



# Newcroft Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119950  
**Local Authority** Leicestershire  
**Inspection number** 291580  
**Inspection dates** 16–17 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Tricia Pritchard HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Trueway Drive
<b>School category</b>	Community		Shepshed
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–10		Loughborough LE12 9DU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01509 503214
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	305	<b>Fax number</b>	01509 508700
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Clive Booles
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher Thomas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 4–10	<b>Inspection dates</b> 16–17 January 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 291580
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Newcroft Primary School has a purpose-built unit which houses the Reception and Nursery children. Pupils transfer to the local high school at the end of Year 5. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than the national average, but higher than the national average for pupils with a statement of special educational need.

## **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, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Newcroft Primary School is not providing an adequate education for all groups of pupils. Too many pupils are underachieving in relation to their starting points. Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are considerably lower than they were five years ago.

Attainment on entry is broadly average. Pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage and many achieve levels in all areas of learning which are above national expectations. Their communication and language skills are particularly well developed by the end of Reception as a result of an emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills through role play.

In Years 1 and 2, higher-attaining pupils and some middle-attaining pupils make inadequate progress in relation to their starting points. This is because the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential. Work is not always matched well enough to pupils' abilities and to meet their needs and interests, and teachers are not confident in assessing pupils' progress accurately and setting challenging targets. The exception is the teaching and assessment of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities; these pupils make satisfactory progress. There is considerable inconsistency in the amount and quality of work in pupils' books and this makes it difficult for teachers to track pupils' progress reliably. In addition, noise levels in the Key Stage 1 open-plan areas are unacceptable during group and independent work, and this impedes learning.

In Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress in English and inadequate progress in mathematics. Their better progress in English is due to accelerated learning in Year 5 and a school-wide focus on improving writing. Underachievement in mathematics is partly attributable to insufficient emphasis on encouraging pupils to apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving situations. The curriculum is inadequate, with the shortage of teaching time being a key factor. During the course of a year, pupils in Key Stage 2 lose the equivalent of over three weeks of taught time in comparison to pupils in most schools since teaching hours fall short of the recommended minimum by two hours a week. The balance of the timetable in Years 3 and 4 is also unsatisfactory and this restricts the progress of pupils in these year groups.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Attendance is good and behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils play well with each other and care for one another, both inside and outside the classroom. However, in too many lessons, pupils disengage from learning because of inadequate teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. The pastoral care

of all pupils is good. The premises have been improved significantly with the opening of a new kitchen and reception area. Parents are supportive of the school.

The senior management team has yet to be successful in ensuring that all pupils make the progress expected of them. Self-evaluation is not rigorous enough and, consequently, staff do not gain a realistic and fully accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This factor, combined with the lack of a well-focused approach to monitoring teaching and learning, has resulted in the school being unable to sustain the high standards and high quality of provision identified during the last inspection in 2002. At present, the school offers unsatisfactory value for money.

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

- Improve standards in English and mathematics across the school by:
- improving the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 4, by better matching work to pupils' abilities
- adopting a whole-school approach to assessing and tracking pupils' progress, which is understood and implemented by all teachers
- ensuring that sufficient teaching time is allocated for pupils in Key Stage 2 and that the curriculum is well balanced, especially in Years 3 and 4
- ensuring that the leadership team adopts a rigorous approach to monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school
- implementing more rigorous self-evaluation procedures.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average. In the Foundation Stage, pupils make at least satisfactory progress so that, by the end of the Reception Year, most achieve levels in all areas of learning which are in line with or above national expectations for five-year-olds about to enter Year 1.

This momentum is not maintained in Years 1 and 2. Many pupils make inadequate progress in relation to their starting points and standards are too low. Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has declined considerably and has gone from well above the national average in 2001 to below the national average in 2004 and 2005. In 2006, there was an improvement in all subjects so that results were in line with the national average. However, higher-attaining pupils and some middle-attaining pupils consistently underachieve and make insufficient progress, particularly in reading. Teachers are overcautious in setting targets and, consequently, targets are not challenging enough. Pupils with a statement of special educational need and learning difficulties make satisfactory progress.

In Years 3 and 4, pupils make inadequate progress in mathematics in relation to their starting points. For example, three quarters of the present Year 5 pupils failed to meet their targets for mathematics in Year 4. Their progress in English is satisfactory. Pupils

do better in writing than in reading. Year 5 pupils make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Personal education and well-being are satisfactory. The pupils are confident talking to adults. They are keen to learn but too often, in lessons, their attention lapses because teaching is insufficiently focused on their needs and interests. Consequently, pupils become passive learners. Behaviour is satisfactory. Those who exhibit challenging behaviour are well managed, particularly by support staff in lessons. Pupils respond well to the merit system and are proud to get a sticker during the weekly merit assembly.

Pupils feel safe in school. They choose healthy options at school dinner. However, while some pupils are proud of the choices they make, a high proportion opt for crisps and sugary snacks at breaktime. The walking bus initiative is a success and those pupils who participate enjoy the experience.

