

# Newtown Community Primary School

Newtown Road, Carlisle, Cumbria CA2 7LW

## Inspection dates

10–11 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Pupils are catching up lost ground in their writing and mathematics because of previously weak teaching and learning.
- There is a lack of challenge for pupils in writing and mathematics in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. Teachers focus on filling gaps in pupils' knowledge. Too few pupils achieve the highest standards.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities in mathematics to apply their calculation skills to problem-solving or reasoning activities.
- Governors are not provided with enough information to be able to accurately analyse the use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- Plans to improve the school do not provide measurable targets. Leaders and governors do not analyse the effectiveness of the actions taken to improve the school well enough.
- There have been a number of staffing changes in the school which have hindered leaders' ability to improve the school.
- Teachers assess pupils' skills accurately but they do not use this information to match tasks to pupils' abilities in mathematics and writing.
- The effectiveness of adults' questioning is too variable across the school.
- On occasion in early years, adult's questions and the structure of activities do not promote children's independent thinking.

### The school has the following strengths

- Good leadership is setting higher aspirations for pupils within the school. This is addressing the school's historically weak performance.
- There are visible signs of improvement in the school, not least in the attendance, conduct and behaviour of pupils.
- In the early years, children make good progress from low starting points to achieve in line with national averages.
- Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check and the end of key stage 2 reading test are improving.
- Due to a concerted effort to improve reading, outcomes at the end of Year 6 are above those seen nationally. This is a clear strength of the school.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum that is broad and balanced. Pupils enjoy studying interesting topics.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school by ensuring that:
  - work is more carefully matched to pupils' abilities in writing and mathematics, particularly the most able and most able disadvantaged pupils, so that they are challenged to achieve the highest standards
  - pupils are provided with activities to promote their problem-solving and reasoning skills in their mathematics work
  - adults ask questions that probe pupils' understanding and promote a deep understanding of the topics they study.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - plans to improve the school include clear, measurable outcomes so that leaders and governors can evaluate the success of the actions taken to improve the school.
- Improve the effectiveness of governance by:
  - ensuring that governors question the impact of funding for disadvantaged pupils in greater depth.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in the early years by ensuring that:
  - adults make better use of questions and planning of activities to prompt children to investigate, and think in greater depth, about their learning.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher has successfully steered the school through the turbulence of significant staffing changes over the last two years. He has tackled the weakest teaching effectively. He has established a senior leadership team that are committed to raising aspirations for pupils at Newtown Community Primary School. Parents say that 'the school has come on in leaps and bounds' since the headteacher took post.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are aware that it will take time to fix the problems caused by the school's previously low expectations. Their focus is on building sustainable improvements. The early signs are positive. For example, improvements in the teaching of reading allow pupils to make good progress to achieve high standards.
- Leaders and governors have developed a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils have in-depth opportunities to practise their skills, particularly in geography and history. There is also a range of extra-curricular clubs that extend pupils' learning, such as in computing club, where they design their own animations and games.
- Leaders' use of the physical education and sports funding further enriches the curriculum by providing a range of clubs and competitions. This has raised pupils' participation and enjoyment of a range of sports. Older pupils have the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification in rock climbing.
- The curriculum also provides pupils with opportunities to learn about other cultures and religions as part of pupils' wider spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders have mapped pupils' learning so that they are consistently taught to respect others' beliefs and values.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They have a good understanding of British values and show respect for each other's views and opinions. Leaders promote equalities throughout the school's curriculum.
- Leaders have made great efforts to engage parents in their child's learning. They respond well to parental feedback and have revised their arrangements for parent consultations so that they are very well attended. Leaders also arrange weekly coffee mornings as drop-in sessions so that parents can approach staff informally to learn more about the life of the school. Parents are very positive about the school's open door policy.
- Leaders use training well to support staff to develop their skills. The majority of staff responding to Ofsted's staff survey said that they value these opportunities. The development that staff have received for reading has helped to raise standards. Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning provide teachers with clear direction on how to improve their performance.
- However, leaders' emphasis on filling the gaps in pupils' writing and mathematics focuses on age-related standards. This is to undo the damage caused by a legacy of weak teaching and learning. Their focus means that lessons do not challenge the most able pupils, and the most able disadvantaged pupils, to make the rapid progress that they are capable of. This is evident in the rates of progress for pupils currently in the

school and in their work books.

