

Newlaithe Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112226
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	337872
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Juliet Ward

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Harker
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Willows
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of the school's documentation including the school improvement plan, assessment and monitoring documentation and safeguarding arrangements. They also scrutinised the 42 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those returned by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the success of strategies used to raise standards across the school to improve the progress of all pupils, and in particular that of boys, in reading and writing
- how effectively information from assessment is used, particularly in the setting of individual targets for pupils, to help them improve their own learning
- how effectively the governors monitor the work of the school and their awareness of areas in need of further improvement
- how the school is raising the quality of teaching to that of the best in order to accelerate the progress pupils make.

Information about the school

Newlathes Infant School is average in size for an infant school and serves a mixed catchment area with pockets of considerable deprivation. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average. Most of these needs are related to learning difficulties, or aspects of autistic spectrum disorder or Asperger's syndrome. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in two Reception classes. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark, the Charter Standard in football and is working towards Investors in Pupils. The Early Years Foundation Stage has been awarded the Cumbrian Kitemark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Newlathes Infants is a good school, with outstanding provision for the youngest children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It provides a happy, secure and exciting learning environment for its pupils. The varied and stimulating curriculum ensures that they are given an effective and inspiring start to their formal education. Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school and many praise it highly. One happy parent wrote, 'Children usually say, "How many sleeps until the weekend?" My child asks at the weekend, "How many sleeps until I can go back to school?" That speaks volumes!'

The school has experienced changes to its leadership and management team over the last two years. The current headteacher took up her post in September and has already demonstrated clear purpose and vision for the school's improvement. High expectations and a strong belief in the expertise and commitment of staff have driven improvements. Much has been done to enhance the consistency and quality of teaching, which is good and is having a positive impact on pupils' progress and standards. Attendance is steadily improving because of the robust procedures the school has introduced to reduce persistent absenteeism. However, there remain a small number of families who continue to take their family holidays in school time. The school's self-evaluation is accurately graded. This, together with what has already been achieved in the drive towards further improvement and the support of staff, and parents and carers, indicates that the school has good capacity for improvement in the future. Governors are very supportive and know the school well. They visit the school and monitor the quality of provision regularly.

The school provides good care and support for pupils. The 'You Can Do It'/social and emotional aspects of learning programme makes a vital contribution to pupils' development. It serves to influence positively pupils' attitudes not only to each other but also to their learning. As a result, they are keen and enthusiastic, considerate and well behaved. They enjoy their learning, and have an excellent understanding for their ages of how to stay healthy and keep safe. They take on responsibilities, for example in pupils' councils where they are able to decide and propose improvements, such as the quiet area and a vegetable patch for the school grounds. They work and play harmoniously together in and around the school. All pupils are working hard towards achieving the Investors in Pupils award.

Pupils often begin school from very low starting points. The school does not see this as a barrier to their learning and making good progress; indeed, staff ensure that pupils do well. The progress of all pupils is tracked carefully. This means that all groups of pupils are well provided for in lessons. Pupils are involved in setting personal targets for themselves; this is an evolving practice, and does not yet focus on targets to guide

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pupils on how to improve their work on a daily basis. Strategies to improve reading and writing are proving to be effective, although boys do not do as well as girls. All pupils are achieving better in mathematics, overall, than in literacy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop target setting further so that pupils understand what to aim for to improve their work, make faster progress and achieve better levels of attainment.
- Raise the attainment of all pupils in reading and writing, particularly that of boys, by July 2010 and maintain these improvements in the subsequent years.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or difficulties, make good progress. The stimulating learning environment ensures that pupils are really keen to learn, are highly motivated to try out new things and are excited by the activities on offer. Pupils in Year 2 were enthusiastic crew members in the lifeboat as they acted out the rescue led by Grace Darling. They later went on to record the journey in a variety of ways. Pupils in Year 1 learned how to formulate interesting sentences about what they saw on a local visit. They learned the importance of using key words to generate more complex and interesting sentences. Practical and interesting activities are helping pupils to make good progress in their key skills and, as a result, standards in mathematics are average. Although standards in reading and writing are lower, pupils' work illustrates clearly the good progress made, particularly their work on sounds and letters.

Pupils are lively and excited by school and really enjoy their learning. Behaviour in and around the school is good and they are thoughtful, caring and responsive to each other's feelings and needs. They have opportunities to plan their learning, for example through themed weeks, using the quiet area and special choice activities. They have an excellent understanding for their ages of how to stay healthy and keep safe. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are proud of the tasks they do, some with members of the local community, such as growing vegetables for their own school lunches, and, through these, are learning more about their community and wider global responsibilities. These, together with their sound literacy, numeracy and good information and communication technology skills, ensure that they are developing a good grounding for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good, some is outstanding, and staff work hard to enthuse and inspire their pupils. They ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn and use resources, such as interactive whiteboards, skilfully. Teaching of reading and writing is strong. The sounds made by letters or groups of letters are emphasised well and pupils respond very enthusiastically and learn well. Questioning is good and pupils are encouraged to explain their answers in full sentences, which is helping to develop their speaking and thinking skills effectively. Teachers plan a range of tasks devised to meet the learning needs of all pupils so that all are appropriately challenged or supported. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to discuss and compare their thinking with partners and to assess how well they have learned during the lesson. Marking is good. Assessment is used effectively to set personal targets, but the school is in the early stages of setting academic targets for individuals to ensure that all pupils know exactly what they have to do next to improve.

