

Newsome Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107630
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	324606
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2009
Reporting inspector	John Young HMI

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Winter
Headteacher	Mrs Jean Farmer
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2005
School address	Castle Avenue Newsome Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD4 6JN
Telephone number	01484 226689
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Age group	7–11
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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

This average-sized and popular school is situated within a community which has higher than average levels of disadvantage and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Most pupils are White British and live locally. A proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Fewer pupils than average speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Pupils' prior attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

The school has achieved Healthy School status, the Activemark Silver and Artsmark Gold awards and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. The school is the current holder of the Key Stage 2 National Animation and Film Award. The school also provides a range of extended services for pupils and parents. It shares its site with a high school to which most of its pupils transfer. Due to local demographics, there are fewer children entering the school than in the past from the local community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Newsome Junior School is outstanding and provides excellent value for money. Pupils, parents and staff are rightly proud of this caring, happy and harmonious school in which being highly successful is the norm. Pupils benefit from a holistic approach to their education that superbly equips them for the next stage of their lives beyond the school. They mature exceptionally well academically, socially and emotionally in the nurturing environment that staff create.

The effectiveness of the school is evident in the outstanding outcomes for pupils. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their education. A combination of outstanding teaching, a first rate curriculum that is very well matched to pupils' individual needs, high quality care, guidance and support, and tremendous personal development help to ensure pupils reach, and more often than not exceed, their challenging targets. They are helped in this by their own high aspirations and positive attitudes to learning.

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress during their time in the school. The standards they reach are well above national averages. Those who find learning difficult or have starting points which are lower than expected for their age also make excellent progress. For example, several pupils who joined the school with standards well below average in mathematics made double the expected rate of progress and left in Year 6 having reached the highest standard possible in the national test.

Outstanding leadership and management have ensured that the school has not become complacent following the previous successful inspection. As a result, everyone associated with the school has a clear understanding of its educational direction. Accurate self-evaluation, astute planning, and implementation of a number of improvement strategies have enabled the school to successfully tackle the identified shortcomings from the last inspection and ultimately improve its overall effectiveness. Leaders and managers at all levels have used their awareness of the school's strengths and potential growth areas to inform subsequent development planning and this has resulted in a well conceived school development plan. Governance is good and governors challenge as well as support the school's senior leaders. There is excellent capacity to improve based on a strong track record of success.

What the school should do to improve further

- All priorities for further development are accurately contained within the school's development plan and there are no significant areas for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and their standards are well above average. Their attainment when they enter the school is broadly average but by the time they reach the end of Year 6 their standards are significantly above average in English, science and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the highest possible levels in the national tests is very high.

The 2007 Key Stage 2 national test results continued a three-year trend of rising standards and indicators that measure the progress made (value added) placed pupils' overall performance in the core subjects in the top 3% of schools nationally. The provisional 2008 test results continue this impressive trend with standards in all core subjects higher than they were in 2007. Higher level attainment in English and science was particularly noteworthy.

The school has been especially successful in raising the attainment of pupils with lower starting points, many of whom have moved from below average to well above average standards during their time in the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make the same excellent progress as their peers and reach much higher standards than their counterparts reach nationally. Inspectors found, and the school's data confirmed, that pupils right across the school are making excellent progress overall. Effective assessment, careful monitoring of their performance and well-targeted intervention are helping to ensure pupils make significant progress. The school sets and habitually exceeds challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They enjoy coming to school which is reflected in their excellent attendance, fine behaviour and the positive way they relate to each other. As one pupil put it, 'I love coming to school because we all get on really well and there are no favourites.' This ethos of teamwork and equality, coupled with the degree of personal responsibility expected of the pupils, underpins the school's philosophy. Older pupils choose to act as mentors and help younger children with their homework. Other pupils build their self-esteem by taking responsibility of running the tea room on a Friday; there are also opportunities for pupils to make presentations during 'something special' assemblies. Very good opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are built into the school week through activities like the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme. Pupils show they can reflect on their behaviour and resolve conflict when they write letters of apology during 'sorry club'. They feel safe in school and know to whom they can turn for help if they are hurt or in difficulties. There are few concerns about bullying.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to be healthy and are rightly proud of achieving Healthy School status. They develop excellent business and enterprise skills by planning the healthy tuck shop, organising sponsored events and running a money saving scheme with staff support. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and wider community by raising money for charity, serving on the school council and working with children from the local special school. They also acquire excellent life skills, such as problem-solving and team working, which will stand them in good stead in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality and impact of teaching on learning is outstanding overall. Pupils make great progress, enjoy their lessons, and are eager to learn because staff make learning interesting, active and challenging. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils were required to design a product, conduct market research to find an appropriate name for it (which involved them giving a short presentation on its unique features), and then analyse the results and present them to the rest of the class. Lessons are well planned, using information from the school's high quality assessment systems and provide activities carefully matched to all levels of ability. Lessons feature varied activities, enthusiastic teaching and excellent relationships that prompt eager, confident responses from the pupils.

