

Newhall Community Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112635
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310956
Inspection dates	13–14 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	331
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lynn Henstridge
Headteacher	Miss Clare Graham and Mrs Karen Price
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2003
School address	Chesterfield Avenue Newhall Swadlincote Derbyshire DE11 0TR
Telephone number	01283 217472
Fax number	01283 213623

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average-sized school serving the community of Newhall on the outskirts of Swadlincote in South Derbyshire. Indicators show that the school's catchment area includes a region of social and economic disadvantage. An average number of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals. Most pupils are from a White British background and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have a statement of special educational need is similar to most other schools. Attainment on entry is above average. The school has an ArtsMark at bronze, Investor in People status, The Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and an ActiveMark for sports. The school is currently led and managed by two acting headteachers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation that this is a satisfactory school. It is improving and offers satisfactory value for money.

A period of staffing turbulence resulted in a decline in standards and a slowing of pupil progress in recent years. However, the two able acting headteachers, supported by the staff team, have ensured, not only that the school has continued to run smoothly, but that necessary improvement measures have been promptly implemented. As a result, the decline has been halted and the school has turned a corner. It is back on track, giving confidence that it has satisfactory capacity to continue to improve. Pupils' progress is now satisfactory and quickening, so that they are on track to achieve increasingly challenging targets. They are likely to at least achieve the standards expected of their age and an increasing number may exceed them by the time they leave the school. Pupils who need extra support with their learning are suitably supported to make satisfactory progress. There is no complacency and leaders recognise that progress needs to continue to improve, particularly so that all pupils who are capable attain the higher grades.

Leadership at all levels has been restructured and is now satisfactory overall. Everyone has a shared focus on quickening the pace of school improvement. Curriculum leaders are becoming established in their new roles. Governors are highly supportive and have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. All are now looking forward to playing their full part in using the rigorous systems which have been put in place to check on the effectiveness of the school's work. Similarly, the school recognises that more work needs to be done to improve communication with parents and to strengthen their involvement in the life of the school.

The school provides satisfactory care and guidance for pupils and is particularly successful in meeting their pastoral needs. Consequently, their personal development is satisfactory with some developing strengths. They work hard and enjoy coming to school, as is reflected in their good attendance. They have a good understanding of how to make safe and healthy lifestyle choices. Pupils contribute satisfactorily to the life of the school and their community by taking on a growing number of responsibilities; for example, through the school council or by raising money for charities. There are appropriate assessment systems in place to set targets and to check how well pupils are doing but these systems are not always applied consistently across all classes. Even so, pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their lives beyond school.

Evidence from conversations with children and from their work confirms that the curriculum has been successfully improved and is now satisfactory. It promotes satisfactory personal development and offers enrichment and enjoyment. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although some good lessons were seen which included challenge for all children whatever their ability, resulting in good progress, the quality of teaching and marking is not consistent across school. Teachers plan conscientiously and in detail. However, this does not always result in work which challenges all pupils and so learning slows at times.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rate at which all pupils make progress so that more pupils achieve the higher levels of attainment.
- Ensure that all teachers use assessment and marking effectively to plan work which consistently challenges all pupils.

- Ensure that all leaders and managers play their full part in quickening the pace of school improvement.
- Further develop work to include parents in the life of the school and demonstrate that their views are valued and acted upon.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards at the end of Year 6 declined in 2005 and 2006. Although still broadly average in 2007 standards began to rise again and this trend is continuing. Evidence at the time of the inspection and school tracking documentation confirms that, as a result of the implementation of rigorous tracking procedures and improvements to teaching, learning and the curriculum, underachievement has been recognised and successfully tackled. Whilst there is still more to be done, pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress throughout the school and, for an increasing number of pupils, their progress is good. Suitable interventions have been put in place to ensure that pupils catch up when they need to do so. This means that most are now on target to reach the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school and many pupils may exceed them. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are also supported to achieve satisfactorily.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. They have positive attitudes and show good enjoyment, reflected in above average levels of attendance. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They eat healthy school lunches and join in enthusiastically with sporting opportunities. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Many behave well but a few find it difficult to maintain expected behaviour without support to ensure the learning and enjoyment of others is not interrupted. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to their community through the school council and other responsibilities they have recently been given. They say they would like more of these opportunities. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future lives. Their basic skills are improving but opportunities are missed to further develop their independence and enterprise skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and so pupils make adequate progress in their learning. Basic skills are developed suitably because of teachers' levels of knowledge and understanding. An increasing proportion of the teaching is good. Effective teaching methods employ a range of valuable strategies. For example, in a good physical education lesson, the Year 5 teacher used questioning well and so pupils learnt to evaluate their own skills and areas for development in detail. Interactive white boards are used well to promote pupils quick recall, such as when timed games are enjoyed by pupils. Planning for lessons is detailed but it is not always utilised effectively.

