

Newton Linford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119943
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339562
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr. Graham Robb
Headteacher	Mr. John Wolfe
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Four lessons were observed, three teachers were seen and the majority of the time was spent looking at learning. Meetings were held with staff, governors and pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment data, monitoring and evaluation records, policies and procedures. Questionnaires from 27 parents and carers were received and analysed.

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

- pupils' progress in writing
- the progress of more able pupils
- how well the lessons are adapted to meet the needs of all pupils
- how well the quality of learning and development opportunities promotes children's achievement in Reception.

Information about the school

Newton Linford is a small rural school. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is low. Children join Reception from a few pre-school settings and are taught in a combined class with Year 1 pupils. There are two other classes, one for pupils in Year 2 and Year 3, and one for pupils from Year 4 to Year 6. The acting headteacher took up post in October 2009. A re-allocation of staffing responsibilities resulted in the appointment of a new Reception leader in October 2009. A new headteacher has been appointed for April 2010. The school holds the Eco-Schools Silver Award and the International Schools Award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Newton Linford Primary provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. The last two years have been a difficult time marked by frequent changes of headteacher. Within this period a new team of teachers has been created. In spite of this upheaval the quality of education has been maintained and the situation has now become more stable.

Children make satisfactory progress in Reception because the use of the outside area is not yet fully integrated into teachers' planning. As a result, this sometimes limits children's capacity for independent learning. Pupils' starting points on entry to Year 1 are usually broadly average. These vary as the size of year groups is relatively small. Standards of work in Year 3 are above average, but in all other years, including Year 6, they are broadly average. This represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils' skills are slightly better in reading than in mathematics or writing. Teachers have carried out some good preparatory work with a view to raising pupils' standards, but, as a result of staffing disruption, most initiatives have yet to have a perceptible impact on pupils' progress.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They behave responsibly and most concentrate well in class. Teachers' planning for lessons has improved since the last inspection, and now provides a greater variety of tasks to meet the needs of all pupils. The information from planning, which explains what pupils must learn to be successful, is not shared with pupils to enable them to assess what they have learnt and what they need to do next. Teachers' questioning does not consistently provide pupils, especially the younger ones in the mixed-age groups, with enough opportunities to clarify key ideas and develop their thinking skills. Consequently, the younger pupils sometimes lack the confidence to share their ideas in front of the class.

Systems for tracking pupils' progress are satisfactory. An increased focus on the progress of more able pupils has resulted in improvements in provision for these pupils and better progress for some pupils who were at risk of underachieving. Monitoring of teaching is suitably rigorous, enabling key priorities and strengths and weaknesses to be accurately diagnosed. Frequent re-allocation of responsibilities has, however, reduced opportunities for senior teachers to ensure that good initiatives are systematically developed and to follow up the impact of action plans on pupils' learning. These factors, together with its present more settled climate indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure senior teachers have better opportunities to monitor the effectiveness of

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their action plans and see whole-school initiatives through to a successful conclusion

- Improve pupils' learning and progress by:
 - ensuring teachers' questioning consistently enables pupils to clarify key ideas and develop their thinking skills fully
 - ensuring teachers provide pupils with clear guidance to enable them to judge whether their learning has been successful and to identify the next steps for improving their work
- Improve the quality of children's independent learning in Reception by:
 - developing the use of the outside area to enrich their experiences.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Lesson observations confirm that pupils learn satisfactorily throughout the school. Work in lessons and pupils' books shows attainment remains broadly average in Year 2. Standards in Year 6 fluctuate from year to year, but annual comparisons are unreliable as substantial proportions of pupils have already transferred by then to high schools. Current standards in Year 6 are broadly average, but contain significant variation due to individual differences in ability. The able Year 3 group use terms such as herbivores and carnivores confidently, can define their meaning and give examples. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily from their starting points. They say they enjoy reading, including at home with their parents and carers. Older pupils write interesting accounts, often based on educational visits on a suitably wide range of topics and use information and communications technology (ICT) effectively to vary their style of presentation. Sometimes, their handwriting is untidy. Some of the younger pupils in the mixed-age classes are less secure in their understanding of fractions and proportions. More able pupils demonstrated in their ICT work satisfactory competence in a more challenging task based on identifying number sequences. The very few pupils with special educational needs progress at a similar rate to their classmates.

