

Newick Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114528
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	311634
Inspection date	4 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Jill Arnold

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Mayes
Headteacher	Sophie Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2004
School address	63 Allington Road Newick Lewes BN8 4NB
Telephone number	01825 723377
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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 effectiveness of the school's actions to improve pupils' progress in mathematics, the relative achievement of boys and girls, and the quality of academic guidance to pupils. Evidence was gathered from discussions with staff, pupils and governors; observation of lessons, assembly and break times; scrutiny of the school's documentation and pupils' work; and analysis of responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires to parents and carers. 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

Almost all pupils who attend this average-sized school are White British. Children start school with above average skills for their age and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well and standards are above average due to the good quality of teaching and care, guidance and support provided. The outstanding curriculum, including an extensive range of additional activities, makes a significant contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development and to their great enjoyment of school. The school has made good progress since its last inspection, notably with respect to curriculum planning and raising standards in writing. The effectiveness of its leadership puts the school in a strong position to continue to improve further in the future.

Although relatively new, the headteacher has earned the respect and support of pupils, parents, staff and governors in her drive for excellence. A positive, welcoming and supportive atmosphere exists in the school which helps pupils and their parents to be confident that it has their best interest at heart. Leadership and management are effective because school self-evaluation is accurate and planning for improvement focuses sharply on improving pupils' achievement and well-being. Assessment data are analysed and used effectively by the school's leaders to monitor pupils' progress closely to set targets for individual pupils that are realistic yet aspirational. Teachers and governors are becoming increasingly involved in monitoring and improving the school's performance. The governing body is organised and well informed. It fulfils its statutory duties, provides good support to the school and asks appropriately challenging questions to hold the school to account for its performance. The governors have been particularly successful in appointing school leaders who have had a significant impact on the school's development this year.

The care and support provided for pupils are good, including productive partnerships with parents and outside agencies that help to ensure the well-being of pupils and contributes to the good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Health and safety procedures and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and behaviour is managed in a consistently positive way. This helps pupils to feel safe, well supported and confident that should they have any worries, there is always an adult to talk to. Although pupils often receive helpful guidance regarding their progress, at times it is insufficiently precise to be fully effective in helping them to improve their work. The leadership team is currently reviewing the marking and feedback policy to ensure better consistency in this area

Pupils' outstanding personal development manifests itself in many ways. It is strongly promoted at every opportunity by the staff, who provide very good role models. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective and, because their ideas are often acted upon, they are confident to share their views. Their behaviour is considerate, respectful and responsible. Playtimes are harmonious, with older pupils showing care and concern for younger ones. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through their various responsibilities in school and their activities in the local community and through the church. Attendance rates are good. Pupils greatly enjoy school, particularly the extensive range of sporting, musical and creative activities on offer which also contribute to their social and cultural development. Their awareness of a good diet, their active playtimes and their regular participation in sporting activities help them to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Good provision in the Reception class helps children get off to a good start and they make good progress over their time at the school. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are generally above average. Standards in English, mathematics and science

have been above average at the end of Year 6, and in some years well above. Whilst the mathematics results in the 2007 Year 6 national tests were just above average and a little disappointing for the school, decisive action by the leadership in reorganising its provision and addressing areas of relative weakness has proved effective. Pupils currently in Year 6 have made rapid progress in mathematics this year and a greater proportion of pupils are expected to reach the higher Level 5 than previously. Pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills, their outstanding social development and their broad range of experiences at primary school make a strong contribution to their future economic well-being.

In 2007, boys performed better than girls in the national tests in Year 6 in all three subjects, and in Year 2 in mathematics. In both year groups, girls' results were average and relatively lower in mathematics. The school monitors pupils' progress closely and its analysis indicates that this is not a trend across the school. It is alert to the variations in performance of different groups of pupils within the school, and is taking appropriate action to address relative weaknesses. Its efforts to improve pupils' achievement in writing are proving to be effective and are signposting the way to secure further improvement to pupils' achievement in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good. Sometimes it is outstanding, enabling pupils to make rapid progress in their learning. Lessons are at their most productive when the content is inspiring, time is used effectively and teachers have high expectations and make explicit to their pupils what they will learn and why. Although most pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, some lessons lack the sharp focus of the better teaching in the school. When this occurs, pupils do not make such good progress. The school's leaders monitor teaching, have an accurate view of its strengths and are having a positive impact on improving relatively weaker aspects.

A creative approach to planning the curriculum is particularly effective in providing a context for pupils' learning. This, and the exceptional range of additional activities, is what makes the curriculum outstanding. Different subjects are linked together in a series of mini topics which provide opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their skills progressively in practical and meaningful ways. This has proved effective in improving the quality of pupils' writing. Pupils are appreciative of the many enrichment activities, including educational trips and visitors to school, which extend their learning and make it thoroughly enjoyable. Their personal development is strongly promoted through the curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education and creativity is strongly nurtured through music and art.

Pupils are justifiably proud of the school and most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire sang its praises. One typically wrote, 'My children are extremely happy at Newick School. I consider them very lucky to attend such an inspiring, caring and industrious institution. The staff are very dedicated and work well beyond the call of duty.' Another simply expressed the view of many with, 'Very lucky to have such a 'fab' school.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school in Reception with skills that are above expectations. Their language and emotional development are relatively stronger than their mathematical development. Children make good progress in all areas of their learning due to the good teaching, care and attention they receive, and many exceed the levels expected for their age. Additional support is provided early on for children who need it. Partnerships with parents and pre-school settings are

productive and contribute to children's smooth transition into school. They settle quickly when they start and rapidly grow in confidence as they try new experiences and become more independent. Activities are planned carefully to meet children's needs and interests, each day building on what the children have previously learnt. The well-designed outdoor area is used effectively to extend children's learning and the school has identified further ways to enhance children's creative development outdoors. Although each intake varies, there are no significant differences between the levels and progress of boys and girls by the end of the Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and ensure that pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- Improve academic guidance to pupils by providing specific feedback and advice on how to improve their work, in lessons and in marking.

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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?	2
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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	1
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	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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newick Primary School, Lewes BN8 4NB

Thank you for welcoming me when I came to inspect your school. Hearing your views and watching your lessons were very helpful to me in reaching the conclusion that yours is a good school. It is welcoming and well organised, with good teaching and an outstanding range of activities on offer. These things help you to really enjoy school and make good progress in your learning. I was particularly impressed by your excellent behaviour, your maturity and by your very positive attitudes to learning.

The people in charge of your school do a good job, by making sure you are cared for well, and by keeping a close watch on your progress. The Reception class gets children off to a good start to their education and, by the end of Year 6, nearly all pupils reach or exceed the national standards in English, mathematics and science.

Although most of you are making good progress in your learning and your standards of work are good, some of you should be doing better. I have asked the school to make sure that the teaching you receive enables you to make good progress in every lesson. I have asked that the feedback and advice you are given on how to improve your work is always specific, so you are really clear about what you have to do. You can help too by following the advice your teachers give you and by asking if you are not sure.

Several of your parents wrote to me saying how delighted they are with your school and you are right to be proud of it. Thank you once again for your help during the inspection. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Arnold Lead inspector