

Neston Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126186
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	328462
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin James

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	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	166
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gillian Pratt
Headteacher	Linda Davies
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Rise Neston Corsham SN13 9SX
Telephone number	01225 810478
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Neston Primary School is smaller than most other primary schools. Almost all pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below that found nationally, as is the proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of Reception, which is integrated into one class with pupils from Year 1. In recognition of its work, the school has received the Healthy School and Activemark awards.

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 school, where pupils achieve well. It also has some outstanding features. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They greatly enjoy school and their behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Care, guidance and support for pupils are also outstanding, with the safety of its pupils being a priority of the school.

Standards are above average, and pupils achieve well. The children's knowledge and skills on entry to Reception vary significantly from year to year. However, they are typically just below those expected, especially in relation to literacy skills. During their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage the children achieve well, and they reach average standards overall, and above average standards in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 to 6, with the result that standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. Good teaching is a key factor in pupils' good progress. Relationships are outstanding, teaching assistants are deployed well, and teachers make good use of a variety of resources and strategies to make the lessons interesting. Lessons are generally well planned to meet the needs of different pupils in the mixed-age classes. However, occasionally the work provided lacks adequate challenge for some pupils, especially the more able. Clear help and advice are provided during lessons, and the targets provided for pupils ensure that they are fully aware of how to develop their work further.

The curriculum contributes very well to both pupils' progress and their enjoyment of school. It is interesting and varied, and, for example, helps to make the pupils very aware of the need to follow a healthy lifestyle. The school routinely reviews and develops its curriculum, and a current priority is to improve the outdoor facilities for the children in Reception. Pupils report that they greatly enjoy the outstanding range of visits and clubs that the school provides. The headteacher and other members of staff are a dedicated team, committed to improving the provision they make for their pupils. Self-evaluation is effective in pinpointing where improvement is needed to move the school forward. Governors support the school well, and they are also fully involved, for example, in school development planning. The improvements that have been made, both recently and since the previous inspection, and the good quality of the current provision show that the school has a good capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children are happy in school; they enjoy themselves and their behaviour is exemplary. The staff work hard to create a friendly and very caring learning environment, and the children also benefit from the good links that are established with parents. The children make good progress because they are taught well. Adults provide them with a good balance between teacher-led activities and chances for them to choose for themselves, and they take every opportunity to help them develop their various skills. Adults regularly engage children in discussion and develop their speaking and listening skills well. A wide variety of reading and writing activities helps to tackle weaknesses in literacy skills. A good range of resources is provided in the classroom, but the limited outdoor resources do not make it easy for the children to carry out free-flow activities, although staff and children do the best they can with what is available. The leader uses her knowledge and enthusiasm well in making good provision for the children, and other

staff members support her well in providing for their various needs. The welfare of the children is exceptional.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers consistently provide challenging activities for pupils, especially the more able.
- Improve the quality of the outdoor facilities in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to facilitate their continuous use in all aspects of the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average, and pupils' achievement is good. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, reaching average overall standards by the end of Reception. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well and, by the end of Year 2, standards are above average.

By the end of Year 6, standards are above average, and these standards represent good achievement through Years 3 to 6 for this group of pupils. In 2008, pupils performed significantly less well in science than in other subjects. The school recognised this, and the strategies introduced to address the issue, such as ensuring pupils' clear understanding of scientific terminology, have been successful, with standards in science now matching those in other subjects. The school makes good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this is helping them to make good progress towards their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding, and is firmly based on the school's very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour, and their great enthusiasm for learning are important reasons why they achieve so well. They are courteous and polite to each other and to adults. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem. Consequently, they feel both safe and well-cared for in school. Pupils love coming to school, as shown by their good attendance. Pupils use their initiative very well when carrying out responsible jobs, and the school council has been very active, for example, in the development of the school travel plan. Pupils also raise money for charities, and they are regularly involved in a wide range of activities in both Neston and Corsham. The pupils are particularly proud of their achievements in the Mid-Somerset Festival. Pupils have an exceptional understanding of the need for healthy lifestyles. Pupils eat fruit and healthy meals and they benefit greatly from the opportunities provided for physical activity. The school very successfully develops in its pupils a range of personal skills, and the good progress that pupils make in literacy and numeracy prepares them well for their next stage of education, and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers provide interesting lessons for pupils, using a good range of resources and strategies. One pupil reported, 'Lessons are fun.' Relationships are a real strength, and, as a result, pupils are very well behaved, keen to learn and ready to work hard. Teachers' explanations are clear, and they successfully engage pupils' interest. Good use is made of paired discussion. However,

