

# The Newton Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110717
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	325205
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joanne Harvey

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 (total)	92
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Hazel Crawley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Rhys Thrower
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Caxton End Eltisley St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 6TL

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 November 2008
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**Telephone number**

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**Age group** 4–11

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- whether all pupils are doing equally well in all phases of the school
- whether previous weaknesses in assessment have been successfully addressed to ensure that expectations are consistently high and pupils are clear about the next steps of their learning
- whether systems for leadership and management are equally robust and effective at all levels and in all phases of the school.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, senior staff and governor representatives. In addition, there was observation of parts of several lessons, scrutiny of school information and its self-evaluation statement, analysis of samples of pupils' work, evaluation of parents' questionnaires, and discussions with pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors 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

This is a smaller than average size rural community primary school which caters for pupils from the immediate area and from several surrounding villages. Nearly all pupils come from White British backgrounds and there are very few at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. There are very few pupils entitled to claim free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found in most schools and there are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. A much larger number enter and leave the school other than at the usual times. The school has achieved Healthy School Status, the FA Charter Standard and an ActiveMark.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with a broad range of knowledge and skills. They are broadly average in many areas of learning but are sometimes lower in early literacy and creative skills. Provision is currently made for the very few EYFS children within a class of predominantly Year 1 pupils.

Pupils at the school have access to childcare provision after school which is not managed by the school governing body and which operates largely from the school hall. A privately run day nursery shares the school site.

## 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 and improving school. Pupils progress well to often attain standards that are above or well above average in English, mathematics and science by the time that they leave the school. Occasionally, progress, and the standards reached are exceptional. The school has exemplary features in the pastoral elements of the care it provides for pupils and in the consequent outstanding personal development seen in the pupils themselves.

Recent success owes much to the relatively new headteacher, supported by his able deputy, who, in a short time has been highly effective in strengthening systems for the leadership and management of the school and improving the quality of teaching and learning. This successful work indicates that there is good capacity to continue to drive forward school improvement. The governors, parents, pupils, and the caring and committed staff team share the headteacher's vision and sense of purpose. The positive ethos and happy family atmosphere they create together are evident on entering the school. Pupils thrive in an environment that is nurturing and at the same time challenging, so they become well-rounded individuals. As a result, pupils not only achieve well academically but their personal achievements are exceptional. It is not surprising that parents are highly appreciative of the school. One wrote: 'We feel lucky to have such a brilliant, caring local school to send our children to.' Another said: 'My child is extremely happy at Newton School. She is both inspired and challenged.' These comments represent the views of many who responded to the questionnaire. Pupils echo this sentiment in their demonstration of exceptional levels of enjoyment and good and improving attendance. Pupils' personal development, including their social, moral and spiritual development, is outstanding due to strong guidance from teachers that matches parental expectations. Their cultural development is good. Pupils are encouraged to express their opinions and to accept responsibilities, allowing them to grow in confidence. They take pride in helping others and in looking after each other and their school. They take their jobs around school very seriously and really make an outstanding difference to the smooth running of the school. They also make a good contribution to village life. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and how to keep themselves and each other safe within and beyond school. The combination of very good literacy and numeracy skills and their extremely well developed personal skills equips pupils remarkably well for the next stage of education and life. They are excellent team workers, show respect for others and are developing as confident young citizens. Providing the highest quality of pastoral care and guidance is central to the school's ethos and includes systems for ensuring high levels of health, safety and welfare. A sample of documents inspected confirmed that safeguarding procedures meet with requirements well. Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that there is always someone to help them with any problems. Adults go the extra mile to reduce any barriers to learning and make sure that everyone is included equally in everything that the school has to offer.

Teaching has many reliably good features. Class teachers and teaching assistants form strong and trusting professional relationships and manage behaviour, resources and classroom routines well. This results in pupils being keen to work hard and behaving exceptionally well. Adults work well together to make sure that those who find learning more difficult get good support, both individually and in groups so these pupils achieve well. Teachers are working hard to develop practical, hands-on and problem-solving activities in order to engage pupils even further. At its best, teaching consistently involves the use of accurate assessments to plan activities that challenge all pupils to do as well as they can and learning moves on at a great

pace. This is not yet always the case. Systems to provide academic guidance are much improved and are now good. They are based on regular checks of pupil progress which is carefully tracked. The information collected is used to set individual and group targets and focus resources. Pupils know their targets and say they help them to improve. However, information collected is sometimes insufficiently detailed or used well enough to give a clear enough picture of how well pupils are doing or, to allow the planning of work that closely matches the needs of all abilities. For example, sometimes the targets for pupils with an individual learning plan are too broad or the tasks planned for the more able are too easy.

