

# Newcastle CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123488
<b>Local Authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314610
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Edwards

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

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<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	37
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jock Beasley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Langford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Newcastle Craven Arms SY7 8QL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01588 640260
<b>Fax number</b>	01588 640890

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Newcastle C of E is a very small but expanding primary school that serves the village and surrounding district. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals but the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above that seen nationally. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. Children enter the school with skills that are broadly at the level expected for their age. The headteacher took up his appointment in September 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Parents are right to be pleased with the school because it is providing a good education, with some outstanding features. Without exception, they are full of praise for the school. The views of one parent reflect those of many others, 'We could not have wished for a better primary education. Our daughter has benefited enormously from the companionship engendered by the school's ethos and its high education content.'

Pupils achieve well throughout the school and attain standards that are consistently above average by the end of Year 6. Children are provided with a firm foundation for future learning in the Reception class. Literacy and numeracy skills are good throughout the school. The school has rightly recognised that, in Key Stage 2, pupils' writing skills are relatively weaker because there are too few opportunities for them to practise and improve their writing in subjects other than English. All pupils develop very good skills in information and communication technology (ICT), the result of well-planned activities that make the best use of very good resources. Pupils do well because the teaching is consistently good. Teachers are particularly effective in ensuring work is well matched to the pupils' age and maturity in the mixed-age classes.

The good curriculum has recently taken on a more thematic approach to enable writing skills to be taught through subjects such as history and geography, but this approach is too new to show any observable results. The very good enrichment activities, such as visits to Chester, are helping to provide a good starting point for pupils' writing. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning French and are keen to talk of their developing links with schools here and abroad. There is excellent care, guidance and support for the pupils. The good number of effective learning support assistants help to ensure all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, do as well as they can.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and, in all classes, their behaviour and attitudes towards work are exemplary. The pupils' enjoyment of school, and all that it provides, is evident in their enthusiasm for work. The school works hard to encourage regular attendance, but the current level of satisfactory attendance is the result of a very small number of parents taking holidays during term time. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and support other pupils who have learning difficulties. The pupils are very keen to follow a safe and healthy lifestyle and are very proud of their garden, where vegetables are grown and used to supplement the meals at lunchtime. They thoroughly enjoy opportunities for physical activities.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is building on the good work of his predecessor and has established an effective working environment for both staff and pupils. The school's self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of what is successful and what needs to be improved. All staff demonstrate a willingness to take on board new initiatives and there is a desire to make the curriculum more interesting and relevant for the pupils. Governors are supportive but challenging, encouraging the leadership to improve further the quality of education. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Overall, children in the Reception class make good progress. Good teaching provides them with a range of stimulating activities which are well matched to their ability and maturity and enable

them to settle well. Teaching is particularly effective in developing children's personal and social skills where they learn to share, take turns, cooperate with one another and mix with older children in the class. Occasionally, children need more opportunities to decide for themselves which activities they should undertake. Children are cared for very well. The very good level of support enables them to make good progress so that by the end of the Reception year most children attain the goals expected for their age in all areas of learning. There are good links with the nearby Nursery and good assessment procedures enable staff to monitor children's progress effectively.

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

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing skills by providing them with more opportunities to practise their skills in subjects other than English.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

From the good start made in Reception, pupils' basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy are built upon effectively through Key Stage 1. Standards have been consistently above the national average in all subjects over the last four years by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' ICT skills are very good and are used very well to enhance their learning in other subjects. Pupils' writing skills do not develop as rapidly as one might expect in Key Stage 2. Although basic grammatical skills are well taught, pupils have too few opportunities to practise and improve their writing skills in other subjects such as history and geography. As result of early identification of their needs and very effective support and guidance from skilled support staff, pupils with learning difficulties achieve well.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time in school, particularly the opportunities provided at playtimes and lunchtimes for physical activities. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to participate in community events such as the Remembrance Service, culminating in a moving rendition of the 'Last Post' by a Year 6 pupil.

Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in pupils' very positive attitudes and excellent behaviour. Although pupils gain a good understanding of different cultures and faiths, the school has rightly planned further activities to heighten their awareness of the multicultural world in which they are growing up. These include links with a school in Birmingham and an island off the coast of Australia. Most pupils take part in a good range of physical activities, eat healthily and are aware of the dangers of smoking and alcohol. Pupils' secure basic skills and outstanding personal and social skills mean they are well prepared for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The consistently good teaching ensures most pupils achieve well. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils are capable of understanding and doing. They plan work very carefully to take account of pupils' abilities and the mixed-age classes, and very good use is

made of the skills of the good number of learning support staff to ensure pupils of all abilities make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils learn well because lessons are fun and varied. One child commented, 'I like the way work is made interesting. The teacher will put something on the whiteboard and then he explains it well.'

A particular strength of teaching throughout the school is the way in which ICT is used to enhance learning. Pupils talk knowledgeably of how they use software to produce animations, a precursor to writing stories for other pupils. Older pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to improve their writing skills and occasional overuse of mundane worksheets inhibits pupils' writing throughout the school.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Throughout the school, there is a very clear focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.. There is a good emphasis on providing the pupils with a varied and wide-ranging curriculum. Music, drama and the arts feature strongly in the school's curriculum and many pupils receive instrument tuition. The good use of teachers' specialist skills ensures there is good provision in subjects such as French and music. ICT features strongly, particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils make good use of computers for research, recording interviews and assessment work. The curriculum is enriched very well through a wide range of after-school clubs, visits and visitors and significantly through links with other primary schools that enhance the learning opportunities for its pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's arrangements to assess pupils' progress are very effective. Teachers match work very closely to the pupils' abilities. Learning support assistants are used very effectively, together with intervention strategies, to accelerate the pupils' progress. Assessment information is shared very well with pupils so that they know what needs to be done to maintain improvement. Parents feel their children are looked after well, and are rightly confident that any concerns they have will be taken seriously. Pupils are very well cared for and they are confident in having an adult to turn to in the event of trouble. Child protection procedures and risk assessment are robust and ensure that the environment is very safe.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Staff work very well together. The strong team approach ensures that they are all moving in the same direction for the benefit of the pupils. Improvement is driven effectively by the headteacher. Self-evaluation is carried out well, resulting in all staff having a clear understanding of what is done well and what needs to be improved. The school acknowledges there is a need to monitor teaching even more rigorously to further improve its quality. Through its use of good assessment and tracking of pupils' progress, the school sets challenging but achievable targets. Staff are continually looking for approaches to make the curriculum more enjoyable for the pupils. The governors question what is happening in school and have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They are not complacent and support the school

well, working hard to ensure the resources, buildings and grounds can accommodate the rise in the school population.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1

<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>	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**

21 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newcastle C of E Primary School, Craven Arms, Shropshire SY7 8QL

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. Newcastle C of E Primary School is providing you with a good education.

These are some of the highlights of your school:

- From the time that you start school, you make good progress and reach standards that are better than in other schools.
- Those of you who need extra help and guidance are provided with good support.
- You behave exceptionally well, try to do your best and thoroughly enjoy your work because you are given many interesting things to do.
- You are taught well and this helps you to make good progress in your work. You get on very well with your teachers and with other children.
- You know the importance of following a healthy lifestyle, take part in many sporting activities and try to eat healthily.
- Adults look after you very well and keep you safe.
- Those in charge of the school ensure it runs smoothly and everyone works hard to help you learn as well as you can.

This is what we have asked the school to do now:

- Help older children to do better in your writing by giving you more opportunities to practise writing in subjects such as history and geography.

I hope you continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school.

Yours faithfully

Paul Edwards Lead inspector



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