

Newtown Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126293
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	360039
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Saunders

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	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Delphine Disney
Headteacher	Tom Hill
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 16 lessons delivered by eight teachers. They held meetings with senior leaders, groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body, and spoke to pupils, parents and carers informally. They looked at pupils' work, the school's tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures and records of school leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning. They also reviewed minutes from meetings, the school development plan and questionnaires received from 101 parents and carers, as well as responses from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the school has tackled the decline in attainment at Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly in mathematics and reading, and for those who speak English as an additional language or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Whether the school has implemented effective strategies to improve attendance.
- How effective the school has been in bringing about improvements to teaching, particularly in mathematics.
- Whether the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are met, so that they make the progress they should.
- How well leadership is developed and distributed, to bring about further improvements and increase progress.

Information about the school

Newtown Community Primary School is an average-sized school in an urban area of Trowbridge. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. There are more pupils than average from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds; the majority of these are of Polish heritage, with a wide range of other backgrounds represented. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is about 20%, although this is higher in some cohorts; a few of these are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average at about 37%. These pupils include those with specific and moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and physical disabilities. More pupils than usual join or leave the school other than at the expected times. Since the last inspection, there have been several changes in the leadership team and staff. After a drop in numbers, the number on roll has been steadily increasing. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a single Reception class. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award, and has been awarded the International School award. There is a privately run nursery on the school site, which was not part of this inspection.

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

2

Main findings

This school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is rapidly improving and has a number of good features. The new headteacher and his senior leadership team have been rigorous in evaluating the performance of the school and have accurately identified key issues which need to be addressed. They have implemented effective strategies to improve teaching so that this is now good. Robust systems to assess and track the progress of pupils have been put in place and are being used to accurately identify which pupils need support to make the progress they should. As a result, the achievement of pupils has improved and is satisfactory.

Leadership is well distributed among the staff and there is a strong sense of shared responsibility for the progress of the pupils. This is having an impact so that progress across the school is increasing securely and quickly.

While attainment remains low, it is improving. The focus on mathematics has paid off and attainment has risen. The full impact is not yet evident in pupils' results in statutory tests but in lessons seen, the majority of pupils are now working at levels that are broadly similar to those that might be expected for their age. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the support they receive. This is closely matched to their needs and regularly evaluated to ensure it is effective.

Pupils who speak English as an additional language often join the school at other than the usual times. From their starting points, they make good progress. However, the high proportion of these pupils in some cohorts has had an impact on the overall attainment.

Teaching is well planned and reflects the good subject knowledge of the adults. As a result, the large majority of pupils are given work that is well matched to their needs. Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to participate in lessons.

In the best lessons, more-able pupils are given stimulating work and encouraged to develop their independence by getting on with their work without long explanations. However, this is not yet consistent and some pupils who are more-able are not challenged as much as they should be. While they enjoy their work, these pupils do not make as much progress as they are capable of.

While marking often includes an indication of how pupils can improve their work, they are not often enough given the opportunity to respond to this and they miss the chance to improve.

In recent years, attendance has been low but the robust and consistent approach of the school means that attendance has improved and is now broadly average. A very few pupils are still not often enough at school, despite the school's efforts.

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Adults care a great deal for the pupils in their care; as a result, pupils feel safe and know that they can talk to someone if they are worried. They have great confidence in the advice and support they receive from adults in the school, particularly when moving between year groups or to their secondary school.

The behaviour of almost all pupils is good, because of the consistent expectations and positive ethos that are promoted across the school. Pupils recognise that there are a very few pupils who find it difficult to comply with the school's expectations, but feel that those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are well supported by strategies which are sensitively implemented.

Alongside the improvements in learning, the school has put considerable effort into improving the learning environment. Pupils have played a significant role in this and are very proud of their school.

A parent echoed the views of many, saying: 'It is a happy and fun place to be. The teachers are warm, caring and professional and encourage enthusiasm for learning.' Another parent commented: 'I am always struck by the politeness of the children throughout the school and sense of community and inclusion.'