The good curriculum is well focused, with thorough planning to ensure the development of pupils' important basic skills. A carefully thought out programme of personal, social and health education successfully helps to encourage pupils' remarkable personal skills. Pupils enjoy an excellent range of lunchtime and after school clubs which pupils say they enjoy and parents say they value a great deal. Further enrichment includes relevant visits and visitors to school and the opportunity to learn a modern foreign language. The curriculum has been improved through occasional planned topics, which involves teaching several subjects through themes in creative and exciting ways. This approach has yet to be developed and consistently applied across school.

The good leadership and management begins with the headteacher who has developed the leadership capacity of other school leaders so that everyone can now make their full contribution, though some leaders are new and have yet to fully develop their role. This results in a more accurate view of strengths and areas for development and combines with high expectations to ensure challenging targets are set and met. The next accurately identified challenge for school leaders is to further refine the way that pupil progress is tracked so that even more detail can be gathered and used as effectively as possible to make sure everyone is doing as well as they can. Governors offer a good deal of practical support, know the school well and are looking forward to further developing their involvement in analysing the school's work and presenting challenge to its leaders.

The school places itself at the heart of its community, forging positive and effective partnerships with parents and outside agencies and promoting harmony well. Its planning for the promotion of community cohesion in the broader sense is not yet as well developed.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Welcoming and caring staff settle children quickly into the EYFS and, in partnership with parents, ensure that children's physical, emotional and social needs are well taken care of. Consequently, children's personal development is good and they soon become confident and ready to take part in all that the school has to offer. Adults actively model good behaviour, turn taking and how to listen and respond. They take opportunities to engage children in conversation and use questioning to extend children's speaking and listening skills. The older pupils in the class are also good role models and help the younger children to become familiar with class routines and expectations. Opportunities are occasionally lost to encourage children to be as independent as possible in carrying out these routines and to encourage them in directing their own learning. Suitable provision is made for children's learning and development in that adults get to know children well and planning for activities is conscientiously done to ensure they are given purposeful and engaging tasks which are directed effectively by teachers and teaching assistants who teach and check on the development of specific skills and understanding. There are not enough opportunities planned to extend children's learning across all areas, either through

purposeful play or through related topic themes. Therefore children are not able to revisit and practice what they have learned often enough and to test out their own thinking in different ways in their own time. The outdoor area has rightly been identified for further development. It is currently limited in the range of opportunities that it offers to extend children's learning. The setting has recently been reorganised and a new and enthusiastic leadership team have come together, but have not yet fully developed their strategic vision. Importantly, they have put in place systems for checking on how well children are doing to ensure that previous underachievement has been successfully tackled, and indeed, to ensure that children now make satisfactory and sometimes better progress and are on track to achieve the levels expected for their age. Not enough is done with the useful information now collected, to check on the overall effectiveness of the setting in ensuring that all children do as well as they can.

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

- Bring more rigour to systems for checking on the effectiveness of EYFS provision.
- Ensure all learners, particularly the most able, are consistently challenged to do as well as they can.
- Further refine systems for gathering and using information about how well pupils are doing to ensure an even more detailed picture of what needs to be done to improve further.





## 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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### 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/or disabilities make progress	2

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

27 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Newton Community Primary School, Eltisley, PE19 6TL

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. This letter is to tell you what we found out.

There are many good and some outstanding things about your school. Some of them are that:

- you achieve high standards and make good progress
- you behave extremely well and work hard to help others
- your knowledge of how to keep yourself healthy and safe is outstanding
- you enjoy school a great deal and the school is good at organising interesting things for you to do
- all of the adults in your school make sure that you are well cared for and looked after
- your headteacher and the other people who help run your school are successful at making sure that you get a good education.

We agree with school leaders and your parents that you go to a good school. However, all of the adults in your school want it to be even better. To help them with this the most important thing for them to do next is:

- make careful plans about how to make sure that the youngest children in school are helped to do as well as they can in all the areas of their learning
- make sure that all of you are always given work that makes you think and work hard, particularly those of you who find learning quite easy
- get an even more detailed and accurate picture about how well you are all doing and use this information to make sure that you all do as well as you can.

We are sure that the headteacher and all the other staff will continue to do everything they can to help you. You can play your part by continuing to behave so well, working really hard and coming to school every day. We would like to wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Harvey

Lead inspector