

Newlands Spring Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115241
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326160
Inspection date	16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Ruth Frith

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	391
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	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Graeme Atkinson
Headteacher	Mrs Susannah Edom-Baker
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Dickens Place Copperfield Road Chelmsford Essex CM1 4UU
Telephone number	01245 442031
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- The rate of pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 1 and science at Key Stage 2.
- Recent improvements to pupils' personal development and well-being.
- The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation.

The inspectors gathered evidence from the school's self-evaluation form, lesson observations, discussions with staff, governors and pupils, pupils' work, information that the school keeps on how well pupils are doing, the school development plan and an analysis of the parents' questionnaire responses. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but 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

Newlands Spring Primary School is larger than many primary schools. Whilst most pupils in the past lived close to the school, this is changing, and currently nearly half come from outside the school's catchment area. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is rising and is broadly average. Attainment on entry to school has changed over the last few years and is now below that usually seen in children of this age. Most start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Reception year but an increasing number join or leave the school part-way through their primary education. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, whilst the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. A broadly average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic groups and five pupils receive additional help to support their learning of English as an additional language. The school runs a breakfast club and after-school club each school day. The headteacher was appointed last year. The school has received the Investors in People Award and an Advanced Healthy Schools accreditation in recognition of its work.

There is a pre-school in the grounds of the school which is privately managed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. The stimulating, friendly and supportive environment helps pupils to make excellent progress, so that by the time they leave school standards are significantly above average. Outstanding care, guidance and support promote their excellent personal development and well-being, and encourage them to feel confident and valued.

Significant improvements to the quality of teaching and the curriculum have resulted in raised standards in Key Stage 1, particularly in mathematics last year. Currently, over a third of pupils in Year 2 have made significantly greater progress than that expected for their age. In response to lower standards in the 2008 Year 6 national tests, teachers raised expectations in lessons so that pupils in the current Year 6 are working above the levels for pupils of their age. Nearly two-thirds have exceeded the expected progress levels in science, indicating excellent progress. The school now faces the challenge of sustaining this excellent progress over time across English, mathematics and science by using the data for each cohort to ensure it places the greatest emphasis on challenge and support in the specific areas needed.

Pupils often achieve exceptionally well because teaching is frequently excellent. Staff have high expectations and pupils are expected to do their best. Frequently, there is a buzz of excitement in lessons as pupils respond enthusiastically to the challenges set and become thoroughly involved in their learning. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods that take account of the preferred learning styles within each class. Learning is usually active, for example in literacy lessons when pupils take photographs to support the writing of a newspaper article. This captures the interest of all but it particularly motivates the boys, who sometimes need additional encouragement to see the purpose of writing. Planning is good because teachers have a clear understanding of what they want pupils to learn and they share this with them. The work is well-matched to pupils' needs and capabilities and so supports a brisk pace of learning.

The creatively designed curriculum is outstanding and makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development and learning. Staff have found that pupils do particularly well when learning is centred around a specific theme. This helps them to develop their skills across all subjects and makes learning more relevant. Consequently, staff are constantly striving to improve the curriculum and have become very innovative in the way they plan lessons and teach. Currently, staff are focusing on a greater use of drama techniques and film, which again is helping to maintain pupils' interests and improve progress. There is a wide range of popular clubs and additional enrichment activities. Music and drama have high profiles in the school and pupils thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to join the choir, play a musical instrument and perform in front of an audience. This develops their sense of self-esteem as well as helping them to develop new skills and interests.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The strong school ethos creates an environment where pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and attendance is above average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of an exceptionally high standard. They develop a keen spiritual awareness through many areas of study and assemblies, where they are taught to care for others and think about themselves and their place within the world. Through good guidance and their day-to-day interaction with staff, pupils learn what is expected of them. This results in excellent behaviour and relationships. The school is a harmonious community because staff show respect to pupils which, in turn, develops pupils' respect for

others. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider communities is excellent. The recent introduction of school 'houses' and a prefect system have widened the opportunities for pupils to take on greater responsibilities and contribute to school life. Pupils know their ideas are taken seriously and are constantly suggesting ways to improve the school or help others. Members of the school council play a key role. Pupils have a very good understanding of sustainability issues and the need to recycle. Their placing of small pictures and comments from 'Benny Bulb' and 'Sammy Switch' remind all to conserve energy. They have an excellent understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise and eating a range of food. They also develop excellent personal safety awareness and contribute to the safety of others by developing rules when using play equipment. Pupils are prepared very well for their next stage of schooling and beyond.

Pastoral care and academic guidance are excellent. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils and the use of a 'worry box' create an environment where pupils feel able to talk about any concerns they might have. The very effective team of teachers and teaching assistants ensure all achieve the best they can. Pupils who find learning difficult are given very effective additional support and those who have a particular talent, or can work at a higher level than most, are challenged very well so all make exceptionally good progress. Staff work extremely well with other schools and specialist agencies to support learning. Pupils know the objective of each lesson and are very clear about how to improve their work. They benefit greatly from the support and guidance given in lessons and through comments in their books, as reflected in the following pupils' comments, 'Teachers are good at checking how well you do' and 'She's very encouraging and shows me what I can improve'. The oversubscribed before and after-school provision provides exceptionally good levels of care and helps to develop pupils' skills and relationships in a safe and stimulating environment.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school's success stems from the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, who has quickly gained the confidence of parents, staff and governors. Her enthusiasm and vision for developing the pupils as learners and promoting their personal growth is infectious. Together with very effective support from the deputy headteacher, she provides an exceptional lead to colleagues who, in turn, work as a strong team, sharing her sense of purpose. They are fully committed to the school and staff morale is high. Staff take on management responsibilities very successfully. They are encouraged to be innovative in the way they encourage better learning, teaching and high standards. Particularly good systems for checking how well the school is doing and identifying what it could do better reflect the school's constant drive for improvement and indicate that the school has excellent capacity to improve further. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and give very effective support. They are confident to ask questions about pupils' progress and standards, thereby evaluating the school's effectiveness. Parents are very supportive of the school and its recent new developments.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children's development in the EYFS is impressive and gains in learning are frequently excellent. Children reach at least the levels expected for their age by the end of the Reception year because provision is outstanding. This provision reflects very strong leadership and management based on high aspirations and a thorough understanding of what young children can achieve. Very effective links are made with parents so children settle particularly well into school. Children are extremely well cared for and helpful routines encourage their feeling of security and sense

of well-being. Learning opportunities focuses particularly well on children's personal, social and emotional development and excellent achievement in these areas helps children's learning throughout. They become confident and happily work and play with others. Staff also focus particularly well on developing children's communication skills by widening their use of language and ensuring that all have plenty of opportunity to put forward their ideas, for example when investigating different apples and describing their tastes. Teaching and learning are particularly good because staff recognise children's needs quickly and ensure that activities maintain their interest. Through good observations and assessment of the children's learning, staff build up a profile of what children can do and what they need to do next. Staff use the outside learning area very well to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding through, for example, recognising and matching numbers, riding wheeled toys and investigating through sand and water play. Good organisation and links between Reception and Year 1 ensure a strong continuity of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the use of data to ensure sustained and consistent excellent progress.

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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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	2
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	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	2
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	1
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**

17 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Newlands Spring Primary School, Chelmsford CM1 4UU

You may remember that two inspectors recently visited your school to talk to you about what you do and what you learn. Thank you for making us feel so welcome. You and your parents said that you go to a very good school and we agree. We think Newlands Spring Primary School is excellent. We really enjoyed our visit and if you read on further you will see some of the things we found out:

- You try very hard and usually make excellent progress so that, by the time you leave school, you reach standards that are above those we often see.
- You get on with each other and make good friends. Your behaviour is excellent.
- There is a great atmosphere in the school because you want to learn and you thoroughly enjoy being at school. The activities in lessons, the tasks set and the clubs all help you to learn and develop a wide range of skills.
- You contribute a great deal to the school and wider community. You take on a good range of responsibilities in school and help others in the local and wider communities.
- Staff are all very keen to do the best they can for you. Teaching is exceptionally good and those of you who find learning difficult do very well because of the extra help you get.

Mrs Edom-Baker manages and leads the school exceptionally well and staff and governors give her lots of help. They are keen to make the school even better and have agreed to use the information they have about your learning more effectively to ensure you make excellent progress all the time. We know you will respond well to their efforts because you really like learning and want to do well. We are sure you will all continue to try hard and do your best at all times.

We left your school with many fond memories and we wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Frith

Lead inspector