

Newhall Community Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112635
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	385010
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2012
Lead inspector	Christopher Parker

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Curtis
Headteacher	Peter Seargent
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2010
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Christopher Parker

Additional inspector

Derek Barnes

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. The inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by nine teachers, talked to the pupils about their work and behaviour in the school, and scrutinised a sample of their exercise books. Inspectors also met with a representative of the governing body and members of staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at records of behaviour, safeguarding policies and the school improvement plan. They analysed responses to governing body's recent survey of parents' views, to which 142 responded.

Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very low, and all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible to free school meals is broadly average. The school is currently operating with nine classes – three classes in Year 3 and two each in Years 4, 5 and 6.

When the school was inspected in November 2010, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on four occasions. At the last monitoring inspection, the school was judged to be making good progress.

Over the last 18 months, there have been several changes to the teaching staff. A new headteacher was appointed and took up post in September 2011. The school met the government's floor standard in 2011.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- 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. This is a satisfactory school. It is not good, because some inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and the rate at which pupils make progress. The rate of improvement has gathered pace over the last six months. The headteacher has secured many improvements in a relatively short time.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils start Year 3 with attainment that is above average. Progress is now satisfactory, and pupils are currently reaching above average standards by the end of Year 6. Progress is faster in reading and writing than in mathematics. In science, pupils are not developing their investigative skills systematically to enable them to make good progress.
- The teaching is satisfactory. It is good in some respects, but there remain inconsistencies that result in the pupils making progress in line with expectations rather than consistently exceeding them. Good teaching of English has accelerated pupils’ progress, notably in Years 5 and 6. In mathematics, the work that the teachers set is not always challenging the more-able pupils. Marking has improved, but is not effective in all subjects.
- The behaviour and safety of the pupils are satisfactory. Pupils behave well in lessons, which are rarely interrupted. Parents, pupils, teachers and support staff all agree that behaviour has considerably improved. The pupils’ attitudes to learning are increasingly positive, but some do not take enough care when presenting their work. A few pupils do not attend school often enough.
- The drive and ambition of the headteacher and senior leaders have resulted in clear improvements in pupils’ achievements. This is because the school is calm and orderly, and teaching and assessment are now much more effective. A well-planned approach to monitoring, training and coaching has contributed to

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improvements in teaching.

- Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics so that, by July 2013, at least half of them reach the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6, by:
 - ensuring that teaching consistently challenges more-able pupils throughout lessons
 - providing a broad range of opportunities for pupils to use and extend their mathematical skills across the curriculum
 - routinely providing opportunities for pupils to respond to, and benefit from, the teachers' marking and feedback.
- Improve achievement, especially in science, by:
 - ensuring that investigative skills are taught and developed systematically throughout the school
 - matching tasks to the different needs and abilities of pupils in the class and ensuring that the more-able pupils are consistently challenged
 - establishing consistently high expectations of presentation, handwriting, grammar, spelling and punctuation in pupils' work, and marking it accordingly.
- Take all possible steps to improve the attendance record of the small number of pupils who are persistently absent by working more closely with their parents.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The rate of progress in lessons has accelerated, most notably in reading and writing, because the teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress have improved considerably. As a result, most pupils are making the expected rate of progress in lessons, and in English many are exceeding it. In Years 5 and 6, a settled teaching team is helping the pupils to make up for slower progress in earlier years at a good rate. In Years 3 and 4, the teaching team has not been as settled for as long and, consequently, improvements are more recent.

Over the last two years, the results of national tests at the end of Year 6 have improved from below to above average. This improvement is being maintained. Attainment in reading is currently above average, although a few less confident readers have gaps in their knowledge of letter sounds. The school is tackling this through the systematic teaching of phonics to those pupils who have fallen behind.

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Although pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress in lessons, there are occasions when the tasks which the pupils are set do not take sufficient account of what they already know. For example, in a mathematics lesson, some pupils were capable of tackling more demanding tasks earlier on in the lesson. Although they consolidated and practised their skills, the lesson was a missed opportunity for more-able pupils to make more rapid progress. The progress made by pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is very similar to that of all pupils.

Improvements in mathematics and science, while resulting in satisfactory progress for most pupils, have not resulted in the same rapid progress that is evident in English. The pupils have too few opportunities to use and extend their mathematics skills in other subjects, and their investigative skills are not being developed systematically in science. As a result, not as many pupils are working at the higher level as there should be, particularly in mathematics.

A recent questionnaire of parents' views, carried out by the governing body, shows that a very large majority of parents are now confident that their child is making progress in English and mathematics. The inspection found that pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress.

Pupils' work in a range of subjects is satisfactory. Teachers are now making good use of opportunities to promote literacy across the curriculum, for example in pupils' work on the Second World War. Their work in the topics that they study, and in art and music, contribute positively to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Quality of teaching

The headteacher has set clear and high expectations of the teachers and this has resulted in much-improved teaching. These expectations have transferred to pupils and have had a marked and positive impact on their behaviour and attitudes to learning. Behaviour is managed well in lessons. The general level of expectation of what pupils can achieve has also risen, although not enough is demanded of the more-able pupils in some lessons, particularly in mathematics. Lessons are made interesting so that they engage pupils, and most are conducted at a good pace.

