

New Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110647
Local Authority	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
Inspection number	310375
Inspection dates	16–17 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jim Saunders
Headteacher	Mr Roger High
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	New Road Whittlesey Peterborough Cambridgeshire PE7 1SZ
Telephone number	01733 204422
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

New Road is much smaller than most primary schools. Almost all pupils are of White British background and there are a few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion entitled to free school meals is almost twice the national average. The school has an average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most of these have moderate learning, speech, language and communication, behavioural or physical difficulties. Children enter the Reception class with skills that are broadly similar to those expected, although their communication, language and literacy skills are below those typically found.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

New Road is a satisfactory school. The pupils enjoy their education and they feel safe and secure. This is because the staff are very caring and ensure that there is effective promotion of good personal development and well-being. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and commented positively on the strong nurturing ethos that is a hallmark of the school's welcoming nature.

Standards are average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, although progress in writing is more limited than in reading or mathematics. Standards in science are the strongest. Following a dip in the national test results for 11 year-olds, a number of improvements have been made, particularly in the way that teachers check pupils' progress and use of assessments to support learning. In addition, there has been a concerted effort from the teachers in the two junior classes to raise standards in writing. These have had a positive impact and the current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain standards that, although remaining broadly average, show stronger progress. Even so, too few of the more able pupils are challenged to attain the higher level.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers in all four classes have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and manage the pupils well. However, until recently, they have paid too little attention to involving pupils in their learning and developing their independence. As a result, the quality of learning is satisfactory, rather than good. The school's efforts to eliminate this weakness are beginning to pay dividends. Teachers give pupils more responsibility by making clear what is expected of them and what their targets are. However, these improvements are recent and not consistent in all classes. There has been a considerable improvement in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) since the previous inspection, although teachers still lack confidence in this area. This is leading to an under-use of the school's resources and teachers' planning lacks opportunities for pupils to develop ICT skills in lessons.

Pupils have good personal qualities. They know how to stay safe. They also have a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles. Pupils value their involvement in charities and are proud of being part of both the school and town communities. The latter is shown by their enjoyment in providing a side of 'Molly Dancers' in the annual Straw Bear festival. They are encouraged by the excellent relationships between staff and pupils and this helps to develop their confidence. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides strong pastoral support and the recent improvements in provision demonstrate the school's commitment to raising standards. However, there is an imbalance in staff responsibilities. The deputy headteacher in particular has a range of duties that is too heavy. In addition, although the procedures for checking the school's provision and pupils' progress are satisfactory, there has been a lack of rigour in the past. The recent improvements show a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision and achievement of children in the Foundation Stage are good. Children make good progress from their individual starting points and, as a result, almost all meet the expected

goals by the time that they leave the Reception class. The class teacher supports the children well. She ensures that there is a positive atmosphere in which children enjoy the good range of activities. There is a good balance of activities between those that are directed by the adults and those that the children choose for themselves. However, at present, due to the building works, there is not the normal opportunity for children to learn outdoors. The children thrive, are well behaved and confident.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in writing, and increase the number of pupils gaining the higher level at the end of Year 6.
- Strengthen the quality of learning by embedding the current arrangements for making pupils more independent.
- Improve provision in ICT by making sure that teachers systematically plan to make use of it in lessons.
- Ensure that responsibilities are more evenly spread across all staff.

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 and standards have been average in most years, although there has been some underachievement, particularly in writing. The improvements in pupils' learning and assessments have raised standards and quickened pupils' progress. Consequently, current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain standards that are stronger than in the past, though the number predicted to gain the higher level remains small. Nonetheless, pupils' skills have improved as teachers have been more rigorous in making clear what is expected of them. Provision is good for pupils who find learning hard, the few who are at an early stage of learning English and also those who are vulnerable. The effective support and individual programmes of work provided by teaching assistants ensures that their progress is in line with that of their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy and well motivated. They enjoy school and show much respect for adults. Their polite attitudes and their good, and sometimes outstanding, behaviour makes the school a pleasant and purposeful place, where everyone can learn in safety. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced well by opportunities to contribute to charities, learn about other cultures and religions and to be involved in decision making through the influential school council. Attendance is barely satisfactory. The school has a sound range of strategies in place to promote good attendance, although the impact of these is not strong. Whilst it has improved in the past year, attendance is still slightly below the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good practice is developing in all classes, though it is inconsistent and so at present limits pupils' learning and progress to being satisfactory. Teachers are experienced and enjoy good relationships with the pupils. This is because they manage them well, provide an interesting range of activities and ensure that the classrooms are bright and attractive. However, pupils' learning is hampered because they are not given enough responsibility as learners. Recent improvements in engaging pupils more in their learning are starting to pay off. Teachers increasingly outline the purpose of the lesson, make sure that pupils understand what is expected of them and make targets for improvement clear. However, it is only in the best lessons that the teachers identify the features that will demonstrate that pupils have succeeded, and use these to check their understanding of how well they are doing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides a good balance between English and mathematics and other subjects. There have been improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in the wide range of additional activities now provided. Good use is now made of visits and visitors to the school, which contribute to pupils' learning. There has also been an improvement in the curriculum for ICT, though at present, too little account is taken of this in teachers' planning. There are some good examples of links between subjects. For example, the recent work on Vikings in Years 3 and 4 included a wide range of thoughtfully organised subjects and activities. However, this is not always the case and opportunities for pupils to reinforce literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are not systematically planned as part of topic work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents are delighted with the good support and care that the school provides. One wrote, 'The school has a community spirit and is like an extended family'. Very good care is taken to ensure that pupils are kept safe and all protection procedures are firmly in place. Because staff know the pupils well, they are able to ensure that all develop social skills and confidence well. In addition, the good partnerships that have been established with agencies that assist pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensure swift action is taken to meet their needs. The good partnership with the pre-school that occupies a building on the site enables a smooth transition for most children into the Reception class. However, improvements in tracking progress and in using focused targets to guide pupils' learning have yet to bed down thoroughly in all classes and this weakness limits pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher ensures that the school runs smoothly. His caring attitude to pupils and parents is appreciated by the whole school community. However, because there has been a lack of rigour in the processes for checking the school's provision and standards, progress and

achievement are only satisfactory. This situation has been caused, in part, by an imbalance in staff responsibilities that has left some, such as the deputy headteacher, with too many duties and the headteacher with too few. Governance is satisfactory. Although governors have a deep commitment to further improvement and support the school well, they are inexperienced as a governing body and have yet to establish secure ways to hold the school to account for both its provision and standards attained. Governors are aware of this and have good training plans in place to remedy this situation.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	3

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	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

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?	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of New Road Primary School, Whittlesey, PE7 1SZ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I was impressed with your good manners and behaviour and also by your enjoyment of school and how you look after each other. It was good to see that your school council is an important way for you to help towards the running of your school.

Yours is a satisfactory school. There are some things that are good, including the way you care for each other and show respect to everyone. All the adults look after you well and help you to feel safe. You enjoy the breakfast club and all the other clubs that are provided for you.

There are some things that can be done to make your school better. I have asked your teachers to make sure that your writing improves and more of you reach the higher level at the end of Year 6. I have asked them to make sure that their assessments help you to learn better and to become more responsible for your own learning. You also need to have more chances to make use of ICT in lessons. Finally, I have asked your headteacher and governors to make sure that the areas that teachers are responsible for are more evenly spread across the teaching staff and your headteacher.

You can help by working hard to meet your targets.

Thank you again for helping to make my time with you enjoyable and I hope that you will always be happy at school.

With best wishes,

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector