

# Newton Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110976
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	310470
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Bamber

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	328
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Griffiths
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Kingsway West Newton Chester Cheshire CH2 2LA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01244 327524
<b>Fax number</b>	01244 400343

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 April 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	310470

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average school is situated in an area of relative social and economic advantage. The proportions of pupils claiming free school meals, who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, come from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language are all below average. The school is growing in number and is preparing to welcome in September 2008 an influx of pupils from a nearby school that is closing. The senior management team is relatively new with the headteacher being permanently appointed in May 2007 and the deputy headteacher in January 2008.

The school has a number of awards including Activemark Gold, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy School status and the Inclusion Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with good features. It has maintained its strengths and improved in some respects since the last inspection. For example, pupils now attain above average standards in English and achieve very well in writing. Pupils' personal development continues to be good, they are well cared for and supported and quality and standards in the Foundation Stage remain good. However, pupils do not achieve as well in mathematics or science. In these subjects, standards are broadly average. Leaders and managers have contributed to improvements in English, and in implementing much more rigorous systems to track pupils' progress. However, the initiatives introduced to improve achievement and standards in mathematics and science have yet to bear fruit. In some areas leaders are insufficiently focused on the impact of their work in improving pupils' achievement and learning. Pupils' good achievements in English are reflected in their imaginative writing, their fluent reading and in their ability to articulate their thoughts and feelings in a concise but sensitive manner. In mathematics pupils show far less confidence in committing themselves to answer without the reassurance of checking with their teachers or fellow pupils. In science the school acknowledges that pupils currently have too few opportunities to carry out their own investigations and to test the accuracy of their own or those of other pupils' predictions and results.

Pupils behave well, especially in lessons, and get on well with each other. They eagerly accept responsibility when given the opportunity. They respond well in lessons, especially when teaching interests and challenges them. There is some good teaching, consistently so in English. However, there are some shortcomings in the teaching of mathematics and science. In addition, some teachers do not use day-to-day assessment information rigorously enough to set tasks that fully match pupils' needs, especially for the more able pupils in mathematics and science. As a result, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall.

Parents are fulsome in their praise for the care and support their children receive. The headteacher sets a particularly strong example for pupils in this area of the school's work. Teachers and teaching assistants, administrators and ancillary staff all make sure that pupils are safe and secure. There is a breakfast and after-school club.

The satisfactory curriculum provides pupils with much enrichment, although it is less effective in providing for their academic needs. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the wide range of after-school clubs and 80% attend at least one of these. These clubs contribute well to pupils' physical, personal and aesthetic development. Opportunities for drama and to perform publicly also help pupils to gain confidence, to articulate clearly and to learn to work together in a team.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is well led and helps children achieve well. When they arrive in Reception, most children's skills are broadly as expected for children of their age. Children rapidly develop positive attitudes to learning and all make good progress, notably in their personal, social and emotional development and in reading. By the time children enter Year 1 the level of their skills and understanding are above those expected for their age in all areas of their learning. Much of this is due to good teaching and rigorous assessments of children's progress.

Children behave well, have good relationships and enjoy being at school. They take responsibility for choosing activities and enjoy doing 'special jobs' such as giving out water bottles and tidying up. Indoor areas are interesting and provide for the good development of basic skills, as well as the wider curriculum. While secure, the outside learning area is quite small and does not currently provide the same levels of challenge or stimulation. The school is aware of this and looks forward to enhancing outdoor provision once the scheduled building improvements have taken place.

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

- Improve achievement and raise standards in mathematics and science so that they better match pupils' performance in English.
- Ensure the consistent use of day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress to match tasks better to pupils' needs, especially those of the more able.
- Ensure that leaders and managers are more rigorously focused on the impact of their work on raising standards and improving pupils' learning and achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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**

Pupils enter the school with skills in line with expectations, achieve satisfactorily and leave Year 6 with broadly average standards overall. Within this overall picture there have been considerable variations over time and between subjects. Over the last two years standards at the end of Year 2 have been above average overall. Standards have been strongest in writing and average in mathematics. The most recent assessments for the current Year 2 pupils show that standards remain above average in writing, and average in reading and mathematics.

At the end of Year 6, standards over the last three years have been average overall. In 2007, standards were above average in English demonstrating the particularly good progress made by pupils in Years 3 to 6. The school's current data show that at the end of Key Stage 2 standards are above average in reading and writing, average in mathematics and below average in science. Because they are well supported, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make the same progress as their peers.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school and a typical parental comment was, 'Children are proud to be associated with Newton Primary School.' Pupils contribute to mutually supportive relationships and are keen to make the most of what their school has to offer. Attendance of the majority of pupils is good, but the extended holidays of some families results in overall attendance levels being satisfactory.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils are both welcoming and courteous and make contributions to improving the school community through the school council, and to the wider community through their impressive support of charities. The skills pupils develop as a result of such activities, together with their ability to write well, prepares them effectively for their future education. Members of the school council take great pride in

the impact of their work. This includes initiatives such as the introduction of healthy snacks at break, the acquisition of playground equipment to encourage active play and providing bicycle racks. Pupils are safety conscious from an early age and talk eagerly about healthy lifestyles. They feel safe in school and know there are adults to whom they can turn for help. Pupils generally behave well although some of the older boys can be boisterous in the playground at lunchtime and do not always adhere to the zoned areas for playing ball games.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good and is better in English than in mathematics and science. For example, in a good Year 5 lesson that promoted pupils' ability to conduct an interview as a reporter, the purpose of the lesson was carefully explained, pupils were given ample opportunity to cooperate in order to refine their questions and role play was used to good effect. As a result, pupils enjoyed their learning and because they were required to take into account the interviewees' feelings the activity enhanced their personal development well. In mathematics pupils are not always given the careful step-by-step consolidation they need. This means that their ability to calculate, their numeracy skills and their awareness of space and shape are all relative weaknesses. It was noticeable in lessons observed that even the more able pupils were not confident in committing themselves and the analysis of their books shows some gaps in their basic knowledge. In science the school is conscious that teachers do not always pay sufficient attention to setting practical activities that would challenge pupils to think about their tasks. There are also fewer opportunities for pupils to be involved in assessing the predictions and results of their own and others' experiments.

Relationships are good in all lessons. This contributes well to pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes, a considerable strength in teaching and learning. In most classrooms teachers make effective use of information and communication technology to make ideas clearer and to interest pupils. In some instances teachers use marking and other assessments to very effectively match tasks to pupils' exact needs. This is most evident in English. However, this is not consistent across the school. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to show how they have responded to the advice written by teachers about their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is further enriched by educational and residential visits. During the time of the inspection pupils in Year 4 were on a residential trip to Burwardsley, while those in Year 3 enjoyed a fieldtrip as part of their geography week. Visitors coming into school and theme days add to pupils' enjoyment, as do the exciting and extensive range of extra-curricular clubs available. These experiences ensure that pupils experience many stimulating activities which make them want to learn. Parents comment on how these opportunities have contributed to the development of their children's self-confidence and self-esteem.

While the curriculum caters well for pupils' personal development, it does not fully support the academic needs of all pupils. This is why the curriculum is satisfactory and not good, as the school judges. Emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills and the success of the recent focus on writing is evident in their work. However, provision in mathematics and science is not as effective, especially for the most able pupils.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The school takes very good care of its pupils. Pupils' health, safety and well-being are scrupulously attended to. Pupils are keen to say that they feel safe from bullying and discrimination. Child protection procedures are robust and meet all requirements. All risk assessments are rigorous and up to date. The use of information about pupil's progress is not used consistently well throughout the school to consistently inform teachers' planning of lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively supported and identified and as a result they make satisfactory progress. The school has forged good links with outside agencies and is well supported by parents, as was seen in the well attended mathematics information evening for parents earlier in the year. Links with secondary schools are well established.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leaders and managers work successfully to ensure that pupils enjoy school, that they become responsible and concerned young citizens and that they are well cared for and supported. The school's Inclusion Mark is well reflected in the number of pupils participating in the many out-of-class activities on offer and how many take the opportunity to be involved in the school and the wider community.

Leaders have successfully improved aspect of the school's work, especially achievement and standards in English. Nevertheless, weaknesses remain and the school's own evaluation of its performance was over generous. Encouraged by the successes achieved in English, senior managers have set more challenging targets for pupil performance in mathematics and science. They have implemented strategies to improve both pupils' standards and achievements in mathematics and science. As yet, there is however little evidence to demonstrate how successful these initiatives have been. Given successes in English and the improvements evident in other aspects of the school's work, the school demonstrates good capacity to improve further.

Leaders and governors have been very involved in managing the imminent increase in the size of the school and detailed planning of extensive additions to the existing buildings. This has particularly engaged governors, who have worked very successfully to make welcome those pupils and their parents who will join the school in September from a closing neighbouring school. The expertise of one governor in literacy has contributed significantly to the recent improvements in the subject. Effective links with the church, other schools and with the wider community contribute well to pupils' spiritual, physical and personal development, to their cultural awareness and to enhancing teachers' skills.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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

### 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 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	2

### 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?	2

<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	2
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	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**

Inspection of Newton Primary School, Chester, CH2 2LA

On behalf of the other inspectors and myself, I would like to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently.

At the moment, the school is giving you a satisfactory education overall and is beginning to improve it even further. Already you are doing better in English than you used to, especially with your writing. This is because the school has successfully done a lot of things to help you improve in this subject. It is starting to do the same sort of things in mathematics and science, which teachers hope will help you to improve a lot more in those subjects as well. Your behaviour in lessons is always good and the vast majority of you are keen to learn. In the playground though, some older boys should stay in the areas where they are allowed to play football rather than straying into the places where they shouldn't be.

The school puts on lots of activities, including many after-school clubs, which help you to be healthy and to learn new skills. You clearly enjoy these because so many of you attend them. Your headteacher and all the other adults who work in the school make sure that you are safe and well looked after. They also work hard to make a very friendly atmosphere in the school.

Part of our job is to make suggestions about how the school can be even better. I am therefore, asking the school to do three things to help with this.

- To improve your work and how well you progress in mathematics and science.
- For all your teachers to make better use of what they know about how well you are doing to set you work that makes you do your best, especially for those of you who find learning easier than most.
- For those who run the school, or who are in charge of different subjects, to keep a close eye on how what they do helps you to improve your work.