The increased rate of progress brought about by improvements in teaching and assessment, as well as the accurate self-evaluation by leaders at all levels, means that the school has good capacity to bring about further sustained improvements.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, by:
 - ensuring more-able pupils receive harder work and are allowed to get on with their work more quickly
 - improving the use of marking to ensure that pupils know what they need to do next and have opportunities to respond to teachers' guidance.
- Increase the attendance of the very few pupils for whom this is an issue, by working with the families to ensure they understand the importance of regular attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

When they join the school, pupils have skills and knowledge which are considerably below those expected for their age. Teachers' records and lessons seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage show that children make up ground and develop their skills as enthusiastic, independent learners. Through Key Stages 1 and 2, they continue to enjoy learning because the topics they study are interesting. During lessons seen, pupils made at least satisfactory progress, although in many lessons progress was good, particularly in mathematics, where progress is increasing rapidly. There has been an emphasis on setting targets for each pupil in reading, writing and mathematics and these help pupils to know what they need to do next. Those who join the school with English as an additional language, often at the early stages of learning English, are well supported by the staff and the helpful partnerships the school has developed. Along with the considerate support of

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their peers, this helps them make rapid progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because the strategies to support them are carefully considered and implemented by knowledgeable adults.

Pupils help each other to behave well during lessons, reminding each other of what is expected. During break times, pupils from a wide range of different backgrounds get along amicably. There are good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities, and they greatly enjoy doing so. The school council has had considerable input into improving the environment, and pupils enjoy taking charge of the quiet area of the playground. Pupils are proud of the secret garden area and the vegetables and flowers they are growing. They are well informed about what they can do to stay healthy, and enjoy learning from the sports leaders provided by the Active Trowbridge organisation and learning to swim in the school's own pool. This has helped the school to achieve the Healthy School award. Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, or who face considerable issues outside of school, are particularly well supported by highly dedicated adults who spend time listening and helping these pupils to make sense of what they are feeling and experiencing. As a result, these pupils are helped to play a positive role in the school and make good progress in their learning. The moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good; while their understanding of other religions is good, opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs, though occasionally provided by teachers, are not always taken up.

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	4
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	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

Teachers use the well-organised curriculum to plan engaging lessons. For example, pupils in Year 4 enjoyed investigating patterns of numbers using practical situations. The accurate assessments, and good evaluation of these, enable teachers to set helpful targets for pupils, which are reviewed regularly. Good practice is effectively shared through observing colleagues within subject areas and through regular monitoring by middle leaders. Teachers make good use of 'talking partners' and use questioning and small whiteboards well to help pupils develop their ideas. While some teachers ensure that the more-able pupils are given work that stretches their skills and knowledge, this is not always the case. Teaching assistants are well informed and provide effective, carefully targeted support, balanced with developing the independence of pupils. In the best examples, pupils respond to the comments made through the marking of work, but this is inconsistent so there are not always sufficient opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning.

The learning of basic skills is carefully planned across the curriculum, although the planning to help pupils develop progressive information and computer technology skills is not yet as refined. A wide range of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum, as do the themed weeks. For example, pupils enjoyed working with a range of authors, to develop their writing skills. The Children's Parliament provides further opportunity for pupils to interact with young people from other schools and develops their awareness of wider issues. The school has been particularly successful in the Trowbridge in Bloom competition and is taking a significant role in preparing for and hosting this event. Opportunities for family learning are well regarded and help parents and carers to support their children. Other clubs and activities after school are popular and allow pupils to explore their creativity or learn to be part of a team. These examples happen because the staff are determined to give pupils the best possible learning opportunities. Staff know the pupils very well as individuals; those facing particular difficulties in their lives benefit from additional support from caring adults and the good partnerships the school has developed. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Parents, carers and pupils agree that they benefit from excellent support during times of transition between year groups, and particularly when starting at the school or moving on to another school.

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?

In the time he has been at the school, the headteacher has brought about significant improvements in teaching and implemented systems to track the progress of pupils, which

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are helping to tackle the decline in attainment. There is a strong sense of purpose among the staff because the vision for high quality learning is shared widely. Targets are ambitious, and these are now being reached. Subject leaders show considerable enthusiasm for their responsibilities and are empowered to bring about appropriate changes towards raising achievement. Good partnerships with local schools, community groups, and sporting organisations all benefit the pupils immensely, and enrich the curriculum. For example, the school has developed a strong partnership with the youth band, which allows pupils to learn to play a musical instrument for free. The school makes the most of the range of cultural heritages of its pupils, celebrating and valuing the diversity of the community through assemblies and in lessons. Along with the many links with the wider national communities and across the world, this means that the school makes a good contribution to developing community cohesion, and this helped them to achieve the International Schools award. Pupils appreciate their similarities and differences; they say that any incidents of bullying or racial discrimination are dealt with quickly and effectively.

