



# Neston Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 110987  
**Local Authority** Cheshire  
**Inspection number** 288818  
**Inspection dates** 20–21 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Clare Henderson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Burton Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Neston
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Merseyside CH64 9RE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 3361662
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	203	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 3530992
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Victoria White
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Fiona Rimmer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 September 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

## Description of the school

Neston Primary is smaller than average and draws its pupils from a wide range of socially and economically diverse areas of the town. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number speak English as an additional language. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils having free school meals is average. In some year groups high numbers of pupils leave and join the school during the year. The school has participated in the Primary School Leadership programme. It has been awarded the Schools Extra award for out-of-school provision and the Healthy Schools Quality mark.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards in reading at Key Stage 1 and in writing throughout the school.

As a result of recent instability in staffing and past inadequate teaching many pupils in the school are not achieving as well as they should. Consequently, Year 2 pupils' standards in reading and writing and Year 6 pupils' standards in writing have fallen dramatically since 2003 to below the levels expected nationally. This is despite the fact that most pupils in the Reception class, whilst starting school with standards which are broadly average, make good progress, reaching goals which are above those expected for their age. The picture of underachievement in Key Stage 1 continues into Years 3 and 4 where inadequate teaching has slowed the pace of learning further. In Years 5 and 6 the teachers work hard to remedy this. However, the gap to make up is too wide and pupils leave the school with standards which are only broadly average. Pupils do not achieve the targets set for them, especially in writing and at the higher Level 5. This underachievement indicates that the school has not taken effective steps to improve since the last inspection and that the school does not provide value for money.

The school's self-evaluation represents an accurate view of itself and has rightly identified the necessary areas of improvement which will enable the school to move forward. In 2005 the governors and acting headteacher, with the support of the local authority, set about improving standards and the quality of teaching within the school. The senior management team's successful introduction of rigorous and supportive systems for monitoring and evaluation has addressed the inadequate teaching. Teaching is now satisfactory. However, some inconsistencies remain, particularly in teachers' expectations and the degree of challenge for higher ability pupils. The 2006 Key Stage 1 results show a slight improvement in reading and writing. Whilst these results are still not high enough, they do indicate, together with the improvement in the quality of teaching, that the school has the capacity to improve further. As yet, however, not all subject leaders play a full role in promoting and monitoring improvements in the school and the standards in writing remain stubbornly low.

Throughout the school there are many strengths in pupils' personal development and in the level of care and support provided for them. The good links with other schools and the community contribute well to pupils' well-being and to the progress made by some groups within the school, notably those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those few pupils who are learning to speak English.

The curriculum is satisfactory. However, the school gives its pupils many extra opportunities through some lively enrichment activities both within and outside the

school day. For example, pupils thoroughly enjoy taking part in the many activities involving art, sport and music which are provided for them.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in reading at Key Stage 1 and in writing throughout the school.
- Ensure that children in Years 3 and 4 are sufficiently challenged to improve their rate of progress.
- Develop the roles and responsibilities of some subject leaders to enable them to take a greater part in school improvement.
- Iron out the inconsistencies in teaching, thereby raising satisfactory teaching to good.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

On entry to school pupils' skills are broadly average for their age. By the end of Reception they have made good progress: most meet and some exceed the goals set for them. They do particularly well in personal and social development. In Key Stage 1, however, achievement slows dramatically and too few children reach average standards by the end of Year 2, particularly in reading and writing. Strategies introduced to remedy this situation have resulted in a slight improvement in the 2006 test results for this age group. Despite this, standards remain below average in reading and writing, representing underachievement for many pupils. In Years 3 and 4 pupils fail to make up this lost ground and learning slows further. In Years 5 and 6 there is a lot of hard work to do to enable pupils to leave the school with broadly average standards in mathematics and science. However, overall standards in English remain significantly below average because, despite average reading results, those in writing are well below average. In the 2006 national tests only around a third of the class reached the expected Level 4 in writing and none achieved the higher Level 5. The school failed to meet the targets it had set for these pupils. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good in relation to their starting points, as a result of the good quality support provided for them.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. By Year 6, pupils are mature and thoughtful individuals who take pride in setting good examples and supporting their younger schoolmates when they act as 'playground leaders'. Pupils behave well, both in lessons and around school, because this is what is expected. They like and respect the adults who work with them because they feel valued and know there is someone to turn to if problems arise. Pupils report that they enjoy lessons and the good range of extra activities on offer to them. Their positive attitudes ensure that they work cooperatively with others and do their best to meet the class targets set for them. Work towards