The headteacher is successfully establishing consistent approaches, for example to handwriting. Teachers now all teach the same handwriting style, although some still too readily accept work that is not presented neatly. The quality of marking has improved, and approaches are increasingly consistent. In English, the impact of training has resulted in teachers clearly identifying how pupils can improve their work. A similar approach is taken in mathematics, although pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond to their teacher's comments or to correct misunderstandings. In science, marking is rather superficial and teachers do not pay sufficient attention to correcting and improving the pupils' grammar, spelling and punctuation. Nevertheless, the teachers are making good use of the information they

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glean from marking in English and mathematics to modify tasks for the pupils. This was evident in Year 5 mathematics lessons, where the teacher grouped the pupils and set tasks on the basis of his assessments of the previous day's work.

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils; they question them confidently, and engage pupils in discussions that make a satisfactory contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is also true of teaching assistants, who provide effective additional support, often for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, but also other groups, by using probing questions, further explanation, and resources tailored to the pupils' needs.

In a recent survey conducted by the governing body, a very high proportion of parents agreed that they had confidence in their child's teacher to help them to achieve the best they possibly can. The inspection found teaching to be satisfactory.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The results of a recent survey carried out by the governing body shows that the vast majority of parents agree that the pupils behave well. A very high proportion agree that the school has 'an air of calmness and control'. Discussions with groups of pupils revealed that they have very few concerns about behaviour in the classroom, and that they feel happy and safe on the playground.

The school monitors and records the behaviour of a small number of pupils who experience difficulty in managing their own behaviour. Support within the school, and that provided by outside agencies, has been effective in improving the behaviour of these pupils so that they are developing better social skills and are making faster academic progress.

Incidents of poor behaviour have fallen sharply over the last year. Pupils say there are very few incidents of bullying. The school helps them to recognise the different types of bullying and to understand why such incidents might happen. In discussions, pupils say they are confident that the school would deal promptly with all types of bullying.

In lessons, pupils concentrate on their work, show increasing levels of perseverance, and collaborate well on tasks they are set. They have satisfactory attitudes to learning, although too many pupils do not present their work neatly or take sufficient care with their handwriting.

The vast majority of pupils have very good attendance records. Consequently, overall attendance is above average. However, the persistent absence of a few pupils remains a cause for concern.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leaders have brought about considerable improvements

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by challenging the teachers to improve pupils' progress. They have successfully implemented a sharply focused improvement plan. This has resulted in improvements in assessment arrangements and detailed tracking of every pupil's progress. Senior leaders also carefully analyse the performance of, for example, those taking free school meals, and of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This illustrates the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity and to improving the achievement of every pupil. The analysis of the frequent assessments of pupils' attainment shows a growing momentum towards consistently good progress, although pupils are currently making up more lost ground in English than in mathematics. The school is well placed to improve further.

The governing body, although pleased with improvements to date, takes a robust position in challenging the school's performance. It not only wants to see higher standards, but also the school adding greater value to the pupils' education.

The most noteworthy improvement is in the standard of behaviour. The last inspection found some pupils' behaviour to be unruly, with a lack of respect for adults. This is no longer the case because the headteacher has introduced the 'respect agenda' which now permeates school life, with the result that pupils are respectful and the school is a calm and purposeful place for them to learn.

The curriculum is satisfactory, and provides pupils with interesting visits and activities, together with a range of extra-curricular opportunities. Although there are opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy skills in other subjects, there are few examples of their numeracy skills being extended in interesting contexts. The deputy headteacher is currently revising the curriculum to ensure that pupils' skills are developed systematically. Currently, investigative skills in science are not being developed in a manner that builds on what they are already able to do. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.

Parents appreciate the improvements that have been achieved, and their recent responses to the survey carried out by the governing body show high levels of confidence in those leading and managing the school. Parents are given opportunities to attend workshops, such as the recent demonstration on phonics. Safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



14 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newhall Community Junior School, Swadlincote, DE11 0TR

I have made a number of visits to your school over the last year and have enjoyed seeing it improve. What has been particularly noticeable is how much more you are now involved in lessons, and how rarely they are interrupted. I have talked to some of you each time I have visited, and each time you have said that behaviour has got better than the last time. I am pleased to say that behaviour is now satisfactory.

You are making the progress expected of you in all lessons, and in many lessons you make good progress. At the moment, many of you are making better progress in English than mathematics, so I have asked the school to help you to do well in both. More of you could reach the higher level in mathematics, so I have asked the school to ensure that at least half of you do so by 2013. I have looked at some of your science exercise books and have watched you in lessons. I can see you are carrying out a broader range of investigation, but approaches to developing your skills vary a lot from class to class. I have therefore asked the teachers to make sure that they build on what you already know, and introduce new skills in a planned way. Some of you take care and present your work carefully, but others do not; this means that your writing in science is not as good as it is in English. You can help by always doing your best work in science, taking just as much care with spelling and punctuation as you do in English.

Most of you have very good attendance records, but a few do not come to school often enough. I have asked the school to do all it can make sure everyone attends every day unless they are ill. Your school has improved because of the commitment and determination of the headteacher, senior leaders and your teachers. The school is now providing you with a satisfactory education and it is improving quickly. I am pleased to tell you that 'special measures' have been removed.

I hope both you and your school go from strength to strength!

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker
Lead inspector

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