

# Newington Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Newington, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 7LB

**Inspection dates** 12–13 May 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The executive headteacher, together with the senior leadership team, leads the school well. They have successfully generated a clear vision for raising standards.
- Pupils' achievement in the school is good. From their different starting points, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils show commitment and enthusiasm when they are learning. They are proud of their school.
- Pupils are very friendly and happy. They feel safe. This view is supported by all staff and almost all parents and carers. Pupils say that the best things about the school are 'learning' and 'the teachers'.
- Leaders have managed staff performance very well. This has helped to bring about improvement in teaching and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders and managers, together with governors, are totally committed to providing a high standard of education for all pupils. Leaders' actions have been effective in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Teaching has improved considerably. It is now good and in some cases outstanding. Members of staff form an effective team where every pupil is known as an individual.
- The school curriculum is rich, varied and exciting. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is a strength of the school and at the heart of everything it does.
- Early years provision is good. Children develop self-esteem and enthusiasm for learning in the early years. Regular and accurate checks ensure pupils make good progress from their starting points.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching in the school is outstanding. As a result, not all pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school does not always communicate successfully with parents in working together to improve their children's learning.
- The learning environment for children in the early years does not provide the children opportunities to reinforce links between their learning inside and outside.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 14 lessons, all of which were visited jointly with either the executive headteacher, the head of school or the inclusion manager.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the senior leaders of both schools in the federation, subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. In addition inspectors looked at pupils' work in books and listened to them read.
- Inspectors met informally with parents at the beginning and end of the school day and took account of the 46 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Three letters were also considered together with the school's own questionnaire for parents carried out in October 2014. The responses to 13 staff questionnaires were also noted.
- A number of documents were viewed, including the school's information about pupils' progress and the school's evaluation of its work. Inspectors scrutinised checks on teachers' effectiveness, reports from the local authority and records relating to attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Gay Whent, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynne Wilson-Leary

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is in a federation with Lower Halstow Primary School. The headteacher is executive headteacher of both schools. The schools work closely together.
- There has been a very high turnover of staff since the previous inspection.
- Reception children attend full time.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A larger number of pupils are of Romany or Gypsy heritage than in other schools nationally.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than the national average. This group of pupils has a variety of barriers to learning which are mostly related to speech, language and communication needs.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who spend all their primary years in this school is lower than the national average.
- The school is part of the Gateway Alliance, a group of 14 local primary schools.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is typically outstanding in order to ensure that more pupils across the school make better than expected progress by giving pupils more opportunities to practise and develop their reasoning and problem solving skills in order to accelerate their learning.
- Develop successful strategies to engage parents so that they can support their child's learning better.
- Ensure that provision for early years children is well planned to provide the children with increased, rich and varied learning opportunities which reinforce their learning both inside and outdoors.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection the executive headteacher, together with her senior leadership team, acted quickly in starting to improve the school. Together they have the expertise and determination to drive the school forward. As a result, they ensure that all pupils make good or better progress. Leaders provide clear and decisive leadership and have created a culture in which teaching and good behaviour flourish.
- Senior leaders work hard and successfully with staff to sustain and improve the quality of teaching. This is achieved through regular and careful checking of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. All staff share the targets set for pupils' achievement. Teachers and their assistants are motivated to ensure that pupils receive high-quality education. The impact of this has been rapid improvement. The school is confident of its checks because its judgements are validated by external agencies and senior leaders and headteachers from other local schools including those in the Gateway Alliance.
- Communication with parents is not always as successful as it might be. Many parents spoken to were very happy with their child's learning, a view highlighted by the results of the Parent View questionnaire. However, while many parents agree that their child is looked after well at the school, many do not know enough about their child's progress. Leaders acknowledge that this is a key area of development for the school and are keen to foster better relationships with families.
- The leadership of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective. The leader has taken direct action to improve the success with which the progress of these pupils is carefully monitored. Systems, policies and procedures are all in place. As a result, these pupils are making good and in some cases rapid progress.
- Pupil premium funding is used wisely and well to support those pupils who are eligible to receive it. Governors challenge how well the school uses the funding and are aware of the findings of national research. The impact of this is very positive, involving both teachers and their assistants in evaluating the progress pupils make. As a result, these pupils are making rapid progress and are achieving as well as their peers throughout the school.
- Subject and other leaders have a clear view of the strengths of their subjects as well as the key areas for improvement which will further raise standards. They have an accurate understanding of how to help teachers improve their practice and, as a result, the quality of their leadership is good.
- Leaders at all levels work together tirelessly to promote equality of opportunity and tackle any discrimination with determination. Consequently, pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds, including those who are of Romany or Gypsy heritage, get on well together and make good progress.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. All leaders ensure that pupils are kept as safe as possible when they are in school. Older pupils say that their teachers listen to them and take them seriously when they feel unsafe anywhere, in or out of school. Governors take their safeguarding duties very seriously and are well trained and organised.
- The school's curriculum is rich, varied and interesting. It not only strengthens pupils' academic development but also their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about other religions and cultures through various themes: this term, 'let me entertain you' focuses on the celebration of festivals and carnivals throughout the world. Younger pupils have created an attractive display about Diwali. A pupil in Year 1 has written, 'This festival is a festival of happiness about good beating bad.' Teachers actively promote British values through making them part of their classroom displays with post-it comments added by many children. Year 6 pupils are enthusiastic about their recent 'mock election' and how they voted for the school's Prime Minister. The opportunity enabled them to appreciate the meaning of democracy and the power of persuasive writing in influencing decision making.
- The school makes good use of the primary school sports funding. Specialist teaching has enabled pupils to engage in a wider range of opportunities and in sporting competitions. Pupils are genuinely excited about the number of Olympian athletes who have visited their school since 2012. The funding is also being used to enable pupils to be far more aware of the importance of developing a healthier lifestyle.
- The local authority has provided helpful support and relevant guidance to the school since the previous inspection. This has been useful and constructive in supporting the improvements made.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is well led. Governors know the school well through their visits and meetings. Governors take their responsibilities very seriously and are determined that the school will improve. They are focused on driving the school forwards. Governors have high expectations for both schools in the federation. They are aware how well the school supports those pupils who have difficult challenges. They meet concerned parents with the executive headteacher and follow up the effectiveness of the

