

Newlands Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122453
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327732
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Walker

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Malcolm Garratt
Headteacher	Mr Chris Newton
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2006
School address	Braemar Road Forest Town Mansfield Nottinghamshire NG19 0LN
Telephone number	01623 480 440
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average junior school. The school serves the former coalmining communities of Forest Town and Clipstone near Mansfield. The school is experiencing a falling pupil roll due to the demography of the local area. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds although there is a small number from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average, as is the percentage known to be eligible for free school meals. Pupils are taught in mixed Year 3 and 4 and Year 5 and 6 classes. The school has been awarded the Activemark status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Newlands Junior School provides a good standard of education. The headteacher has guided significant improvements in the school which have led to the good personal development and progress of the pupils. The calm and nurturing character of the school provides a sound base for pupils to make progress. There is a very clear commitment to the inclusion of all children in the school, including the gifted and talented as well as those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The headteacher provides supportive and positive leadership that enables all staff to play an important part in the success of the school. The school has a good reputation in the local area and parents and carers praise its good work. Parental comments include, 'I am very happy with the positive atmosphere in the school and the way the teachers really want to help the children'.

Pupils make good progress considering that they enter the school with skills and knowledge that are below national expectations. The vast majority consistently achieve average standards in mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. Standards in English are slightly below average and the challenge for the school is to raise standards and levels of progress in English by improving the writing skills of the pupils. The school is using assessment information very effectively across all classes to track individual pupil progress. There are systems in place to provide good quality intervention and support for pupils who require additional help with their work.

The good pastoral care, guidance and support is greatly supporting the improvements in the school. The school has been effective in monitoring absences but the poor attendance of a small minority of pupils has a detrimental effect on their progress. The majority of pupils behave well and enjoy coming to school. They develop good personal qualities although they do not have sufficient opportunities to take responsibility in the school or make a positive contribution to the local community. Teaching is good and the well-structured lessons meet the different learning needs of the pupils. The school has developed a good curriculum that is creative and interesting for the pupils. There is a good emphasis on developing skills across all subjects and encouraging the pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning. The emphasis on writing across all subjects is providing a good foundation for improvements in literacy. The school is clean with excellent display work which provides a stimulating environment for learning.

Self-evaluation is accurate. The school has good partnerships with the local community and a range of external services. A small number of pupils from different backgrounds receive a warm welcome and settle quickly into the school. The school makes a positive contribution to community cohesion and encourages all parents and members of the community to feel welcome in the school. The school is a member of the Pathfinder Family Extended Services Project, which provides additional support for the school and community. The leadership and management is good overall and the headteacher is well supported by the senior staff and governors. The school has developed a coherent strategic plan to address the temporary falling pupil roll, over the next few years. The effective leadership of the headteacher, senior staff team and governors, plus the commitment and dedication of the staff, indicates that this school has a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and levels of progress in English by improving the writing skills of the pupils.

- Improve the levels of attendance in the school so that all pupils have the opportunity to make good progress in their work.
- Ensure that there are more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in the school and make a positive contribution to the local community.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most pupils make good progress from their low starting points. By the time the pupils leave the school, standards are broadly average which represents good progress in relation to their prior attainment. National test results for Year 6 pupils in mathematics and science are average and slightly below average in English. A significant number of pupils gain at least the expected level in these three key subjects and an increasing number gain the higher grades. Progress has been good overall for the last three years and is particularly significant in mathematics and science. The school has rightly identified the development of writing skills as a key area for improving the rate of progress in English. The tracking system for progress identifies underachieving pupils, who then receive good support through a range of intervention strategies. Additional support for the large number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities ensures that they make good progress, and a number make exceptionally good progress. Minority ethnic pupils make progress in line with that of others. Evidence of pupils' work during the inspection and analysis of assessment records shows that most groups make at least good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils develop good personal qualities because there is a positive and caring atmosphere in the school. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and speak enthusiastically about it. Attendance is below the national average and frequent absences from a small but significant number of pupils are having a negative effect on their progress. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are sensitive towards the feelings of others although they are not fully aware of the multi-cultural diversity of society. Pupils are generally well behaved and friendly. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, both through eating sensibly and taking exercise. The pupils raise some money for charities but are not fully engaged in making a contribution to the local community. The older pupils would welcome more opportunities for responsibility in the school. The school council takes an active part in improvements such as raising funds for additional bins around the school and water bottles in each classroom. Pupils' basic skills and ability to work with others are developing satisfactorily. As a result, they are adequately prepared for their secondary education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Detailed planning in all lessons ensures that pupils make good progress. Teachers use assessment information well to make sure that activities match the range of pupils' needs particularly in literacy and numeracy. Lesson objectives feature prominently at the beginning and end of all lessons so that pupils know exactly what they are aiming for and this supports their progress. Teachers work hard to make activities interesting for pupils and give them many opportunities

