

Newlands Primary School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 133704 |
| Local Authority | Southampton |
| Inspection number | 333409 |
| Inspection dates | 16–17 June 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Gehane Gordelier HMI |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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

| | |
|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 327 |
| 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 | Mr Michael Tumelty |
| Headteacher | Ms Lou Stapleton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 14 May 2008 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Ullswater Road Millbrook Southampton SO16 9EA |
| Telephone number | 0238 0774333 |
| Fax number | 0238 0775063 |

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection dates | 16–17 June 2009 |
| Inspection number | 333409 |

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Newlands is larger than most primary schools and serves a community in the middle of a social housing estate on the west side of Southampton. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is more than three times the national average. The vast majority of pupils speak English as their first language and fewer pupils than in most schools are from minority ethnic groups. Although a smaller proportion of pupils than the national average have a statement of educational needs, there are twice as many pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in most schools. The main areas of need include moderate difficulties; difficulties with speech, language and communications; emotional and behavioural difficulties; and physical disabilities. The school has some nationally accredited awards, including the Activemark and Investors in People.

There has been a large turnover of staff and significant changes to the governing body since the time of the last inspection, when the school was placed into special measures. There is now a new chair and vice-chair of the governing body, as well as a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.

The school shares its site with the local community pre-school which is led and managed by an external provider.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Nevertheless, in accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required to raise standards to be at least broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of Years 2 and 6.

Newlands Primary is an improving school. The new headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of governors are providing the school with strong and determined leadership; the quality of senior leadership in the school is now good. This is helping to bring about sustained improvement and rising standards, and contributes to the school's demonstration of its capacity to continue to improve. Although the school has made good progress in addressing most of the significant weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection, the progress made has been from a very low starting point. Consequently, standards, while rising, are still too low. This is largely because of the gaps which remain in pupils' learning from the legacy of inadequate teaching and learning, as well as poor leadership and management, in the past.

Pupils enter Reception with skills that are well below those expected for their age and make satisfactory progress in a relatively short space of time. Pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, which was previously inadequate, is now satisfactory overall. However, at times this is still too slow and is generally uneven within year groups. Consequently, standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are still too low in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and too few pupils attain the higher levels in these subjects in both key stages. Until recently, some of the most vulnerable pupils in the school were not making adequate progress. The recent changes and improvements to inclusion, to the quality of teaching and learning and to the quality of leadership and management have ensured that these pupils now progress satisfactorily.

Pupils talk positively about the changes they have noticed in the last 12 months. This includes finding their lessons more challenging, purposeful and enjoyable, as well as enjoying playtimes. That pupils enjoy coming to school can be seen in their much improved levels of attendance, as well as their positive attitudes to learning and their satisfactory behaviour in and around the school. Pupils recognise the importance of being healthy; they demonstrate a particularly good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They value their school community and willingly take on additional responsibility, such as helping to improve the school environment, for example their concern about the amount of litter in the surrounding area. Although pupils demonstrate a good level of social and moral awareness and are learning to work well with others, too many still do not attain the basic level of academic skills required to prepare them adequately for their future. Nevertheless, there are now more opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills across the curriculum, although there are still too many missed opportunities for pupils to write.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly and is now satisfactory. There is now more teaching which is securely good. This is evident in Year 4 and in at least one class in every year group. The school has improved the quality of its curriculum provision to ensure it is more responsive to the needs and interests of learners. The increased focus on meeting the academic

as well as the pastoral needs of each and every pupil ensures the school now provides an adequate level of care, guidance and support. Consequently, the most vulnerable pupils are all enabled to participate in and contribute to school life and their learning equally well.

Governance is now effective. Governors are supportive of the school's efforts to promote community cohesion. They have contributed to the analysis of the make-up of the local community and are helping to plan how the school's work in this area will be evaluated and further improved. While senior leadership is good, leadership and management are satisfactory overall, as the role of some leaders and managers, many of whom are new in post, remains underdeveloped.