Pupils are fond of their school. Nearly all pupils enjoy their lessons. They say they know to stay safe by keeping away from strangers. They behave responsibly in lessons and out in the playground. They make good contributions to the school community as eco-councillors by promoting recycling and care for the environment and as junior road safety officers in organising relevant competitions. Pupils enjoy theme days and participate enthusiastically in special events, such as World Book Day. While pupils' moral and social development is good, their spiritual and cultural awareness is more limited and this is sometimes reflected in a lack of imaginative responses and personal initiative. Pupils' attendance is excellent. The development of their satisfactory basic skills, coupled with their developing research skills, and good personal development means that they are set up soundly for secondary school.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers maintain a constant lively dialogue with pupils. Consequently, relationships are good and most pupils take an active part in lessons. Lessons invariably get off to a good start, but teachers' questioning does not build systematically on pupils' responses to extend their learning. Key ideas are not always clarified sharply enough and as a result misconceptions sometimes persist which slows the progress of pupils in their independent work. A few of the teaching assistants are new to the school and teachers have not yet integrated them fully into their planning to enable them to be pro-active in supporting pupils. Teachers mark pupils work regularly and have a useful structure in place for providing feedback to pupils. Best use is not made of this as targets are too general to provide the most effective personal guidance. Teachers use community resources well, for example, the local park to provide pupils with a recognisable context for their learning.

The curriculum develops pupils' skills in English and mathematics satisfactorily. Useful initiatives exist to improve pupils' writing but follow-up work has been sporadic. Some improvements have been made to the science curriculum for older pupils to provide

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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them with more opportunities for investigative work. This, combined with planned opportunities for pupils to develop key skills across subjects linked to ICT, for example, on the space challenge project, has enhanced pupils' enjoyment of learning. These initiatives have also contributed usefully to the improved progress of more able pupils.

The school has very few pupils from circumstances which make them vulnerable but uses outside agencies effectively to support these pupils as required. Teachers know their pupils well and intervene confidently to talk through problems, which ensures pupils feel secure in school. Formal systems for supporting pupils in their academic progress are of satisfactory quality.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher has played an effective role in maintaining the quality of provision in the school since his appointment. He has steered a steady course for his less experienced colleagues. He has not sought to compromise his successor by creating further instability through embarking on a host of major changes. The recent turbulence in staffing has impacted on planning for long-term development and diluted the effectiveness of the work of talented senior teachers. For example, much hard work was done to secure the International Schools Award two years ago but the school has been unable to sustain momentum in this field as new priorities steadily emerged.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are of good quality. The school promotes equal opportunities satisfactorily. There are no marked discrepancies between the progress of boys and girls and between pupils of different abilities, but there is some variation in the rates of pupils' progress across the year groups and within subjects. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. It understands its local community well, but work to extend this further afield has been patchy. Governors provide the senior leaders with satisfactory support and challenge.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Relationships in Reception are good and children enjoy school. By the end of Reception, children have made satisfactory gains in their learning. More able children make good use of the role-play tent and possess well-developed oral skills. This enables them to interact well with each other and sustain long conversations on topics which interest them. For example, they raised the question of aspects of their curriculum with the inspector and were able to tell him clearly what this meant for their learning.

Occasionally, some opportunities are missed to promote the development of speaking skills of some children who are less fluent. Good welfare arrangements ensure children are secure and know how to keep themselves safe. The outdoor area is not yet fully adapted to provide good opportunities for children to widen their range of experiences and extend their learning independently. Children's progress is carefully recorded in individual 'learning journeys', which ensured good continuity when the Reception leader took up post. Good plans are in place to enable the Reception leader to develop her expertise further with this year group. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed satisfactorily to ensure all requirements for the welfare and learning of children are met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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Views of parents and carers

The questionnaire responses indicate, overall, a positive level of satisfaction with the school's work. Several comments centred round the uncertainty caused by frequent changes of headteacher; a few comments praised the resilience of staff in enabling the school to cope with the resulting difficulties. These views are consistent with inspection findings as described elsewhere in this report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newtown Linford Primary 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 inspection team received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 62 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	63	10	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	52	13	48	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	33	15	56	2	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	22	14	52	2	7	1	4
The teaching is good at this school	11	41	15	56	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	44	11	41	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	63	6	22	2	7	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)	5	19	11	41	3	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	26	16	59	1	4	1	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	22	19	70	0	0	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	30	13	48	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	33	12	44	3	11	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	52	11	41	2	7	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



11 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newton Linford Primary School, Newton Linford, LE6 0AD

Thank you for making us welcome in your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your interests and finding out your views about your school.

Newton Linford is a satisfactory school. These are the things it does well.

It is clear, as you said that you get on well with the teachers and your behaviour is good.

You know what to do to keep healthy and stay safe. Your personal development is good overall.

By the time you leave school your standards are average and you have made satisfactory progress in your learning. We have asked the school to do some things to help you make faster progress.

Give senior teachers better chances to follow up their plans for improving your standards and to check if they work well.

Make sure that teachers help you to completely understand the key ideas of the lesson; that you have good chances to extend your thinking skills and that teachers make clear to you what you should have learnt by the end of the lesson so that you can judge what you need to do next to improve.

Improve the use of the outdoor area so that Reception children can learn better.

You can help by trying your hardest and keeping up your super attendance.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken

Lead inspector

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