to work together in pairs and groups. Pupils are encouraged to use thinking skills and take responsibility for their learning and progress. Classroom management is very effective and pupils behave well as a result. On occasions, pupils lose concentration if the explanation from the teacher is too long. Relationships are positive and pupils feel secure so that they can learn effectively. Teaching assistants provide effective support and make a good contribution in most lessons. There are examples of very successful teaching in the school where teachers have high expectations of pupils, match work to their individual needs and constantly check understanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides opportunities for all learners to make good progress. The increased emphasis on practical and active learning motivates the pupils and encourages them to be involved in their learning. Schemes of work in English and mathematics are flexible and planning is well informed by the assessment information on the pupils. The school is focusing properly on a curriculum that will help to improve pupils' writing skills although this has not had sufficient time to raise the levels of progress in English. Teachers make meaningful links between subjects and develop interesting themes for the whole school such as the 'Romans' and 'Take One Picture' days. The regular use of the information and communication technology room enables pupils to develop their computer skills. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is developing well with a programme of extension activities in classes and out of school. Imaginative use of external support provides a broad programme of physical education for the pupils. The wide range of enrichment activities, such as visiting artists and theatre groups, greatly enhances the pupils' enjoyment and learning experience. A good number of school clubs and opportunities for visits out of school to places like Southwell Minster and the residential centre in Derbyshire support pupils in their work and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The inclusive and child centred nature of the school provides a welcoming and caring environment for all pupils. The school is particularly successful in supporting children who find learning difficult so that they make good and sometimes excellent progress in their work. There are very good links with outside agencies and pupils are very well supported. Procedures for child protection and measures to ensure the health and safety of pupils are fully in place and rigorously implemented. Monitoring of absences is rigorous, although attendance is below the national average. Transition arrangements from the infant and nursery school and to secondary school are well planned through the Garibaldi College Partnership. The school is effectively using assessment information across all classes to track individual pupils' progress. There are clear systems in place to provide good quality intervention for pupils who require additional help with their work. All pupils have learning targets in literacy and mathematics that are helping them take more responsibility for their learning. Marking is regular and supportive but it is not always consistent in showing pupils what they have to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides informed and collaborative leadership which has guided the considerable improvements in the school. Parents, teachers and governors greatly respect and share his focused approach to promoting good standards of personal development, progress and attainment for all pupils. The headteacher is well supported by the school leadership and management team, which acts as a stimulus for development across the school. The school development plan is a good working document with clear actions and achievable success criteria. However, the plan does not include the full range of subjects. Subject leaders are developing their planning, supporting and monitoring roles. There is a good programme of professional development and increasing opportunities for sharing of good practice, which improves the quality of teaching. Support staff are greatly valued and well integrated into the school. Governors are well informed about the school's progress and areas for development. They are increasingly involved in evaluating and monitoring progress. The school is setting challenging targets to further raise standards and rates of pupils' 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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

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?	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
The extent to which 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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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**

26 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newlands Junior School, Mansfield, NG19 0LN

Thank you for making me so welcome and talking to me during the inspection. I really enjoyed watching your lessons and looking at your work. It was also good to see you in the dining room and during the playtime. The school runs very smoothly and calmly on a day-to-day basis and provides a good standard of education. The school has greatly improved since the last inspection. We know that your parents and carers are very pleased with the school.

There are many positive things about your school.

- You make good progress in your school work.
- You feel happy at school and enjoy the lessons.
- Most of you behave well and take care of one another.
- The teachers and support staff care greatly for you.
- The staff really help children who find some of the work difficult.
- The school is very welcoming to all pupils and parents.
- Your teachers work very hard to make your lessons interesting.
- There are many extra activities at the school.
- You have a very good headteacher.

I have asked Mr Newton, the staff and the governors to do the following things to make the school even better:

- help all pupils to gain even better results in English by improving your writing skills
- improve the attendance in the school so all pupils have the best opportunity to make good progress in their work
- provide more opportunities for you to take responsibility in the school and make a positive contribution to the local community.

Keep working hard and enjoying the many things you do at Newlands Junior School. I would like to wish you success in your future education.

With very best wishes

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector