

Newlands Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 133318 |
| Local Authority | Wakefield |
| Inspection number | 316078 |
| Inspection dates | 15–16 November 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Philip Cole |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 288 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr R Smith |
| Headteacher | Mrs Kathleen Griffiths |
| Date of previous school inspection | 9 June 2003 |
| School address | Wakefield Road Normanton West Yorkshire WF6 1BB |
| Telephone number | 01924 302585 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average size school serves Normanton, a village close to Wakefield with mainly rented housing. Virtually all of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average but fewer of these pupils have statements to support their particular needs than is usually found. The school provides extended services through its recently opened Children's Centre, which is awaiting its inspection. The school is participating in the local authority's Primary Leadership Intensive Support Programme.

Key for inspection grades

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| 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. It enjoys strong parental support. Parents are very happy with the care and support given to their children and are pleased with the progress they make. On average children come into the Nursery with skills that are poor compared to those expected for their age, particularly in their language and their personal, social and emotional development. In the past pupils have made barely adequate progress in school overall. This is changing. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. Progress in Key Stage 1 is accelerating after a few years when it was weak and standards declined in English and mathematics. The satisfactory progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 is being maintained. Results in the national tests have been improving for several years in Year 6, although they remain well below national averages.

Warm caring relationships and effective support and guidance ensure that pupils' personal development is good. 'I love coming to school because it makes me happy.' sums up the views of many pupils. They enjoy school because they feel safe and secure and have many interesting activities to do. They have a good understanding of what they need to do to keep fit and healthy and eagerly take on responsibilities. Weak basic skills mean that work place skills that contribute to pupils' future economic well-being are no better than satisfactory. Their good behaviour provides a firm foundation on which learning can be built.

Involvement in the Intensive Support Programme has made a significant impact on teaching and the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress. As a consequence, these have become much more effective. This is leading to better learning and improving standards. Teachers focus closely on what they want pupils to learn in lessons and pupils work purposefully because it is made clear to them what they should to be able to do. Positive relationships and effective discipline means little time is wasted. Progress is no better than satisfactory, however, because teachers do not expect enough of pupils when they are recording what they have done. Nor do they always ensure that the tasks they set are sufficiently well matched to the needs of the different groups in their classes.

The school regularly reviews its curriculum following analysis of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. Provision is adjusted to support identified needs. This is proving very effective in tackling the deficits that exist in pupils' literacy skills. One of the reasons pupils enjoy school so much is the wide range of interesting visits, visitors and out of class activities that are available to them. The school works hard and effectively to promote pupils' well-being through the efforts of the learning mentor and the involvement of external agencies to support vulnerable pupils in particular. Assessment is used well to identify groups who then benefit from effective extra support and this is making a strong contribution to accelerating the learning of these pupils. Pupils find the class targets useful general guides but not enough is done to help individual pupils understand what they need to do to move forward.

The headteacher, together with the increasingly effective leadership team, is raising expectations and setting realistically challenging targets that support improvements in standards and achievement. Although some specific weaknesses in teaching have not been identified, the school's evaluations of its performance are generally accurate and programmes are put in place that tackle weaknesses. Governors provide the school with good support but are not sufficiently involved in evaluating its performance to be fully effective. The school has made sound progress since its last inspection. It works well in partnership with others, particularly the local authority,

to promote pupils' learning and it provides satisfactory value for money. Its capacity to improve is satisfactory, but improving, as leadership skills become more widely embedded across its staff.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception class. This is because the Foundation Stage is well led and managed. This ensures that good quality and stimulating provision is well matched to children's learning needs. Gains in children's personal, social and emotional development and their language skills are most impressive. This is because of the very good induction arrangements, the strong emphasis placed on care and support and the intensive work done to develop children's language. Opportunities for mathematical development are well planned, but progress is less impressive than it is in language because there are fewer focussed adult led sessions for the children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics, particularly by the end of Year 2.
- Raise pupils' expectations of both the quantity and quality of their work.
- Ensure that the needs of the different groups are always met in class lessons.
- Ensure that pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to make their work better and to take the next steps in their learning.

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

Standards by Year 6 are well below average overall. The deficits in language that are particularly marked when children enter school contribute to overall standards being so low. Very few pupils attain the higher Level 5, especially in English. Across Key Stage 2, achievement has been improving and, in 2007, progress was significantly better, both overall and in English, than previously. This improving picture is seen in standards that have risen year-on-year since 2002. In Key Stage 1 standards have been falling for some time and progress has been inadequate. This decline has been addressed and now pupils are making steady progress overall and impressive progress in their literacy skills where the school has provided very intensive and well-focussed support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school invests a lot of effort into promoting pupils' personal development. This is bearing fruit. Pupils' behaviour is good, their self-esteem is improving and relationships are positive and supportive across the school. Pupils who are new to the school, including the few who come from Eastern Europe with little or no English, soon make friends and are happy in school. Pupils are keen to become involved through, for example, the school council, 'Fit Bods', 'Wake Up Shake Up Crew' members and being house captains. They love the opportunities they have to exercise both in lessons and in the many clubs they eagerly attend. Although they know well

what they need to do to keep healthy some do not make the best choices when it comes to lunch-time. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are well focussed on what pupils will be learning and are mostly taught in a purposeful and appropriately structured way. Weaknesses in providing appropriate challenge to the different groups in each class limit the progress that is made and often more could be asked of pupils when they are recording what they have done in both the quantity and quality of their work. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they will be learning and this helps them to work purposefully. Teachers often make helpful comments on pupils' completed work but do not always follow up on what they have said and, as a result, the impact of their marking is often limited. Supportive relationships promote positive attitudes to learning and ensure that pupils are involved in the activities they are given.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is clearly focussed on raising standards and achievement. It is well matched to the particular needs of groups of pupils. This is because assessments of pupils' learning are carefully analysed and appropriate intervention programmes are put into place to tackle the weaknesses that are identified. This is evident across the school but particularly in the intensive teaching of phonics in lower school where impressive gains are being made by many pupils. Stimulating visits and visitors, for example a local baker, add greatly to pupils' enjoyment, motivation and personal development Pupils also really enjoy the many clubs that are provided, ranging from card making to netball. These also provide added challenge for pupils who may be gifted or talented.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The work of the learning mentor and the school's close and effective partnerships with local authority support services and parents ensure that pupils, including those who are vulnerable, are given very effective support. Attendance has shown strong improvement, although a very small minority continue to cause the school concern, despite its best efforts. Guidance provided by an effective programme is underpinning pupils' strong personal and social development. Very careful and regular tracking of pupils' progress is ensuring that support is provided for those whose performance could be better. The academic guidance given to pupils is helping them to understand what they should be able to do for their age but is less successful in helping individuals improve their work and to take their next steps in learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is committed to raising standards and achievement and is making effective use of the support that the local authority is giving the school. This is enabling teachers to play

a much fuller part in evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses and in leading initiatives that bring about improvements. Good use is made of data to evaluate the school's performance. The monitoring of teaching is helping to identify strengths and weaknesses and is leading to appropriate support being given where it is needed. It has not, however, been fully effective in pin-pointing specific aspects of practice that are ineffective and which prevent pupils from making better than satisfactory progress. The governors are keen and supportive and ensure that the school meets its obligations. Their skills in evaluating its effectiveness are not fully developed and this limits their ability to hold it to account.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 |
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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? | 2 |
| 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

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| 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 | 2 |
| 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 |

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

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our two days with you, particularly the time we spent talking to you. We know from what you said that you enjoy school, especially the visits you go on, and that you feel safe and secure there.

Your school is satisfactory and has some real strengths. Your behaviour is good and you get on very well with each other. We were impressed with how you help around school and how keen you are to get involved in the clubs and activities the school provides. You have a good understanding of what you need to do to keep safe and healthy. The teachers and their helpers look after you very well and do their best to make sure you have interesting things to do and are happy in school.

Although most of you are now making satisfactory progress in your learning, not all of you are doing as well as you possibly could. To help you do better we have asked your teachers to make sure that those of you who find learning easy are given more difficult work and those of you who find it hard are given work you can manage. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that you all do as much as you possibly can when you are working in your books. Your teachers make helpful comments on your work and give you useful class targets to aim for. We have asked them to make sure that you do what they have written on your work. We have also asked them to give you individual targets so you each know what you need to do to take the next steps in your learning. You can help of course by trying your best to do what the teachers ask you to!

Test results at Newlands are not as high as they are in other schools, although they have been getting better in Year 6. We have asked your headteacher, governors, teachers and their helpers to close the gap, particularly in Year 2. We know that they work very hard and we are sure they will do their best to make this happen.