

Newlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133704
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	316202
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Graham Stephens

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr James Meffen
Headteacher	Mrs Carole Bird
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
School address	Ullswater Road Millbrook Southampton SO16 9EA
Telephone number	0238 0774333
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school, formed as a result of the amalgamation of an infant and junior school five years ago, is larger than most primary schools. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds. Half the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much higher than average. The number of pupils either joining or leaving the school other than at normal times is above average. The school continues to receive long standing support from the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Since the last inspection and despite long term, intensive and on-going support from the local authority (LA), leaders and managers have not demonstrated sustained improvement in respect of achievement and standards by the time pupils leave the school. Weaknesses from the previous inspection such as improving standards in speaking and listening, mathematics and science and the attendance of pupils have not been tackled sufficiently. Neither have leaders and managers, at all levels, ensured that information from tracking pupils' progress is used sufficiently to ensure improvement over time. The rate of pupils' progress is disrupted by attendance that remains well below average, and by many pupils arriving late and disrupting the start of lessons. There are good aspects to the curriculum, such as the range of visits and visitors and the music and sporting provision. However, it is inadequate overall because there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they are taught, especially in mathematics, science and writing. It fails to deliver high enough standards in basic skills. Consequently, although there are some good aspects in pupils' personal development, they are not prepared well enough for their next stage of education. The school's capacity for improvement without on-going external support is inadequate.

Children start the Foundation Stage with standards well below those expected. They progress well and many reach the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. Throughout the rest of the school, pupils make insufficient progress. Standards, at the end of Year 2, in 2007 were significantly below average in reading and writing but were slightly better in mathematics. They are similarly very low at the end of Year 6. Progress is inadequate, and standards have been significantly below in Key Stage 2 for several years.

The on-going support from the LA has recently successfully focused leadership and management on the need to accelerate progress. This has seen the implementation of several strategies. For example, management has been restructured to involve subject leaders more in monitoring and assessing progress and there is additional coaching for teachers in Year 3. It is too early to see the full impact of these measures on pupils' progress. Some pupils' learning needs are beginning to be met because the outcomes of assessment and monitoring are being used more effectively by some teachers to target work and support. Again, the changes are at an early stage and have still to be applied consistently and embedded. Teaching observed varied from satisfactory to good, but the school's track record of underachievement demonstrates that teaching is inadequate overall. It has yet to become consistently good over time to address the legacy of underachievement.

Pastoral care is good and the school places a great emphasis on identifying personal barriers to learning. Behaviour remains good. Pupils say they enjoy school and have a good understanding about how to stay healthy and safe. However, academic support and guidance are less secure and slow pupils' progress. For example, pupils have literacy and numeracy targets but are often unsure of how to use them to improve their work. Teachers' marking is inconsistent in the degree to which references are made to individual learning targets or how pupils can attain challenging personal goals.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's induction into the Foundation Stage is of a good quality. Very good partnerships with parents and pre-school providers help ensure that children settle quickly, and feel happy, safe and secure. Children achieve well because of good teaching and a curriculum that provides a good balance of opportunities for child initiated learning and adult directed activities. Many children still fall short of the standards expected in reading and writing by the end of the Reception year because of their low starting points. Children access the dedicated outdoor play area freely, take part enthusiastically in all activities and get on well with each other. Their individual needs are very well catered for and as a result their personal development is exceptional. Staff operate well as a team, are enthusiastic and committed to improvement. They pose relevant and stimulating questions but occasionally opportunities are missed to extend the children's thinking to encourage further exploration. The quality of leadership and management is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress and raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the consistency of teaching to ensure that it is at least good throughout the school.
- Ensure that information gained from tracking pupils' progress is used effectively, so that work is always well matched to pupils' needs.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that systems and procedures to monitor overall performance are rigorous and applied well to effect improvement in teaching, achievement and standards.
- Improve attendance and punctuality.
- Improve the curriculum through providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills in subjects across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils, including those who find aspects of English and mathematics challenging, make inadequate progress. Evidence indicates that consistently good teaching in the Foundation Stage is beginning to raise standards on entry to Year 1, although they remain well below average. National assessments until 2005 indicate continued progress as pupils moved through Key Stage 1, but since 2006, standards have declined and progress is inadequate. Key Stage 2 standards since 2003 have, overall, been significantly below average, representing inadequate progress for pupils given their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities in school and are proud to be a 'buddy', playground monitor or a school councillor. They work together well and talk positively about others. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They learn to respect each other and the different beliefs and cultures that people have. At present, teams of pupils are also working with the site manager to create a litter free outdoor environment. Pupils enjoy being involved in community events and in planning and taking part in charity days. Attendance is below average. Low standards in English, mathematics and science do not prepare pupils well

