

Newton Farm Nursery, First and Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102181
Local Authority	Harrow
Inspection number	307920
Inspection date	6 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Raminder Arora

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

Type of school	Middle deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Dennis Guest
Headteacher	Mrs Rekha Bhakoo
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2004
School address	Ravenswood Crescent South Harrow Harrow HA2 9JU
Telephone number	020 8864 8081
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school with a particular focus on the following: the progress made by pupils right across the school from the Foundation Stage to Year 7; the quality of teaching and how it affects pupils' achievement across the school and the monitoring role of leaders at all levels in raising standards. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, samples of pupils' work and scrutiny of main planning and monitoring documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Some observations and discussions were made about the quality of the other aspects of the school's work, but not in detail. The inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments as given in its evaluation were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a popular, over subscribed and larger than average one-form entry school. More than three quarters of all pupils are from minority ethnic groups, most of whom are from Indian or other Asian backgrounds. The majority speak another language at home. Currently 7 pupils are at early stages of learning English. The school has recently had an influx of Tamil speaking pupils. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is low. The percentage identified with learning difficulties is below average. These pupils mainly have specific learning or speech and language difficulties. Several pupils leave the school after Year 6, and their places in Year 7 are taken by pupils from other schools. The school has held Beacon Status and received the School Achievement Awards. Among many prestigious awards the school has the Healthy Schools status, Sports and ICT Activemarks, Artsmark Gold and Able, Gifted and Talented award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Newton Farm is an outstanding school that provides a high quality education for its pupils. The pursuit of excellence is reflected in every aspect of the school's work and provides pupils with a strong platform for future success. Pupils reach exceptionally high standards in their work and their personal development is outstanding. Pupils and staff from a wide range of backgrounds work in a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere. The vast majority of parents have nothing but praise for the school. Typical comments include, '...very fortunate to have our children go to this school', and 'My daughter has enjoyed the school from day one, thanks to the excellent teachers and strong leadership'. Parents are right; the school is exceptionally well led and the quality of teachers' work is exemplary. The outstanding leadership of the highly respected headteacher is underpinned by excellent teamwork between pupils, parents, governors and staff, all of whom have been key elements in creating and maintaining the school's continuous success. The headteacher plays a pivotal role to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. This purpose is strongly embraced by the key leaders and the members of staff. Pupils in turn are well motivated and work hard. 'I enjoy school 150%, it is great fun', commented one.

Children enter the Nursery with skills and understanding below those usually expected, particularly their social and linguistic skills. They make rapid progress due to the excellent provision, so that by the time they enter Year 1, the majority have exceeded the expected learning goals for their age. Pupils continue to make excellent progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards in the past years have been consistently very high and remain so. Exemplary progress and high standards are also a feature of Year 7, despite a considerable number of new arrivals in this class. Pupils of all abilities are set challenging targets, which they generally meet or exceed, so that by the time they leave school their achievement in relation to their starting points is outstanding. The school is very effective in overcoming the potential barriers to learning. Well-trained assistants work closely with teachers and make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that teaching is closely matched to the individual needs of all the pupils. As a result, all different groups, including the pupils who find learning difficult and those learning English as a new language, achieve exceptionally well throughout the school. A very high proportion of pupils attain higher levels in the national tests; this is because pupils classified as 'Able, Gifted and Talented' are catered for extremely well in the planning and delivery of the lessons. The creative curriculum, with its cross-curricular style of working is an effective component of the outstanding curriculum, a particular strength of which is art. The school displays a high quality of work by pupils. Theme weeks, such as New Zealand day, International or Enterprise day, inspire creativity and enliven learning through music, dance, drama and art.

Key to pupils' outstanding achievements is the high quality of teaching and learning. Many practical and motivating activities engage learners and they particularly enjoy talking about their work and discovering new learning for themselves through paired and group discussions. Expectations are consistently high and pupils thrive on challenge in lessons. Teachers make very effective use of the electronic whiteboards and pupils comment on how much they enjoy this. Pupils make use of the laptop computers in lessons with great confidence and skill. Marking and academic guidance is exemplary and has a significant impact on standards. Pupils' individual progress is tracked rigorously and they are fully involved, so they know what they need to do

to achieve the next level of attainment. Staff are very keen and continuously strengthen individual pupils' involvement on a more personal level in their learning.

Pupils' outstanding personal development is supported by an excellent level of care, guidance and support. Pupils are polite, courteous and considerate of the views of others. They know right from wrong and have an excellent sense of staying safe, healthy and fit. Their behaviour is excellent. Many pupils take advantage of the outstanding range of extra activities in music and sports, which enriches their school life further and helps them develop the independence, reliability and co-operative skills they will need in later life. Pupils' loyalty to the school is evident in their willingness to act as peer mediators and school councillors. They organise fund raising activities, for example a Dance-a-thon to raise money for the school playground project. They support the community through engaging actively in various charity events, for example, Poppy Appeal and the Red Cross.

Senior leaders and governors give strong direction to the school. All staff are involved in the evaluation of the school's work and actively seek out ways to maintain high standards and make continuous improvement. Subject leaders aim high and skilfully monitor standards in their subjects, through regular scrutiny of pupils' work and very careful planning based on the analysis of pupils' test results. A strategic approach to improvement by key staff and governors is reaping rewards of excellence. The school continuously seeks to meet the challenging needs of the local community. For example, the support given to the Tamil parents to promote involvement in their children's education through weekly meetings and the Family Learning Programme is helping improve pupils' performance in school. This is not a school content to stand still and has an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The stimulating environment both indoors and outdoors is outstanding and builds firm foundations for children's learning. They make excellent progress because of high quality management, excellent care and high expectations. The environment is colourful and stimulating and the outside areas are very well equipped. As a result, children are excited by learning and persevere at their tasks. Teaching areas are well defined and resources thoughtfully organised to aid independence and promote children's confidence and self-esteem. There is a very good balance between teacher directed activities and those that children choose for themselves. Children are busily and purposefully engaged in the wide range of imaginative activities, well chosen to match their needs and interests. The staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn. Teachers' planning includes focused activities where speaking and listening are actively encouraged, especially through role-play, and this supports children's excellent progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school has no major issues needing improvement. The inspector agrees with staff that their major priority should be to help pupils in taking even more responsibility for their own learning in order to build on their exceptionally high standards of achievement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newton Farm Nursery, First and Middle School, Harrow, HA2 9JU

It was a real pleasure to meet you when I came to inspect your school. Thank you very much for making me so welcome. You were very polite, very helpful and very happy to tell me how much you like your school. You are proud of your school and a credit to it. I especially enjoyed talking to the school council and I am pleased that you are working so hard to improve your school.

I think yours is an excellent school that gives you exceptionally good education. I can understand why you are so keen to come. All of you, including those who need extra help, make excellent progress in your lessons. You do exceptionally well in your tests in Year 2 and Year 6. I was particularly pleased to note your excellent behaviour and the strong friendship you all share. I really like the way that the staff look after you and you all look after each other. You learn a great deal about health and safety and your school council works hard to make sure you all help to improve your school. The way that you contribute to school life is impressive. I agree with you that your headteacher and all the other staff are outstanding. Your teachers work very hard to provide you with interesting lessons and excellent range of clubs and activities to do.

You do very well already, but I have agreed with your teachers that they will concentrate on helping you take more responsibility for your own learning, so you continue to make excellent progress.

Continue to work hard and do well. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Raminder Arora

Lead Inspector