achieving the Healthy Schools Award has ensured that they understand and put into practice the principles of healthy eating and living a healthy lifestyle. Pupils enjoy working together to raise money for those in need around the world and for the school. These activities, coupled with their involvement in community events, give them a secure grounding for future life, although their basic literacy skills are not as well developed as they should be.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Following recent action the quality of teaching and learning is now satisfactory overall, with some good teaching. A period of staffing instability and inadequate teaching meant that learning for many pupils was fragmented and standards began to fall. Leadership and management have brought about stability in staffing and improvements to the quality of teaching so most pupils now make adequate progress in lessons. Routines are well established and enjoyable activities stimulate pupils' interest. Throughout the school, teachers plan appropriately to meet the different needs of the pupils, making more effective use of information about pupils' progress to pinpoint their next learning steps. They explain clearly to pupils what they are expected to achieve, which ensures pupils are well focused on the tasks in hand. Nevertheless, some inconsistencies between classes remain and need to be ironed out. In some lessons teachers over direct pupils' learning, which limits progress. Sometimes, the more able pupils could be better challenged through teachers' questioning or through being given harder tasks from the start. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 teachers do not have high enough expectations of the quality and presentation of children's written work. However, teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and leads to good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress well because teaching assistants provide them with high quality support.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The satisfactory curriculum meets all legal requirements and provides an appropriate range of learning opportunities to meet pupils' needs. However, provision for writing does not as yet enable pupils to make the progress they should. The wide range of additional activities offered to pupils in art, sport and music extends learning outside of lessons well. Pupils say they are thoroughly enjoyable. These greatly enrich the curriculum and make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Residential experiences, visitors to the school, and community links are also helping to promote pupils' understanding of the wider world, preparing them effectively for the future. The school places good emphasis on teaching children about risks and those attributes needed for living a healthy lifestyle. The curriculum for Reception children is good, promoting their personal skills well. Provision for children with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities is good because work planned for them is based on an accurate analysis of their individual needs.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school takes good care of its pupils. Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are robust. Staff know their pupils well and are committed to ensuring that they are safe and secure. Their emotional development is also well supported. These factors play a significant part in pupils' good personal development. Support for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is strong. Their progress is effectively monitored and reviewed enabling them to make good progress towards their individual targets. Thorough and appropriate systems have been introduced to assess pupils' progress and targets are set and shared with them to pinpoint their next learning steps. However, the full impact of this work on pupils' achievement and the standards they reach has yet to be seen.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, senior managers and governors have accurately identified the areas of improvement that are necessary to raise standards and tackle weaknesses.

High staff mobility and shortcomings in teaching are significant factors that have prevented pupils from achieving as well as they could. The current school improvement plan provides a clear direction for moving forward. The strategies introduced are beginning to pay off, indicating a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The quality of teaching has been improved through rigorous monitoring and through the support given to staff.

Some subject leaders, particularly in the core subjects, are now taking a stronger part in bringing about school improvement. However, some are new to their roles and others need to develop their skills in order to take a greater share of this work. Parents show good appreciation of the care the headteacher shows for their children and the good relationships formed with them. The school seeks out and responds well to the views of parents and pupils. Governors work cooperatively with the school and the local authority, fulfilling their responsibilities appropriately. They have a good understanding of the challenges the school faces and of their role in the improvement process, including holding the school to account for its performance.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when we came to inspect your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school and what you like best about it. Although your school has to do things to improve how well you learn, these are the things that we found to be good about your school.

- You behave politely and sensibly in lessons and around the school.
- You all get on so well with each other.
- People in school take good care of you.
- There are many after-school clubs that you enjoy attending.
- Your parents give good support to the school.

Your school needs to do more to make sure you all learn as much as you possibly can. We have asked your teachers to improve these things in particular.

- Help those of you in Year 1 and 2 to do much better in their reading and writing.
- Help all of you do much better in writing.
- Make sure that all your teachers expect and help you to do your best by giving you good lessons, which will help you do well in your learning.

We have given your school a 'Notice to Improve', which means it will receive extra help. You can play your part by always working hard and doing your best in lessons. Inspectors will also return to your school to see how well the school has improved since this visit.

Thank you again for helping with the inspection.