Pupils are aware of their targets, and these are broken down into small realistic steps, which give pupils a clear sense of achievement and confidence as they surpass them. They are encouraged to be inquisitive, to work independently and talk to each other and to staff, to consolidate their learning. Staff manage behaviour well so very little or no learning time is lost. Support staff are skilled and make a valuable contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. The school has rightly placed a strong emphasis on improving pupils' literacy skills through group work and drama and this has been highly successful. A weekly 'surgery' allows parents the opportunity to discuss the progress of their children and see the quality of their work. Marking is evaluative, often indicating the next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that the curriculum is outstanding. It is diverse, well-balanced and meets all statutory requirements, and includes provision for modern foreign languages. It is very well matched to the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Provision for literacy, numeracy and science is outstanding and this is supplemented by an impressive range of foundation subjects. The regular use of information and communication technology (ICT) by staff and pupils is also well embedded. The topic-based approach the school uses allows staff to be more imaginative in their planning and develop themes across all subjects. This ties in well with a whole school shift towards developing creativity across the curriculum. As a result, pupils find it easier to reinforce their learning as the connections between subjects and activities are more apparent.

The school places a strong emphasis on providing experiences pupils would not otherwise receive and successfully enriches the curriculum through frequent visits, visitors and a number of themed weeks. Pupils go to Robin Wood and Cliffe House to experience outdoor and adventurous activities. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a range of PE, music, dance, ICT and art activities provided before school, at lunch-time and after school. They also benefit from events organised as part of the School Sport Partnership.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance, and support provided to pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very happy and feel safe because routines and procedures are clear and highly effective. They know who to turn to if they are in distress and are confident staff will help them. The school really believes every child does matter and this shines through in all they do. Child protection procedures and support are in place. Risk assessments and health and safety measures are rigorously implemented. Strong links with a range of suitable external agencies help the school to support pupils and their parents effectively.

Every child, irrespective of ability, has an individual plan, which helps to tailor their learning experience and track the progress they make in all areas of their development. It also alerts staff to where additional support may be needed. The use of assessment information to boost pupils' learning and motivation is well established and pupils have an excellent understanding of their targets, how well they are doing and what they need to do in order to improve further. Regular peer and self-assessment consolidates this understanding. In turn staff are clear about what pupils know, understand and can do, which helps them to effectively plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Links with the main feeder infant and nursery and high school are outstanding

and help to ensure that children integrate smoothly into life at Newsome Junior and receive excellent support and guidance as they move through and leave the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management of the school are exceptional at all levels, but underpinned by superb support, guidance and strategic thinking from the headteacher. Together with her very capable senior team, she is providing clear educational direction, which has the full backing of all staff. By distributing leadership responsibility throughout the school she has ensured that all staff feel valued and an integral part of the school's mission to provide the best possible educational experience for pupils. All aspects of the school's provision are monitored and evaluated and the school is well aware of their strengths and areas for further development. Staff benefit from regular professional development and are held to account for the effectiveness of their work through rigorous performance management. All legal requirements are met. Provision for equality of opportunity is excellent. Community cohesion is promoted very effectively and pupils know they are part of a local, regional and global community. Harmony among pupils from different ethnic heritages is good. Most parents are very positive about the school and the quality of education it provides.

The school has effectively tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection, with the use of ICT now very well embedded. Pupils have many opportunities to learn independently and the new focus on creativity is providing additional chances for pupils to take ownership of their learning. The school has also raised standards in mathematics and English and they are now in line with those in science. The impact of leadership and management is very evident in the outstanding outcomes for pupils not just academically but socially and emotionally.

Governors fulfil their duties well. There is excellent management capacity, which was evident during the long term absence of the headteacher, when the school continued to function without missing a beat. Some very effective partnerships have been established with a number of external agencies, which enrich pupils' education. Shrewd financial management has enabled the school to continue to build for the future despite a declining budget.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

Thank you for being so friendly and polite to Mr Aziz and me when we visited recently to find out about the quality of education the school provides for you. It was fascinating, and a privilege to see you learn, hear your views and discover how well you're doing. We also read the questionnaires completed by you and your parents; they were very helpful to us. We appreciate the thank you card you made for us.

We think your school is outstanding. Your personal development and well-being are terrific and you obviously enjoy school because your attitudes to learning, behaviour and attendance are all good. The impact of teaching on your learning is exceptional and this helps you all to reach and frequently exceed the targets set for you. The quality of your curriculum is first class and you told us how much you enjoy the chances you get to do 'exciting' things. The school takes super care of you and the support and guidance you get to improve your learning are tremendous. The leadership and management of the school are outstanding and staff are determined to do everything they can to ensure you all reach your potential.

You are rightly proud of your school and I am confident that you will continue to support staff in their efforts to tackle the priorities for further improvement accurately identified in the school development plan.