The use of assessment is satisfactory overall but the criteria against which pupils can evaluate their work are not consistently applied and so they are not always clear about how to be successful in lessons. Marking is not fully developed to ensure that pupils receive specific feedback on their strengths and areas for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A satisfactory curriculum places a suitable emphasis on developing pupils' key skills. The school's planning has been appropriately adapted to match with the new framework for literacy and mathematics. Work to enliven the curriculum has resulted in greater pupil enjoyment. For example, more emphasis is being given to promoting pupils' investigation skills in science work. The curriculum is enriched well with visits to places of interest and by visitors to the school. Clubs allow pupils to extend their skills in a good variety of ways. Special events such as the Year 5 'Victorian Day' make pupils' school days more interesting. These contribute successfully to their enjoyment of school life. The information and communication technology suite is used satisfactorily to support pupils' learning. The curriculum meets the needs of different groups of pupils reasonably well but in a few cases the more able pupils are not extended effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff successfully ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils. Appropriate arrangements for child protection and safeguarding are in place. A suitable focus is given to promoting pupils' personal, emotional and social development. Teaching assistants give appropriate support to individuals and groups with learning difficulties or disabilities and ensure that they make satisfactory progress. They work successfully with outside agencies where appropriate. Academic guidance has been much improved by the introduction of pupil targets, improved assessments and systems to check how well pupils are progressing. These are not yet applied consistently and effectively enough to ensure that pupils are always challenged to do as well as they can.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has experienced a period of staffing turbulence. However, the two acting headteachers are working successfully, in partnership with the local authority, to ensure that the school continues to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis and to promptly bring about necessary improvements. They have brought together a staff team who are responding positively to initiatives taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Rigour has been brought to systems for self-evaluation, which are now satisfactory. Leaders have a clear picture of strengths and areas for improvement. New systems for checking how well pupils are progressing ensure that extra support is focussed in the right places and that the progress of all pupils is quickening. The governing body are supportive, have a satisfactory understanding of the school's work and are increasingly able to hold leaders and managers to account. Curriculum leaders and governors are not yet playing as full a role as possible in quickening the pace of school improvement. Several parents expressed their concerns that they do not feel sufficiently welcome or involved in the life of the school. The staff and governors recognise the need to further develop the involvement of parents to ensure that they feel fully informed and that their views are valued and acted upon.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newhall Community Junior School, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE11 0TR.

We were pleased to meet you and all the staff recently and enjoyed the time we spent with you. Thank you for making us feel so welcome, talking to us, and helping us to find out about you and your school. We especially enjoyed seeing you play and work together cooperatively, and watching you carry out your jobs which help to make your school a pleasant place.

Your school is satisfactory. Those who lead the school, the teachers and all the other grown-ups do their best to look after and care for you. It is clear that you are happy at school and enjoy doing your work. Your teachers and your friends help you to feel important and safe.

The school is keen to find ways to help you do as well as you can. So, we have asked those who lead the school to make sure that

- You make the best progress you can and that more of you reach the higher grades.
- You always have work to do which challenges and interests you.
- Subject leaders and governors keep a very careful check on the work of the school and on how well you are all doing so that they always know that you are all doing as well as you can.
- Your parents feel included and valued in the life of the school.

We are sure that Miss Graham, Mrs Price, your new headteacher and all the other adults will continue to do all they can to help you. You can play your part by continuing to work hard, behaving well and by coming to school every day.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Joanne Harvey

Lead inspector