Good links are made across a range of subjects, which enable pupils to practise their basic reading and writing skills. The practice of having continuous provision across the school, for example having exciting role-play areas across all age groups, allows pupils to develop their creative as well as their speaking and listening skills effectively. A variety of excellent artwork enlivens the school environment and demonstrates well how the school values the efforts of its pupils. A wide range of visits and visitors as well as a good range of out-of-school activities provide pupils with many additional opportunities to enhance their learning.

Every pupil's needs are known and well catered for. The school works closely with parents and carers, and a wide range of outside agencies, to enable staff to make the

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best possible provision across the broad spectrum of educational needs presented by the pupils at the school, for example in the nurture group. Transition arrangements for Reception to Years 1 and 2 and on to the junior school are well thought through and highly effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides clear, purposeful leadership. She has successfully motivated pupils and staff and done much to reinvigorate the school and start driving through changes. Leadership teams oversee strategic and curriculum development, and have a clear role in decision making. The monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and effective. The school improvement plan accurately identifies key objectives but the criteria for judging success are not always sharply enough focused or precise. Governance is good. The governing body encompasses a range of expertise and local knowledge and uses this information well. Governors ensure that statutory requirements are fully met. Governors are building a much better understanding of the school than previously with more detailed information about pupils' performance, which they use to ask pertinent questions of the headteacher as necessary.

The school promotes equality well and, at the time of the inspection, the school's safeguarding procedures were robust. There is a particularly thorough approach to this aspect of the school's work. The school works very effectively with external agencies, and parents and carers, to support pupils as necessary and to ensure that they have the same good opportunities as other pupils. The school has a positive approach towards promoting community cohesion. This ensures that pupils are gaining a good understanding of life in multicultural Britain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children make an excellent start to their education in the Reception classes and make good progress. The huge level of commitment and care shown by all Early Years Foundation Stage staff is evident in the excellent quality of relationships with local playgroups and nurseries. As a result, children settle into the school extremely well and immediately begin to learn. Their attainment on entry is below expectations for their age; for some it is very low. Over the last three years the staff have recorded an increasing number of children arriving with lower levels of language and communication skills. Staff get to know all the children very well. Staff make a careful note of all responses and feedback. The information collected about children is used particularly well to ensure that the least able and most vulnerable settle well. Adults have high expectations, provide very clear routines and enable children to build strong, positive relationships.

Careful planning creates an excellent balance between formal and creative work and encourages children to be independent and think for themselves, including organising their timetable on individual planners. One parent summed up the success of the Early Years Foundation Stage by writing, 'My child talks about what she does in school enthusiastically and loves coming to school.' This level of enjoyment was obvious in all the lessons observed. The delight of children as they selected and concentrated on one of the many activities related to bears and 'going on a bear hunt' was particularly impressive. The classrooms are stimulating and resources are used exceptionally well as children move from one activity to another. The outstanding outside area provides the same exciting level of challenge and stimulation. This is especially well used by the staff to provide challenging and thought-provoking tasks for the more able children to ensure that all are able to make maximum progress. The Early Years Foundation Stage is jointly led and managed very effectively.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors analysed the 42 questionnaires returned from families attending the school. Nearly all the parents and carers who responded are pleased with all that the school has to offer and this was reflected in the comments made. Parents and carers are very confident that their children are safe and well cared for. They also express confidence in the leadership and management of the school. All are happy, overall, with the experiences their children are receiving. There are very few reservations, mainly concerning whether children with specific learning and social needs are given sufficient support. The inspectors followed up these concerns and found the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties was good, and that they were included very well in all classroom activities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newlalthes Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 173 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	63	12	30	2	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	58	16	40	0	0	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	43	21	53	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	40	20	50	2	5	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	19	48	18	45	2	5	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	40	22	55	1	3	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	43	20	50	2	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	14	35	20	50	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	43	20	50	1	3	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	30	20	50	4	10	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	28	23	58	2	5	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	17	43	20	50	3	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	55	16	40	0	0	2	5

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newlalthes Infant School, Carlisle, CA2 6DX

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we came to your school recently. We did enjoy our visit. Yours is a good school with several strengths, and we agree with what you told us, 'It is a happy school.' Here is a list of some of the things that we think are good.

- You all make good progress in your learning.
- You behave well, get along with each other and feel safe in school.
- You all have lots of ideas on how to make things better and the staff always listen to what you want, and care for you well.
- You have an outstanding understanding of how to live healthily.
- You find lessons interesting and really enjoy school.
- There are plenty of exciting things for you to do both in school and on visits and in clubs.
- The headteacher and staff manage the school well.

Even in good schools, there are ways of getting better. We have asked your headteacher and staff to look at a couple of ways of making a difference to what you learn. We have asked them to make sure you are given the chance to set some targets about how to improve your reading and writing, such as getting better at writing more interesting stories using 'wow' words. We would also like to see the boys doing better in their literacy work.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Juliet Ward

Lead inspector

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