academically, either for their next stage of education or their future economic well being. However their ability to work and cooperate on tasks is a strength.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching lacks consistency. It is inadequate because it has not ensured that pupils make sufficient progress over time. As part of the intensive support programme, coaching was successfully introduced in Year 3 at the start of the current term. This, together with on-going monitoring of teaching, is beginning to make a difference especially in the Foundation Stage and in Years 4, 5 and 6. There are currently examples of good teaching where work is matched well to ability, lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils are eager to learn. However, learning sometimes lacks rigour. For example, some higher attainers and pupils with learning difficulties do not achieve as much as they could because either the pace of work is too relaxed, or the tasks are not well matched to their abilities. Relationships are good and teaching assistants often support learning well. Teachers use interactive whiteboards confidently to engage pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

Provision to equip pupils with basic skills is inadequate and this has seen achievement and standards remain too low for too long. The school recognises this and changes are being introduced, but they are not yet having sufficient impact. For example, there are some increased opportunities for pupils to apply the writing skills they are taught, but this is not fully embedded across all subjects. Similarly, there is evidence of a greater emphasis on speaking and listening. It is too early to assess the impact of changes, but work seen in English and the creative arts involving Aboriginal art and poetry, and measuring the height of beans grown by the pupils linking science with mathematics, is encouraging. Pupils' learning is also enhanced by the provision of specialist teaching in music, sport and information and communication technology. These help to motivate pupils. The personal, social and health education programme, well supported by the nurture team, contributes well to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

The school gathers information about pupils' progress but the impact of this is limited because the data are not organised well, or used sufficiently to plan work that challenges pupils and helps them move on. Whilst the information is now presented to teachers in a more useful format, much of the school's work on using the outcomes of assessment is too new for its effect to be clearly measured.

Academic guidance and support are inadequate. However, adults have a good understanding of pupils' pastoral needs, especially those of pupils who are vulnerable and those with learning difficulties or disabilities. They are able to respond positively to any concerns. A dedicated nurse supports pupils and families well. The school works effectively in partnership with a wide range of agencies. Policies and procedures to protect pupils are rigorous, made clear to all staff and carefully implemented. Consequently, arrangements for keeping pupils safe are secure.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The school's judgement of good leadership and management is difficult to reconcile with very low standards and achievement. The school has successfully created a harmonious and caring community that is based securely on mutual support and good pastoral care. However, academic standards and achievement have remained too low for too long. Until very recently, the tracking of pupils' progress has been neither robust nor organised well enough. Consequently, the information is not used effectively to challenge pupils consistently and accelerate their progress. The rate of pupils' progress remains too slow to make up for the legacy of underachievement.

Formal and informal monitoring of teaching takes place, pupils' progress is discussed and teachers have been trained to ensure that assessment of work accurately reflects the standards attained. However, the information gained from monitoring is not yet organised well enough to enable the leadership team to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.

The chair of governors has recently expressed his concerns about achievement and standards. However, governance is inadequate because the track record of underachievement is too long and the school was not held to account at an earlier stage.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
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	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
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	4
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newlands Primary School, Southampton, SO16 9EA

Thank you for your help when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting and talking with you and hearing about your work and all the exciting things that you do. By now, you probably know that we think your school needs some extra help; we call this 'special measures'. This means that we feel there are important things wrong in your school. It needs help, quickly, to put them right. The school will have help to make the necessary improvements. More inspectors will visit to see how well the school is progressing. At the moment, it does not make sure that you do well enough with your work. Also too many of you spend too much time away from school and miss too many lessons. We have asked the school to do six things.

- Help you do as well as you should in all subjects, but especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Make sure that all your teachers teach as well as they can so that you learn even more quickly.
- Tell you clearly what you are doing well, how you can improve your work and ensure that work is just at the right level for each of you.
- Make sure that both your headteacher and senior teachers check frequently to see if you are making enough progress.
- Make sure that more of you attend school regularly, and are punctual.
- Give you more opportunity to practise your literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in all subjects.

We think you behave well and most of you enjoy school. You know how to keep fit and healthy. You feel very safe in school and know that there are many adults to turn to if you have a worry or concern. Adults do the right things to look after you. Children in the Reception class get off to a good start and do well in all areas of their learning. Your teachers plan many exciting things for you to do like going on visits, growing vegetables and arranging for interesting visitors to come and talk to you. Your headteacher and the school's governors want to make the school better so that you all make as much progress as you should.

With best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Graham Stephens

Lead Inspector