- Although the school does not currently receive additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, they have previously used this to provide bespoke support for pupils' learning. The school's own tracking of pupils' progress shows that these pupils make variable progress in relation to their starting points.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have a great deal of passion and ambition for the school. They have made astute appointments to the leadership team and are setting an ambitious vision for the future.
- Governors' strategic overview of the way in which leaders manage staff performance is very good. Governors understand how the use of training is improving standards within the school. They make good use of external support when setting targets for the headteacher.
- Leaders' plans for improving the school lack clarity. Leaders do not define the difference that their actions will make. Consequently, governors cannot measure the success of the actions to improve the school.
- Governors are not provided with enough information about the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders' use of the pupil premium is not well defined and is not making a big enough difference to the progress of some of the more able disadvantaged pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils feel safe in school and aware of how to keep themselves safe, including when online, because of the effective teaching that they receive. Pupils feel comfortable in approaching staff because of the strong relationships within the school.
- Staff receive updated training at least annually and are vigilant to the signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff are knowledgeable about, and responsive to, different types of abuse as well as issues around exploitation, radicalisation and extremism.
- Records of exclusions show that bullying incidents are dealt with swiftly to make sure that pupils feel safe.
- The school works effectively with parents and external agencies to keep pupils safe. The parents with whom inspectors spoke are happy that the school is a safe place and they have no concerns about safeguarding.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- There is a lack of pace and challenge for pupils' learning in mathematics and writing, particularly for the most able and most able disadvantaged pupils. The work in pupils' books shows that progression in mathematics and writing is too variable. Some of the most able pupils say that their work does not fully challenge their thinking and that

they feel that they are capable of attempting more complex work. For example, in mathematics there are few opportunities for pupils to use their reasoning skills to solve problems. There is too much emphasis placed on progress in upper key stage 2. The pace of learning is better for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils because work is matched to pupils' next steps.

- The effectiveness of adults' questioning varies throughout the school. The most effective learning takes place when pupils are given the chance to explain their thinking. However, this is not consistent across the school. Teachers do not correct misconceptions to reinforce pupils' understanding. This is evident in pupils' writing, where common errors in punctuation persist in their work.
- Assessment is accurately used to track pupils' progress. However, this is not used to match work to pupils' abilities, particularly in mathematics. Teachers are helping pupils to consolidate their number and calculation skills so that they have the basic skills to enable rapid progress in the future. This is in its infancy and has yet to make a difference to the progress of pupils.
- The most recent school performance information shows variable progress rates for pupils in writing and mathematics. This is also true of the progress of disadvantaged pupils. The work in pupils' writing books shows too much variation in the rates of progress in different year groups.
- Pupils' phonics teaching is highly structured and is successful in equipping pupils with strategies to read unfamiliar words. The most able pupils read with increasing fluency and intonation as they move through the school.
- Feedback systems have been well developed and pupils are starting to take more ownership of their work. Pupils work with positive attitudes in class and see homework as reinforcing the work done in lessons. Year 6 pupils see this as good preparation for secondary school.
- Parents are happy with the information that they receive on their child's attainment and progress. They value the informal opportunities that they have to approach staff if they have a concern.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are respectful of others and their views. They are becoming increasingly aware of what it means to be a successful learner. They are confident and enjoy their time at school.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their roles as playground monitors. Their support for younger pupils helps to support their emotional well-being as well as provide opportunities for structured play during breaktimes. Leaders feel that their role in taking care of younger pupils enables them to flourish because of this responsibility.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils have opportunities to experience trips to the local fire station and hospital as well as

welcoming visiting speakers into school to reinforce these messages.

- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They say that any instances are dealt with swiftly and decisively. Pupils feel confident in the actions of staff. Leaders, parents and pupils agree that this is a significantly improved aspect of the school's work.
- Pupils have a broad awareness of other religions and cultures. They have a good understanding of right and wrong because of the well thought-out way in which leaders are developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' cultural development is reflected in the diverse range of artists that they study as well as the development of the school's sporting heritage. The school makes best use of the resources available in the local area to promote pupils' physical well-being, such as their link with the local professional football team.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have implemented a new behaviour policy which is supporting pupils to improve their behaviour. The school's behaviour logs are comprehensive and show an improving pattern of behaviour. Pupils say that they feel comfortable when approaching staff with any concerns that they have.
- The school is orderly and lessons proceed without interruption. Pupils are quick to settle in class and are keen and enthusiastic learners.
- Leaders have set up nurture groups to enable some pupils to reflect more clearly on how their behaviour affects others. The result is that pupils are able to manage their own feelings and are much more settled in class. Pupils are gaining in confidence in their own abilities because of the belief that leaders have shown in them.
- For pupils who attend alternative provision, behaviour is improving because of the high levels of support that they receive.
- Pupils' attendance is starting to improve due to the new policy that proactively engages pupils and their families by offering rewards for good attendance. Although pupils' absence last year was high, the signs from the summer term when the school's new policy was put in place are much more positive. Attendance since the start of the new academic year is above 96%.
- Parents responding to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and those spoken to during the inspection have no concerns about behaviour in school and recognise the positive steps that leaders have taken to improve this aspect of the school.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because there is too much variation in pupils' progress in writing and mathematics across the school. Leaders' progress data shows variable rates of progress for different groups of pupils. The work in pupils' books supports this view. Pupils do not develop a secure knowledge and understanding from their starting points until they reach upper key stage 2. Here, a great deal of focused work is provided to fill the gaps in their understanding in preparation for secondary

school.

