

Newtown Community Primary School

Newtown, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 0BB

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although changes in leadership have led to improvements in the quality of teaching, this has not had enough time to lead to good achievement in all areas of the school, including in English and mathematics.
- Past underperformance and gaps in pupils' learning, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, have not been fully resolved.
- Teachers do not consistently ensure that all parts of the lesson meet pupils' individual needs.
- Planned opportunities for using and applying mathematics and literacy skills across the curriculum are not fully developed.
- Subject leaders, who are recent appointments, have not had time to play a full role in checking and improving teaching and learning in their subject in order to secure good achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of staff, governors, pupils and parents, and is well placed to raise pupils' achievement across the school. Staff are strongly committed to ensuring that this is achieved.
- Self-evaluation is accurate, the management of performance is now robust and action to develop teaching is effective.
- Marking has improved throughout the school. Pupils consistently know how to improve their work and their next steps of learning.
- Behaviour is good. There is a culture of mutual respect and pupils feel safe at all times. The school offers good support to vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Parents are highly positive about the school, the leadership and staff, and the stable environment now secured.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons. Two of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors heard pupils read and looked at their work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, governors, a local authority adviser and the school’s staff, including subject leaders.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents who responded to Parent View, as well as the views of parents spoken to at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s self-evaluation and planning for improvement, the data the school keeps on pupils’ current progress and achievement, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and the school’s safeguarding information.
- The inspection team observed morning playtime, lunchtime and attended two assemblies.
- There have been considerable staff changes over the last 18 months, including the appointment of two assistant headteachers.

Inspection team

Sarah Somers, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Shears

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. An increasing number of pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children of service families, is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that the new approach to the teaching of basic skills addresses any gaps in pupils' learning
 - ensuring that the planning of lessons meets the needs of all pupils in each part of the lesson
 - planning opportunities for pupils to apply and practise their literacy and numeracy skills in a wide range of subjects
 - sharing the existing good practice in school and drawing on the expertise of colleagues.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - recently appointed subject leaders check the quality of teaching and learning regularly and take prompt and effective action to tackle weaknesses
 - subject leaders review assessment data regularly to check pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should because teaching is not consistently good. Changes in staffing have held back the school's capacity to sustain improvement in pupils' progress and attainment. However, the achievement of current pupils in the school is improving because weak teaching over time and staffing instability have been tackled effectively by the headteacher.
- Pupils join the school with skills and experiences that are well below those expected for their age. They make the progress usually found in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this continues in Key Stage 1. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 in 2012 improved in reading, writing and mathematics, although they remained below average.
- Pupils' attainment in reading is improving and children are beginning to apply well what they know about the linking of letters and sounds (phonics) to their reading. This is an improvement over the screening check for Year 1 pupils in 2012 when the results were below the national average. Reading has a high profile in the school and pupils are generally enthusiastic about books.
- Standards in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 were significantly below average in 2012. Pupils made better progress than is expected in English in Year 6. However, in mathematics, most pupils made far less progress than pupils nationally. This was largely to do with a legacy of past underperformance and gaps in learning because of inadequate teaching.
- The school's data for pupils currently in the school and the work in pupils' books shows that the rate of progress has improved, although some gaps in learning remain. This improving rate of progress is a result of better teaching and rigorous monitoring.
- Senior leaders now have a robust system for tracking pupils to check they are making the progress expected in reading, writing and mathematics. Where any pupils are falling behind, the school has a clear system in place to take steps to make sure they catch up. Current school data show that the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills is becoming more secure.
- Gaps in achievement between different groups are narrowing as a result of actions to make more effective use of resources to ensure all pupils have an equal chance to succeed. This is helping pupils supported through pupil premium funding, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Based on their average point scores, the gap between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils is closing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not all pupils are making consistently good progress. Weak teaching in the past has led to gaps in pupils' knowledge and to their underachievement. Although improving because of the strong focus on developing teaching skills, the teaching is not yet consistently good.
- Teachers plan work for the main activities in lessons that is matched to pupils' individual needs, but not always for the whole time. As a result, the pace of learning drops when pupils' needs are not met in every part of the lesson.
- The whole-school approach to the teaching of basic skills is more systematic and builds effectively on pupils' prior learning. This approach has not yet ensured that previous gaps in learning have been addressed sufficiently to enable pupils to make good progress. Planned opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects are not fully established in all classes.
- The questioning of pupils is effective in the best lessons. It is targeted at individuals to ensure that pupils remain involved in the lesson and helps to consolidate learning by encouraging pupils to explain their reasoning.