school's support.

- Governors are fully aware of the quality of teaching. They understand that senior leaders have led a rigorous and robust focus on improving teaching. They know that underperformance has been supported and tackled. They are aware of how much the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Governors are fully aware of how good teaching is rewarded through the school's performance management systems.
- Governors take an active role in monitoring pupils' progress, which they do every six weeks. They are very well informed. They know how to compare the school's data nationally through good quality training which they attend alongside staff every year.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are friendly and polite. They readily open doors and welcome visitors with a cheerful 'good morning' at the start of the day. Pupils of all ages arrive in their classes keen to learn. Their eagerness to settle quickly to early morning work is a notable feature to the start of the day.
- School leaders are focusing relentlessly on improving attendance which is now at the national average. Monthly newsletters to parents are honest and highlight the importance of good attendance to good learning; noting when it is improving as well as when it has been disappointing.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive. This is evident when they are working as a class, in a group or individually. These positive attitudes are linked to the improved quality of teaching across the school.
- Throughout the school there is a positive ethos. This is evident through the strong relationships between adults and pupils as well as between pupils and their peers. Pupils find playtimes a positive experience and interact well with pupils of all ages. They are confident that 'everyone will ask if you want to play with them if you are alone' and an older pupil said, 'There are numerous opportunities for you to make good friends so you enjoy being at school.'
- The presentation of written work in mathematics is immaculate. Older pupils explain how the 'early morning time' is useful to either complete their work or respond to their teacher's comments. The school is focusing on improving presentation in writing in all classes throughout the school. Examples of high-quality writing about African animals, plants, habitats and the recent school election are clearly seen on walls outside classrooms.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. One pupil says that 'a grazed knee is the worst thing that has happened to me at this school'.
- The staggered start to the school day ensures that pupils arrive safely, as their parents are able to arrive at a time when the quiet country road outside the school is not overwhelmed by traffic.
- There are no well-founded concerns expressed by pupils, staff or parents about pupils' safety at the school. Pupils feel very well supported by staff who they say will always listen to them, 'even if we have worries about things that happen when we are not at school'. The school's records also show the positive impact of the family liaison officer, whose support enables pupils to learn as well as possible at difficult times.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors say that bullying does not happen. Pupils know exactly what to do and who to go to if they feel this is occurring. They know how to keep safe when they use the internet. One pupil explained, 'You just say no to any stranger on the internet. It is simple.'

## The quality of teaching is good

- The school's focus on improving the quality of teaching has been robust and relentless. The good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well. Pupils say that the best things about this school are 'the teachers', 'learning', 'maths and literacy' and 'the superb visitors we have in sport, a brilliant author and a scientist'.
- The clear improvements in the teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics ensure that pupils are making good progress. In some year groups, pupils are making outstanding progress in their reading,

writing and mathematics as a result of outstanding teaching. This is not yet consistent across the whole school. The school's leadership is focusing on improving pupils' reasoning and problem solving skills in order for more teaching to be outstanding. This is a major focus as there has been a high turnover of staff in the years following the last inspection.