- Because pupils need to catch up, few pupils achieve beyond the expected standard by the end of key stage 2. This is due to the historically low expectations of pupils which has led to a lack of challenge in the work that pupils receive. The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not make the progress that they would otherwise be capable of.
- The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils across the school is too variable in writing and mathematics. However, the use of the pupil premium has supported pupils to progress and attain well in reading.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities varies. The support for pupils' behaviour has enabled pupils to become more integrated into lessons. However, their academic achievement requires improvement.
- Pupils' progress and attainment in reading is improving rapidly. The high standards reached by pupils in Year 6 is a sign to all of the raised aspirations that governors and leaders have brought to the school.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check has also improved. Teachers structure pupils' learning well so that they acquire the phonic skills that they need to work out unfamiliar words.
- Pupils develop skills in their topic work due to the comprehensive coverage of subjects such as science, geography and history. Pupils' computing skills mean that they can understand the actions that different algorithms perform. The school has also been presented with a prestigious award to recognise the quality of its music provision.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years leader has brought stability and continuity to the early years, which contrasts with the turmoil of staffing issues elsewhere in the school. She has a good grasp of the setting's strengths and weaknesses.
- Children's needs are identified from their progress and external agencies support children and their families well where needed, for example in developing children's speech and language.
- Children make at least typical progress and sometimes better to achieve well by the end of their Reception Year. The progress of disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similarly positive. This is due to adults' focus on identifying and filling gaps in children's knowledge as early as possible. Adults prepare children well for the more formal learning environment in Year 1.
- Safeguarding is effective and there are no breaches of statutory requirements.
- The organisation of the curriculum provides children with a broad range of activities. The early years leader has improved the areas of learning so that they focus on developing specific skills such as fine motor coordination. Children in both Nursery and Reception were observed during the inspection to hold pencils and other writing implements with a perfect grip.
- Outcomes in 2017 continue a pattern of good achievement. Many children come into

Nursery or Reception with low levels of skills in relation to the expectations for their age. Throughout their time in the early years, children work well towards achieving a good level of development.

- Phonics is very structured and allows children to copy and consolidate sounds. This has proved effective in improving the level of children's skills over the last two years.
- Adults have high expectations of children. Children listen well and have settled into organised and structured routines very quickly. Their good behaviour and way in which they respect each other's space shows that they feel comfortable and safe. Relationships between adults and children are excellent and supportive.
- Parents are kept informed through informal daily contact and meetings about the curriculum. Parents are very positive about the way in which staff involve them in their child's education.
- The most effective learning takes place when adults ask questions that are open-ended so that children have opportunities to think for themselves. This is not always the case, as questioning at times does not give children opportunities to develop their own ideas and deepen their thinking.

## School details

Unique reference number	112218
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10036618

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Glenn Hunt
Headteacher	Mr Raymond Gordon
Telephone number	01228 409650
Website	<a href="http://www.newtown.cumbria.sch.uk">www.newtown.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@newtown.cumbria.sch.uk">admin@newtown.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	8–9 July 2014

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about exam and assessment results, the curriculum, the pupil premium or the physical education and sports funding on its website.
- Since the last inspection a new headteacher and assistant headteacher have been appointed.
- Since the previous inspection the school has changed its provision and no longer offers resourced provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection there has been an increase in the percentage of pupils

who speak English as an additional language. This is now in line with the national average.

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above average.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in each class, which included joint observations with the headteacher.
- A range of pupils' work in mathematics, writing and from across the curriculum was examined as part of the inspection.
- The inspector heard pupils read, both individually and during class activities.
- The inspector spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around school.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the views of seven parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors made observations of pupils' behaviour during lessons, at lunchtime and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Meetings were held with three governors, senior leaders and middle leaders.
- The inspector considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and its areas for development.
- The inspector looked at attendance and behaviour records, including incidents of bullying.
- The inspector reviewed safeguarding documentation and considered how this related to daily practice, as well as speaking with staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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