The school ensures that parents and carers are well informed about their own child's learning, as well as upcoming events; parents and carers greatly appreciate this and feel that they are part of the learning community. The impact of raising attainment, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language, along with improvements in attendance, supports the promotion of equality of opportunity well. The governing body has been through a period of turbulence, but is now a settled body that is increasingly confident of its role within the school. Members of the governing body are highly dedicated, bring a wide range of helpful skills, and have ensured they are well trained. As a result, they provide the school with good levels of challenge alongside their support. They ensure that policies and procedures are regularly reviewed; at the time of the inspection, statutory requirements for the safeguarding of pupils were met well.

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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
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	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The good preparation before they join the school, along with clear routines and highly positive attitudes of the staff, means that children settle into the Reception class quickly. While children often join the school with skills and knowledge which are low, particularly in communication, language and literacy as well as their social skills, they make good progress. By the time they join Key Stage 1, they have made up considerable ground. There is a rich array of activities to choose from, and adult-led sessions are effective in supporting their learning, particularly in linking sounds and letters. Good use is made of the adults available, who are very knowledgeable, to observe and record the learning of the children so that further work can be planned. Parents and carers are helped to support their children's learning, through workshops and opportunities to play and work alongside the children. The indoor environment provides well for all the areas of learning; there are plans to improve the outdoor environment so that it provides similarly effective opportunities. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is very effective; the key issues from the last inspection have been accurately identified and appropriate strategies put in place to tackle them. As a result, children make a good start to their learning journey at the school.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires received by the inspection team was well above the average response rate, at 50%. In all questions, the views of parents and carers were highly positive, and above national figures. A very small minority of parents and carers felt that their child was not making enough progress at the school, or believed that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that the very large majority of pupils make at least satisfactory progress; however, more-able pupils do not always make as much progress as they are capable of. Inspectors found that the school has appropriate procedures to deal with unacceptable behaviour. In some cases, their approach is appropriately and sensitively tailored to the needs of individuals who may exhibit particularly challenging behaviour. The needs of all the pupils are given careful consideration in addressing behavioural issues. Parents and carers were particularly positive about the safety of their children, that the teaching is good, and that the school is led and managed effectively. Inspectors found that these aspects are strengths of the school's work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newtown Community 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 101 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 203 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	60	36	36	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	66	65	34	34	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	55	54	42	42	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	50	40	40	10	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	54	53	44	44	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	51	44	44	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	58	57	39	39	3	3	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)	49	49	44	44	8	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	50	45	45	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	44	45	45	6	6	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	43	50	50	6	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	61	60	37	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	58	38	38	1	1	1	1

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 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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



20 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newtown Community Primary School, Trowbridge BA14 0BB

Thank you for talking to us and showing us the work you were doing when we visited your school. We enjoyed finding out about the many things you like about your school and could see how proud you are to be part of it. Your school gives you a satisfactory education and the headteacher and staff are working to make it even better. These are some of the things we found about your school.

- You behave well and are keen to learn; many of you told us how much you like being at school. You get along with each other very well.
- You are doing much better in your reading, writing and particularly in your mathematics this year; you can be proud of the progress you have made.
- Teaching is good, and the teachers keep a close eye on how you are doing. As a result, they give you targets so you know what you need to do next.
- Those of you who find learning more difficult, or speak English as an additional language, make good progress because of the support you get.
- You know a lot about how to stay healthy, and particularly like the swimming and physical education, as well as growing things in the secret garden.
- The headteacher and other adults understand very well what needs to be done to make the school even better.

There are some things we have asked the school to improve.

- Help you to reach even higher standards by the time you leave the school.
- Provide even harder work for those of you who find learning fairly easy to do in lessons.
- Give you time to do what the teachers ask you to when they mark your work. You can help by thinking about what you have learnt from the teachers' comments.
- Help those few of you who are too often away from school to understand how important it is to be at school regularly. You can help by making every effort to be at school when you should be.

We are glad you enjoy being at school and hope you will continue to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Saunders

Lead inspector

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