- Teaching assistants provide effective support in lessons, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English.
- Marking has improved considerably and is being used consistently across the school. Pupils know how to improve their work and the next steps in their learning. They are given time in lessons to read and respond to the teacher's comments.
- Considerable changes to teaching staff have occurred in the last eighteen months but there is now a stable staff team. New appointments, effective professional development and a willingness on the part of staff to develop their own practice are improving the overall quality of teaching. This is reflected in the acceleration in pupils' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say they enjoy school. They have positive attitudes to one another. Pupils are polite and courteous, with frequent examples of good manners. Relationships with all adults in the school are strong, which contribute effectively to the calm, well-ordered and welcoming atmosphere.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying and say that it rarely occurs. Pupils have high confidence in staff and feel secure that any concerns will be taken seriously. They say that any incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with instantly and that the headteacher has done much to improve behaviour and reduce incidents of bullying.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Occasionally, when the pace of learning slows, a few pupils become restless when listening to the teacher's explanations.
- Pupils say they feel safe at all times. Pupils have an awareness of how to stay safe in different situations, including how to stay safe when using computers.
- Attendance is average and improving, reflecting the diligence of staff in encouraging good attendance. Absence is monitored rigorously and the Parent Support Advisor works closely with parents and carers to reduce persistent absence.
- Staff, governors and parents who were interviewed or responded through Parent View indicated that pupils' behaviour is typically good.
- A range of responsibilities develops pupils' social skills well. For example, pupils enjoy being members of the school council and the youth parliament where they work with the community to improve the local area. Pupils enjoyed making an Olympic mosaic picture, which is displayed in the local park.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because achievement and teaching, although improving, are not yet consistently good. The continuous focus on improving the quality of teaching has been successful, but its impact is not yet fully evident in raising pupils' attainment substantially. This is because inadequate teaching in the past has led to underperformance for some pupils. There is still some teaching in the school that requires improvement.
- There have been significant changes to staffing since the last inspection. The headteacher's strong vision has secured a cohesive team, clearly focused on school improvement. Staff morale is high. Leaders have a realistic understanding of the school's effectiveness and have an awareness of what needs to be done to improve pupils' achievement.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic but are recent appointments to their roles. They have an accurate understanding of the priorities in their subject. However, they have not had time to develop their role in monitoring and leading improvement in teaching quality. Subject action plans are not specific enough and do not include measurable criteria against which success can be judged.
- A robust tracking system is now in place and this is used carefully to monitor pupils' progress.

Their progress is discussed at regular meetings, and where progress is slow, strategies are put in place to support learning.

- The headteacher has ensured that the management of performance is robust. Professional development activities are matched carefully to the needs of each teacher. Pay and promotion reflect teachers' effectiveness and their impact on learning.
 - The school teaches a broad and balanced range of subjects although there are not always planned opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in a wide range of subjects.
 - Visits, visitors and a range of experiences, such as a samba-drumming workshop and the Year 6 camping trip, enhance and add to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Older pupils organise activities such as raising funds for Red Nose Day. The themed enrichment days, pupils' performances and sporting opportunities effectively underpin pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - The school spends its pupil premium funding well, for example, through the use of a Parent Support Advisor and a bilingual teaching assistant, and small group and individual support for learning. This is helping eligible pupils to make more rapid progress.
 - Equal opportunity for different groups of pupils is promoted well and the school does not tolerate discrimination.
 - The Parent View survey and informal discussions with parents give a very positive picture of the school. The school's close and supportive work with the parents of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those who speak English as an additional language has strongly enhanced children's well-being.
 - Procedures to ensure the safeguarding of pupils are fully in place.
 - The local authority has provided a medium level of support, which has been effective in improving teaching and learning and supporting developments in mathematics and English. They are supporting the school to improve the environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - There have been a number of changes to the governing body. Governors are playing an increasing role and have an understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are realistic about the current judgements on the quality of teaching and the school's performance and have a good understanding of performance management and way that it is being used to reward good teachers. Governors have increased amounts of information about pupils' performance and the impact of additional funding. Governors ensure that pupil premium is used effectively to support and improve achievement of eligible pupils. The expertise of governors is being developed through meetings with school leaders and a termly meeting with the local authority. They have organised six training sessions a year with the local cluster of schools to further their development. Governors are developing their skills in monitoring the school's performance and ensuring the school continues to improve by holding senior leaders to account.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	126293
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	406355

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	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Gear
Headteacher	Mary Hiscock
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2011
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