The pupils enjoy taking responsibility; those on the school council take their duties seriously. They care for one another in the playground and many demonstrate that they are able to collaborate in teams and work with a partner successfully. Overall, they are adequately prepared for their future education and the world of work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage, pupils' social skills are well developed by the end of the Reception Year.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory because significant groups of pupils are not progressing well enough. Listening skills are underdeveloped, particularly in Years 1 to 4, where noise levels are often unacceptable and the atmosphere is un conducive to learning. Tasks are not always matched well enough to meet the needs of all pupils, and particularly middle- and higher- attaining pupils. Teachers in Years 1 to 4 rely too much on worksheets which lack challenge, particularly for the more able, and this contributes to the poor presentation of pupils' work in books. Assessments take place but the central record is not user-friendly and teachers do not have a clear enough understanding of pupils' needs. The best teaching is in the Foundation Stage and in Year 5, where it is consistently satisfactory. Relationships between pupils, teachers and teaching assistants are good throughout the school.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 4**

The curriculum is unsatisfactory because it is not sufficiently well balanced. This is reflected in the organisation of class timetables. For example, in Years 3 and 4, some pupils are timetabled for swimming, a further physical education session, music and religious education on the same day, and this leaves little or no time for other subjects to be taught. In addition, the teaching time is short and below that recommended nationally for Years 3 to 5. Work in books shows that most aspects of the curriculum are taught but not in sufficient depth. For example, in mathematics there is too much focus on number at the expense of shape and space, measures, data handling and, particularly, problem solving.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, which are well attended and focus on sporting, artistic and musical opportunities. For example, the band gives an accomplished performance and pupils enjoy playing their instruments. The addition of French broadens pupils' knowledge of the world. Visits and visitors enhance the curriculum and the programme of personal and social education contributes to pupils developing healthy lifestyles. There is no sex education programme, at present, for older pupils. In the Foundation Stage, an activity-based curriculum is well planned, although there is more scope for using the outdoor environment for structured play. At present, there is no dedicated play space.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, with some strengths in pastoral care. The appointment of extra teaching assistants has added to the provision for those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Teaching assistants rarely support more-able pupils. The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for child protection and to prevent bullying. There are a large number of adults in school to whom pupils can turn if worried or upset. A tracking system is in place to identify those needing help or not making enough progress but it is not easy to use and does not give teachers a full overview of how well pupils are doing. Marking is usually congratulatory and does not often suggest how pupils might improve their work. The school works well with parents and outside agencies in supporting those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

The leadership team has yet to be effective in leading the drive to raise standards and ensuring that all pupils achieve as well as they could. The strategic plan identifies clear and pertinent objectives but there is no clear action plan which sets out how the objectives will be achieved. The self-evaluation document overrates the quality of education provided. The school's approach to monitoring standards, curriculum balance

and the quality of teaching and learning has not been systematic or rigorous enough and this accounts for the discrepancy between the school's views and the inspection findings. Recently, however, there are signs of improvement; the mathematics subject leader has begun to monitor provision across the school and a start has been made on tracking pupils' progress more systematically.

Governors are supportive but have not been kept sufficiently informed about standards. They have been heavily involved in the recent building project and this is a good example of the staff's and governors' commitment to promoting the well-being of pupils and improving the physical environment.

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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?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
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	4
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>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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>	4
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	4
<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>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
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	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

Thank you very much for welcoming Mrs Richardson, Mr Cross and myself to your school when we visited recently. We enjoyed talking to you and thank you for talking to us. We thought you were good at speaking to adults. You are rightly pleased with the new buildings, especially with your new kitchen, which is producing healthy meals. It was good to see you playing happily with one another in the playground. Your attendance is good and you are well cared for by all the adults in the school.

We do not think your school is doing enough to make sure that you all do as well as you should. We are asking the staff and governors to make some improvements and we are recommending that the school gets some extra help. Inspectors will visit regularly to see how the school is getting along.

We were interested in the progress you are making and found that the youngest children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress because they have plenty of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in lovely purpose-built indoor surroundings. Between Years 1 and 4, we are concerned that the noise levels are sometimes too high and that the tasks some of you are given do not always help you to make as much progress as you could. So, we have asked your teachers to look at the planning of learning and to see that they check how well you are doing regularly and accurately. We noted that those of you in Year 5 make faster progress and have more opportunities to learn in a calmer working environment. The teaching day, particularly for those of you in Years 3 to 5, is rather short and that makes it difficult for you to learn all the subjects you need to.

Your headteacher, governors and the senior management team are responsible for looking ahead and planning for the future. To help them, we have recommended that they come and see your lessons more frequently, take a close look at how well all of you are doing and consider our comments about the short teaching day.

I thought the band played very well. It is good that you have the opportunity to participate in sporting and musical activities both during the school day and after school.

Good luck for the future.