils not making the same good progress as others. Marking is generally informative with best practice identifying pupils' next steps. There are shortcomings, however, where some marking fails to pick up poor presentation and inaccurate spelling. Effective care and support are centred on staff knowing pupils well and keeping in close touch with parents or carers through regular meetings, shared events and informal playground chats at the start or close of the day. Good work is going on with a few parents to support the better attendance and punctuality of their children. Pupils say that the staff 'listen to their views' and, although bullying, racism and especially name-calling does occur from time to time, adults always take swift action to sort things out. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported both in class and in the small group withdrawal sessions that cater very effectively to meet individual needs. The school harnesses the input of a very widerange of additional services to help assess and support pupils' specific needs, and this assists their good progress. Pupils work from a well planned curriculum that includes an extensive range of additional activities. At its core are English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology with themed topic work covering other subjects. Pupils identify that physical education, gym and swimming help them to keep fit and healthy, whilst their involvement in charitable fundraising and hosting lunch for local senior citizens widens their involvement in the community. However, they also flag that it would be nice to learn a modern

foreign language and experience a residential visit to deepen their appreciation of the world beyond their neighbourhood. Good leadership by the acting headteacher has kept the school moving forward with clear purpose since its last inspection and with good capacity to sustain this. Teamwork is a real strength that results in everyone working to the benefit of the pupils. The school's view of its own effectiveness, as reflected in its self-evaluation form, are accurate. The school improvement plan shows a strong focus on Every Child Matters outcomes but it is not specific enough in identifying required improvement in key aspects of the school's provision. Additionally, a lack of specific focus to some of the school's monitoring leads to evaluations that do not always pinpoint how well groups are progressing in different years. Governors are supportive of the school and are gaining in confidence in their role as 'critical friends' as they use a wider range of data to help in holding it to full account.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

From a well below average start, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because they are well taught. Relationships are very good and, together with a secure home/school partnership, help the children settle well. Strong emphasis is placed on helping children build confidence and self-esteem and results in them being ready to 'have a go' at new experiences. Planning shows a sensible balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities with regular observation and assessments building up a picture of each child's all round development. The accuracy of assessment has been a key priority over the last year and the most recent audit identifies that this now provides a secure baseline on which progress can be measured. Children work in a variety of groups or independently depending on the task. Occasionally, opportunities are missed for Nursery children to extend their knowledge through first-hand experiences, for example, when learning about healthy foods such as fruit. Children are able to access the dedicated outdoor play space freely, but the quality of environment and resources available are in need of a major upgrade across all six areas of learning, of which the school is well aware.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations about the progress expected of the more able pupils and ensure that they are set suitably challenging work in all years.
- Make the monitoring of lessons and pupils' work more rigorous to aid sharper evaluation of the progress of different groups of pupils and measure the impact of strategies to better inform school improvement priorities and action planning.

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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?	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?	1
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	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**

- 16 April, 2008 Dear Pupils Inspection of Newtown Primary School, West Bromwich, B70 0ES
I am writing to say a big thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave to me when I visited your school. I found out quite a lot during my visit and I would like to share the most important things with you.
- You go to a good school where everyone is friendly and caring and pulls together.
- Your behaviour is good but, when there are occasional fallings out or upsets, you are confident that an adult will deal with the matter quickly.
- You benefit from good teaching and experience an exciting curriculum. The number and range of clubs you can go to are first rate!
- Your academic and personal achievements are good.
- You feel confident and safe and your work on anti-bullying, keeping fit and healthy eating shows how keen you are to make sensible decisions.
- Your headteacher leads the school well and, together with all staff, is very keen to make sure your school gets even better. There are two things that I have suggested will help the school become even better.
- Ask teachers to keep a close check on the progress made by the more able learners and set them suitable challenges so that they reach the highest level possible in their work in all years.
- Make sure that when senior leaders visit lessons or check work in your books, they find out about the progress being made by different groups and then use this information to identify improvement priorities and help their action planning. I wish you every success for the future.
Best wishes Chris Field Lead inspector