The school has benefited from very good and wide-ranging support and feedback provided by the local authority. This has impacted on many aspects of school life, including attendance and the quality of teaching and learning, and has been instrumental in helping the school to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children are keen to start their learning for the day and play happily together. Parents are confident their children are well cared for and appreciate being able to talk with teachers whenever the need arises. Although children make expected progress by the end of their year in Reception, many have yet to reach the Early Learning Goals, particularly in reading and writing, as well as aspects of mathematical development like calculation, shape, space and measures. However, they make good progress in their physical and creative development. There is an appropriate balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children themselves, but the outdoor facilities are not always used sufficiently well to support learning. The school is aware of this and is already working hard to remedy the situation. The introduction of the teaching of letters and sounds in daily lessons is beginning to improve children's literacy skills, but there are missed opportunities for encouraging pupils to apply these skills within other areas of learning, such as with new vocabulary in mathematical activities. Teachers and teaching assistants generally work well as a team. Good support is provided for children who find learning difficult. Assessment is carried out regularly, but is not always used to best effect to ensure activities and new learning are appropriately challenging, especially for the more able.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards so that, by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The school makes effective use of intervention strategies, such as the daily teaching of phonics and placing pupils in ability groups for mathematics. This is helping to fill the gaps in pupils' knowledge of basic skills in literacy and numeracy but significant gaps remain. While pupils are now making satisfactory progress in lessons, many are not yet making the progress of which they are capable, especially boys. Consequently, standards continue to be exceptionally low, especially by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Improved leadership and management of inclusion, as well as teachers taking responsibility for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is leading to improved rates of progress for all pupils. The school now has effective systems in

place to track and monitor the progress made by every pupil on a regular basis. This information is used effectively by senior leaders and managers to challenge underperformance, accelerate rates of progress and raise standards. The improved analysis and use of data is leading to targets for English, mathematics and science that are now more appropriately challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe and what represents a healthy lifestyle; they enjoy their sporting and physical activities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a well-defined code of right and wrong, which is evident in their actions around the school and in the respect they show for one another's ideas when working together. Pupils enjoy school and learning because of the interesting and challenging activities their teachers plan for them. Their enjoyment is reflected in the improved levels of attendance and punctuality that have been achieved lately. As one teacher reported, 'Pupils are such keen beans now - they're ready to learn from the start.' Pupils enjoy taking responsibility; they know that their ideas and contributions will be listened to and valued. The school council has appreciated the opportunity of helping to improve the quality of playtimes and looks forward to sharing its ideas with the architects for the new school buildings next year. Pupils are proud of their school and this is demonstrated by their keenness to invite governors to visit and join in their learning experiences.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers are more aware of the levels pupils are expected to attain and of what they are capable of achieving. Consequently, they now have higher expectations of their pupils as well as of themselves as practitioners, although at times they still underestimate pupils' capabilities. Lessons focus on teaching what pupils need to learn and adding value to what pupils already understand and can do. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing skills and understanding, as opposed to merely going through the motions of doing an activity. Teachers are more reflective of their practice; this includes asking pupils for feedback about what helps them to learn. Pupils in turn are encouraged to be more reflective so that they can take more responsibility for their learning and consider how they can help themselves to improve. The best lessons in the school are characterised by dynamic and inspirational teaching. In these lessons, teachers ensure that pupils are set work that is appropriately challenging and check their learning and progress at regular intervals. Learning is placed within a meaningful context and generally includes the use of a wide range of resources and strategies, including information and communication technology (ICT). Assessment strategies are used continually during lessons by staff as well as pupils. In a particularly good mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils learnt how to solve multi-stepped problems using a calculator. The activity was presented in an exciting way, with pupils being asked to plan and cost a sporting event. The pace of learning was good, with each group being led well by a pupil acting as 'project manager'. Pupils discussed how they would organise and plan their work, as well as how they would present their results. They were encouraged to use a check list, which helped them to determine how well they were progressing, what they were learning and what they needed to do next.