occasionally, opportunities are missed for pupils to discuss their work in front of the whole class, to help them clarify their ideas. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards to motivate pupils and develop their knowledge and understanding. Pupils respond well, work with enthusiasm and they greatly enjoy their learning. Teaching assistants are well deployed to promote learning, and they provide well-directed support where help is required. Teachers plan carefully for the different ages and abilities in their classes, and, for example, the work produced for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. However, although planning also takes account of the needs of more able pupils, it lacks consistency. On occasions the work provided for these pupils is not challenging enough, so that their knowledge and skills are not fully extended during the lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The innovative curriculum enables pupils to study a broad and very interesting range of subjects, and this contributes significantly to their good progress. Most suitable links are made between subjects to produce topics that really motivate pupils. Information and communication technology is used well to enhance work in other subjects. There is a very good emphasis on the use of the school's exceptionally attractive and well-resourced grounds, as well as the wider area around the school. Pupils report that they greatly enjoy the work provided through using the moonbase in particular. The provision of French and Spanish also benefits pupils' learning. Learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very carefully identified, and pupils are provided with a good range of tasks, activities and support. On occasions, less allowance is made for the needs of more able pupils. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, a good range of teacher-led and child-initiated activities is provided using the classroom and school grounds. However, the limited resources available in their dedicated outdoor area restrict some of the children's free-flow activities.

There is a very good emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills, and the curriculum makes an exceptional contribution to pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles. There is an outstanding range of outings, visitors and clubs, which pupils much appreciate and which they support with enthusiasm.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Staff are highly committed to ensuring the best possible academic and personal progress for all pupils, and pastoral care is a priority. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust, with potential risks properly assessed. Outside agencies are used most effectively to support pupils when a need is identified. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living, and they are regularly reminded of the need to stay safe, for instance when using computers. Parents say that they greatly value the caring approach of the school towards their children.

Teachers help pupils negotiate their targets, and pupils understand clearly how to reach them. This is a major factor in their good achievement, because they develop clear insight into their strengths and weaknesses, and they use this knowledge very effectively to move themselves forward. Although there is some inconsistency, teachers often add comments on how to improve when they mark pupils' books.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school with dedication and skill, and she is supported very well by other staff members. Staff are keen to make the best possible provision for pupils, especially to help them achieve as well as they can. Staff have been successful in creating a very caring and happy environment, and good care is also taken to ensure that no form of discrimination is evident in the school. The school has good systems for finding out how well it is doing, including seeking the views of parents. Most parents in turn speak highly of the school, although a very small minority feel that communication with the school could be improved. The self-review has been largely accurate in identifying strengths and areas for development. For example, the current focus on planning to improve the outdoor provision for children in Reception is a very appropriate priority for the school. Community cohesion and pupils' understanding of cultural diversity are developed well. There are strong community links both in school and locally, and the school has successfully enhanced these through contacts made with schools in other parts of England and in France.

Subject leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of the strengths in their various subjects, and they have initiated strategies for making improvements, as seen for instance in science. The school has identified the need for leaders to observe more lessons in other classes, and plans are firmly in hand for this to happen. Governance is good, with the governors being fully involved, for example, in producing the school development plan and monitoring its implementation. They readily exercise their role of 'critical friends' should the need arise.

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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?	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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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	2

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?	1

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**

12 June 2009

Dear Pupils,

Neston Primary School, Neston SN13 9SX

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit and it was a pleasure talking to you. My colleague especially liked talking to the school council, and we really enjoyed joining you in assembly and in lessons. I am writing to tell you what we found out about the school, what we think is good, and what we think could be made better. Overall, you are in a good school, where you are doing well with your work. Your headteacher and other staff know what they need to do to make the school even better.

These things are some of the strengths of the school:

- You get a good start to school in Reception.
- Teachers provide you with interesting lessons.
- Your behaviour and your attitudes to your work are excellent.
- You know clearly how to improve your work.
- You really enjoy the wide range of activities that the school provides, such as visits and different clubs.
- You know about how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise.
- The staff know you well and take very good care of you.

These are things the school has been asked to improve:

- Make sure that you all get work in lessons that suits you and is hard enough for you.
- Provide better outdoor facilities for children in Reception.

You can help, too, by telling your teacher if you ever think your work is too easy.

We wish you all good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully,

Martin James Lead Inspector