

New Mills Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112597
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	310939
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Timothy Bristow HMI

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	195
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Cupit
Headteacher	Miss Claire Whetstone(acting)
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Meadow Street New Mills Derbyshire SK22 4AY
Telephone number	01663744453
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

New Mills Primary School is below average in size. The majority of children generally join the school with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of pupils who have learning disabilities and/or difficulties is average.

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 and improving school with good features. The good personal development and well-being of pupils are nurtured by good care, guidance and support. Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a period of great instability that led to a decline in the standards and achievement of pupils. In the last year the acting headteacher, supported by the school governors and staff has successfully halted this decline so that the achievement of pupils is satisfactory overall. Consequently, the capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

Standards overall are average. Assessment information for 2008 shows that in Key Stage 2 standards have risen in English and mathematics this year. This is because the progress made by the pupils has accelerated. However, a small minority of pupils do not make the progress that they could, particularly in mathematics, because their work does not sufficiently challenge them. The school does not use assessment information sufficiently to capitalise on the good progress made by children in the Reception class. Progress slows in Key Stage 1 so that standards are average by the end of Year 2.

The school has a happy atmosphere in which pupils are kind and caring to each other. Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and friendly when talking to adults, demonstrating good levels of self-confidence. Pupils feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to obtain help when they need it. Attendance is above average. All pupils enthusiastically take regular exercise at school, and enjoy the healthy meals and snacks demonstrating that they are successfully adopting healthy lifestyles. Most pupils make a good contribution to the community. For example, at the time of the inspection, pupils had invited the '60 and not out' club of senior citizens for lunch, serving them and then entertaining them. Pupils have a satisfactory preparation for education in secondary school.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the progress pupils are making. Lessons are well prepared and organised so that no time is lost. Appropriate use is made of teaching assistants to support groups of pupils who need extra help in English and mathematics lessons. In a minority of lessons, the expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough so that pupils do not learn how to be sufficiently independent or creative. The curriculum is satisfactory. The school offers a good range of enrichment activities such as the work all pupils are involved in to create an ecological environment in the school grounds. The pastoral care, guidance and support for pupils are good so that pupils thrive in this secure environment. Academic guidance and support are satisfactory. Procedures to track pupils' progress are starting to have an impact on achievement.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The acting headteacher demonstrates very good leadership. Middle leaders take their responsibilities for improvement seriously, but have insufficient opportunities to monitor the work of the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Because the provision is good, most children make good progress so that by the end of Reception many have exceeded the expected goals for learning. The environment indoors is made welcoming, inviting and interesting and the children are keen to explore this and take advantage of the wide range of stimulating activities offered, for example playing in 'Santa's workshop'. This is in contrast to the outdoor area that is less well developed. The layout limits the range

of activities that children can engage in, for example, to develop their skills using bikes and negotiating space and other children. The staff work hard to try to overcome this and are rightly aware of the need to improve facilities.

Procedures to ensure the children's welfare and well-being are good and efforts are made to ensure children have opportunities to exercise, such as 'Brain gym'. The staff are very active participants in this and help the children to develop their co-ordination, moving with control, whilst following instructions. Children behave well, comply with requests and are keen to share their ideas. The provision is well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the rate of progress made by all pupils in mathematics.
- Use assessment information better to raise the expectations of what pupils can achieve in Key Stage 1 so that their progress does not slow down.
- Improve teaching and learning by giving pupils more opportunities to develop and demonstrate their independence and creativity.
- Ensure that middle leaders are fully able to take responsibility for their areas of improvement.

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

In Key Stage 1, standards are average by the end of Year 2. This is because the pupil's progress slows after they leave the Reception class. Assessment information collected in the Reception class is not being used effectively enough to set challenging targets or to raise the teachers expectations of what the pupils can achieve once they are in Key Stage 1.

The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 overall is satisfactory. In English, improvements in the teaching of writing have led to a rise in standards so that they are above average. The standards attained by pupils in mathematics have risen and are now average, because progress has accelerated. However, some groups of pupils, particularly the more able do not make the progress they could because work is not pitched at the correct level for them. The progress of pupils who have found English and mathematics difficult is in line with other groups of pupils in school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils behave well in school, show good levels of respect and are polite, friendly and well mannered. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In assemblies, they demonstrate that they are thoughtful and reflective, for example by considering the significance of the message in the words and verses of Christmas carols. Pupils know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and say that mostly their school friends make healthy eating choices in school. They are aware of what to do to keep themselves safe and can explain the course of action they should take to maintain this. They say incidents of bullying are rare and they are generally confident that these are dealt with and do not re-occur. Pupils say they enjoy the activities provided for them in school and participate in the wide variety of clubs, some of which are organised by older pupils at lunchtime. The pupils' involvement in developing the outdoor

areas, fund raising and being responsible around the school demonstrates their positive contribution to the life of the school and the community. Pupils' skills to equip them for their future working lives are developing at a satisfactory pace.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in lessons are good because there are high expectations set by teachers and teaching assistants. Relationships are good and pupils collaborate well, for example, by discussing ideas that will improve their work. Pupils receive clear direction on what the learning objectives are in each lesson so that they are clear about what they need to do to be successful. However, expectations for some groups of pupils, especially the more able, are not set high enough. This means that they are not challenged enough in their learning, to enable them to think for themselves and to discover their own solutions to problems, particularly in mathematics. These pupils have insufficient opportunity to develop their independence and creativity.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school offers many enriching and stimulating activities which pupils report that they find interesting and enjoyable. For example, the Reception class benefited from the recent trip to Buxton Opera House to see 'Elmer the Elephant'. The school has worked successfully to establish effective links between subjects. For example, in some lessons writing has improved because of the work pupils do in design and technology which stimulates their imagination. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in this way. The curriculum for personal, social and health education has been successful in developing pupil's good personal development and well-being.

The school has a wide range of clubs in which many pupils take part. For example, pupils reported that they enjoy the dance club at lunchtime. The school provides an adequate range of additional activities to accelerate the progress made by pupils in English and mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for in school and there are clear procedures for keeping them safe and free from harm. Good partnerships with outside agencies have led to improvements in provision. For example, the nurture group is successful in helping those pupils who sometimes find life in school difficult. Pupils learn to deal with their emotions and develop skills in listening to others, sharing and taking turns fairly. There are a good range of links and partnerships in the community, for example with the local nurseries to ease the transition process when the children first start school. Pupils say they know if they have any problems, a member of staff will listen to them and take their concerns seriously. Procedures for checking pupils attend school regularly are used vigilantly to ensure any absence is explained as quickly as possible and in the best interests of the child. In consequence, the attendance rate rose in 2008.

The school has implemented an accurate procedure for tracking the progress that pupils make. This is beginning to have an impact on the pupil's progress in Key Stage 2 where standards

rose this year. Marking in some subjects celebrates the pupils' success and gives them useful guidance on the steps they need to take to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The acting headteacher demonstrates a clear vision for school improvement. A recent restructuring of staff means the school is better placed for future improvements. Procedures for evaluating the work of the school have accurately identified the priorities for improvement in the development plan. Middle leaders demonstrate an enthusiasm and commitment to leading these improvements. However, they have had insufficient opportunities to check the lessons to ensure that recommendations for improvement are applied consistently. Challenging targets set by the school in Key Stage 2 have been instrumental in the acceleration in progress experienced over the last year. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. School has successfully broadened the pupils' understanding of the different groups that contribute to the community. For example, the annual 'Diversity week' gives pupils enriching opportunities to develop their understanding of the importance of celebrating cultural diversity. Governance is good. Although there have been some recent replacements, a group of experienced governors demonstrate that they are knowledgeable and supportive and regularly act as critical friends to the school. The vast majority of the parents support the work of the school. As one parent reported 'This is a school that you feel you are able to invest something in.'

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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 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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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 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

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

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

11 December 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of New Mills Primary School, New Mills, SK22 4AY.

Thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We felt very welcome. If you remember, we came to look at the work that you were doing and to talk to you and your teachers. We enjoyed meeting you and thought you were friendly and polite. We think that you are kind and considerate to each other and we agree with you when you say that you feel safe in school. You try hard in lessons and some of you are doing much better in English and mathematics this year. You appreciate and enjoy taking part in the wide range of exciting and interesting activities that the school provides. We think that you take your responsibilities to the school and to the wider community seriously and your contribution is valued.

Your headteacher, all of the staff and school governors work very hard and are always looking for ways to make your lessons better and to help you to learn more quickly. Considering everything, we decided that yours is a satisfactory school.

To make things even better, we have asked the school to do the following.

- Help you to do even better in your mathematics lessons.
- To make sure that younger children make faster progress with their work.
- To make the work more challenging so that you can show how creative and independent you can be.
- To make sure that some teachers check more often how well you are doing in lessons.

You can help the school to improve by continuing to work hard in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow

Her Majesty's Inspector