Where teaching is less effective and, very occasionally, inadequate, the use of assessment strategies by pupils, as well as teachers, is not well embedded. This often results in a very slow pace of learning. In these lessons, there is generally insufficient challenge for those pupils capable of working at an even higher level and too many opportunities for pupils to write or practise basic skills are missed. For example, developing their knowledge of letters and sounds when key vocabulary is introduced or when they need to read and write new and unfamiliar words. Although pupils are improving their problem-solving skills and enjoy working as part of a group, many still struggle to work successfully on their own and continue to require additional scaffolding and support to enable them to progress successfully.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has correctly focused on English, mathematics and science in the school's efforts to raise standards in these subjects. The overall key skills for learning have been recognised and are being introduced into all subject plans; this is beginning to help pupils to use a wider range of skills in all subjects. The well-resourced ICT suite, and the accessibility of computers in the classroom, are appreciated by pupils as an aid to enhancing their learning experiences. However, ICT is still not used regularly enough or as a tool to help meet the needs and interests of all learners, particularly boys. The school makes effective use of a personal, social, health and citizenship education programme to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The curriculum is enriched by a full programme of extra-curricular clubs, by visits to places of interest and by visitors who add to pupils' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school takes its responsibilities for the pupils' safety and care very seriously. The provisions for child protection and safeguarding are robust and meet all requirements. Pupils feel valued and know they will be listened to. The secure systems in place to track and monitor pupils' progress are used successfully to inform planning and to identify the need to provide extra support. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well provided for, which enables them to make similar progress to their peers. All pupils have targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science, but there are still some pupils who do not have a clear understanding of what their targets mean. Teachers' marking is secure and supports, informs and guides pupils' learning. In many classes, pupils are usefully being encouraged to assess their own efforts, with the help of their teacher.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management in the school has improved beyond all recognition and is continuing to improve at a pace. Senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school and are aware of the developing strengths and the weaknesses that remain. However, self-evaluation is largely undertaken by the headteacher and deputy headteacher; other leaders and managers have yet to develop their roles in a way that would enable them to contribute to whole-school improvement. Although action plans include measurable success criteria and clear outcomes for pupils, they do not always focus sharply enough on different groups of pupils or where underachievement is at its worst. Nevertheless, staff are held to account for

the progress which pupils make and inadequate practice is being systematically eradicated. Consequently, there is now very little unsatisfactory teaching.

Governors are also developing their role well. They have supported the school on some difficult decisions which have prevented the school from slipping into a deficit budget. Governors now come into school and are better informed about the progress made by pupils. This is because of the quality of information provided to them by the headteacher and because they are now being more challenging and acting more appropriately in their role as critical friend.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 4 |
| 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? | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

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? | 4 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 3 |

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? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| 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 | 4 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 4 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| 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? | Yes |

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

10 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newlands Primary School, Southampton, SO16 9EA

As you know, two inspectors visited your school recently. We came to see if your school was making progress because last year the school was not doing well and was put into special measures. There have been a lot of changes in the last 12 months and we were interested to hear your views about how much better your school is. We agree with you that teaching is now better, your lessons are more interesting and you are learning more and making better progress. These are some of the things we think are particularly good about your school.

- The staff and governors care about you a lot and they work hard so that when you are at school you are well looked after.
- You are helping to make your school a better place and we know you also want to help the area around the school to be better.
- You know how to keep yourselves and others safe and have a good understanding of right and wrong.
- Even the youngest children in the school quickly learn to work and play happily together.
- Parents and carers know that you are looked after well.

The inspectors found that your school has made such good progress that it no longer needs to be in special measures. However, there is still a lot of work to do and, because standards of work throughout the school are still too low, the school has been given a notice to improve. We have asked your school to make sure that, by the end of Years 2 and 6, you reach standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science that are appropriate for your age.

You can help your school and help your work to improve by working hard, by making sure you come to school when you are supposed to, and by arriving on time for the beginning of lessons. I know you will continue to help each other and I wish you all every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

Gehane Gordelier

Her Majesty's Inspector