- Every six weeks, teachers, together with their teaching assistants, evaluate the progress pupils make with school leaders. They quickly identify any pupils who are not progressing in their learning. Teachers deploy their teaching assistants effectively in order to enable all pupils to make the best progress possible. All adults take responsibility for pupils' learning and progress. As a result, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good or better progress.
- Outstanding teachers across the federation lead learning in the school so that teachers have the benefit of seeing exemplary practice in action. Older pupils are very well prepared for teaching which will be led by specialists in their secondary schools.
- Pupils arrive calmly and happily in the morning. Teachers have good classroom routines and have successfully established positive learning atmospheres. This calm and focused start sets the tone for the day. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and behave well. As a result, there is a purposeful atmosphere in lessons with pupils concentrating and striving to do their best.
- Pupils' books are well organised and regularly marked.
- In every classroom, bright and attractive displays link to pupils' current learning. The displays clearly show ways in which pupils can improve their learning and include a range of challenges. Pupils use the questions on display to encourage them to think, reflect upon, reason and explain their understanding.
- Each classroom has well organised and readily available resources for learning. For example, in a Year 3 class, pupils select and use a thesaurus to help them start a diary entry imaginatively. One records, 'Dear my beloved diary.'
- Teachers encourage pupils to read and they talk about their favourite books across all ages. They talk animatedly about their inspirational meeting with a real author. Writing skills are extended as in Year 1, pupils write many suggestions exploring the feelings of an alien character in their favourite book. These include a response to 'How do you think Beegu felt when she was in the box of puppies?' Older pupils cannot name just one favourite author but select two or three. A whole school focus on reading has resulted in imaginative reading areas in classrooms. A welcome banner to 'Our wonderful world of reading' entices young readers to the well-stocked and invitingly set out library.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the previous inspection, raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics has been an important focus for the school, directly linked to improving the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils of all abilities are making much better progress.
- Although published test information does not appear to support this judgement, pupils' achievement is good or better. This is because teaching is good and the school's assessment is now accurate and checked by a range of high-quality external assessors. This view matches the findings of Her Majesty's Inspector who carried out the follow-up visits and telephone monitoring since the previous inspection.
- Current information about pupils' progress together with the evidence in their books shows that, from their different starting points, the vast majority of pupils make at least good progress. In some year groups, this is outstanding. This is the case for reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils show how they apply their mathematical knowledge to their learning in science in a range of different ways from graphs to data bases to drawing and measuring angles made by reflecting light extremely accurately.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good over time. This is because the careful monitoring of their progress data and observing them in lessons are used to check closely how well they are doing. Leaders ensure that teaching is planned to make a positive impact. Teachers and their teaching assistants work together sensitively to ensure that the work is pitched at just the right level of need.
- School leaders focus on the achievements of all groups of learners. The progress of pupils who join the school at times other than at the start of the school year is carefully tracked. Leaders work closely with the families of pupils of Gypsy or Romany heritage in order to forge good relationships with them. This is shown in the good progress that they show by the time they leave the school.
- The needs of the most able pupils are met well and consequently their achievement is good. Over the year, some of the older pupils have filled seven books full of learning and with their progress in

mathematics! Teachers apply their good subject knowledge to provide interesting challenges for learners of all abilities. They also set increasingly difficult challenges for the most able learners to choose themselves. This year, leaders are expecting even higher standards from the most able in reading and mathematics because some pupils are already working some years ahead of what is expected for their age.

- Disadvantaged pupils are taught well and are making good or better progress. This is as a result of an effective whole-school focus on improving provision for pupils who are disadvantaged. In many classes they are making better progress than their peers. Any gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally are closing. In the national tests in 2014, there was a gap of about two terms in reading and mathematics and a gap of one term in writing at the end of Year 6 when comparing disadvantaged pupils with other pupils in their year group and with other pupils nationally.

### The early years provision

is good

- Most children start school with skills typical for their age. A high number of children – almost half the current class – have joined the school since September. Routines and expectations are quickly established which is crucial for a good start in their learning. By the end of the year, the numbers of children achieving the expected level of development is well above expected. In spite of the change in staff across the year, school leaders are supporting the new team so that learning continues to be good.
- Children are given many opportunities to be a part of the whole school right from the start of the day. This also includes being with all the older pupils in school assemblies, at playtime and also at lunchtime. The school offers a safe start to school life by linking the youngest children to a Year 6 'buddy'.
- The leadership of early years is good. Leaders ensure that the new teaching team is receiving focused support from specialist advisors and visits to outstanding schools. Good standards of achievement are being maintained. Children are making good or better progress from their starting points. There are clear systems for tracking children's progress so that any underachievement is quickly noticed and addressed. Current checks on children's progress are rigorous and accurate. A high number are expected to achieve the expected level of development by the end of the school year. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education in Year 1.
- Parents are encouraged to make comments or ask advice in their children's contact books. These are responded to quickly. A class email address has been set up recently and an activity afternoon has taken place for parents in the spring.
- Children play and learn happily together, both inside the classroom and outside. They behave well. Both the classroom and the outside learning area are safe and secure as a result of the watchfulness of all staff.
- Children engage in a wide range of interesting activities. The new team has created bright and cheerful learning places for children. However, the activities in which children participate inside the classroom are not reinforced in their outside learning. In order to improve further, planning for more opportunities that link both inside and outdoor learning for children is key to even greater development for all young learners.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118649
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	462398

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	184
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Marshall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cathy Walker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 May 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 842300
<b>Fax number</b>	01795 843964
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