

# Newtown Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126293
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	315479
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joanna Pike

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	235
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marcus Francis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Marian Bartlet
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Newtown Trowbridge BA14 0BB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01225 752678
<b>Fax number</b>	01225 761674

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Newtown is slightly larger than most primary schools, though the number on roll is falling. The intake of the school is changing. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is increasing, being currently above average as is the proportion entitled to free school meals. An increasing number of pupils come from families in difficult circumstances, but this is not reflected in the national context data for the school. An increasing proportion of pupils (currently 14%) speak English as an additional language and an increasing number of pupils joining the school speak very little English. In some classes, up to a third of pupils join the school part-way during the school year and national data does not reflect this. There is a private nursery on site. The school has gained the Active Mark award and Investors in People accreditation.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school where pupils make sound progress. The outstanding level of care and support contributes significantly to pupils' good well-being. As a result, pupils' personal skills are successfully developed. They have very positive attitudes and enjoy their time in school. Pupils relish the many good opportunities they have to contribute to the school and community and talk with enthusiasm about the impact that their school council has had on improving school facilities and activities. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep healthy because of the strong emphasis the school places on this. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils treat each other and adults with respect.

Standards have been rising steadily over the last few years but remain well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. Standards continue to rise due to the good initiatives set in place by the school's leadership team. These initiatives have resulted in significant improvement in pupils' progress and achievement in areas such as reading and science. Improvement with writing is taking longer, with pupils' progress being weaker in sentence construction and spelling. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in English, mathematics and science because of the very effective support they receive.

The school has worked hard to develop a curriculum that matches pupils' needs and interests well. This now provides a firm basis upon which to raise pupils' achievement further and build strong basic skills. Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities that boost their learning. Much of the work they do in this respect, such as in the well-acclaimed drama productions, is making a strong contribution towards increasing their confidence and enthusiasm for learning and school life in general.

Teaching is satisfactory, with much that is good. Pupils work hard because they enjoy the interesting activities in lessons. Teachers give clear explanations that aid pupils' understanding and deepens their knowledge. The school has effective systems to record the progress that pupils make. Teachers use this information well to identify pupils who are underachieving. However, they do not analyse test results in sufficient detail to identify specifically where the weaknesses in pupils' work occur. Also, pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing or what their next learning steps should be to reach their target.

The headteacher leads the staff well and has helped them develop a good range of initiatives to keep the school improving. Senior and middle leaders are playing a very effective role in driving the school forwards. The work they have done with staff is already showing much impact with, for example, good improvement now seen in improving standards in reading, mathematics and science. The good headway made, the enthusiasm and commitment of all staff and the clear plans for future development mean that the school has good capacity for building on its current success.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

When children start in the Reception class, their knowledge, understanding and skills are well below expectations. Although sound teaching helps them make satisfactory progress, their attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage is still well below the expected levels. Relationships between adults and children are good and result in children acquiring positive

attitudes to learning. The strong encouragement the children are given ensures that they settle in well and enjoy their time in school. In lessons seen, children worked enthusiastically and were keen to join in the good range of play-based activities provided, with adults supporting learning well. Sometimes teacher-led activities are not well structured into small enough steps and this slows the pace of children's learning.

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

- raise achievement in writing by improving spelling and sentence construction
- analyse test results in more detail to identify areas within pupils' work that are in particular need of improvement
- ensure pupils know how well they are doing and have a clear understanding of the learning steps they need to take to help them reach their targets.

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

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are improving and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Although results in the national tests in 2007 remained well below the national average, there was a good improvement on 2006 results in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in reading, mathematics and science at Year 6. This was as a direct consequence of the school's good quality initiatives in these subjects. Work seen in lessons and in pupils' books confirms that improvement in pupils' progress and achievement is continuing. Improvement in pupils' writing skills is taking longer to achieve and their attainment and progress in this area is weaker than in other subjects. Although pupils' presentation and handwriting are good, their spelling and sentence construction skills are particular weaknesses. The school has quite rightly put an emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, as individuals often struggle to explain their thinking. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils make progress similar to that of others because of the good support they receive. Children in the Reception class make satisfactory progress in all areas of their learning.

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

### **Grade: 2**

' We get on really well with all of the staff ...teachers and teaching assistants always try to help us ...I always feel happy to talk to someone if I have a problem.' These were just a few of the comments from pupils showing their highly positive attitude to school life. Throughout the school, pupils are polite and friendly. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities they have to contribute to the school and community, and this helps them to build their confidence and social skills. Their cultural understanding is good because the school celebrates the many different cultures within the community very well. The school council gives pupils a real voice in the school. For example, council members used an assembly to explain how they were going to encourage healthy eating in the school. Through the school council and money-raising activities, pupils gain a reasonable understanding about handling budgets. This is sound preparation for their future economic well-being, but is weakened by their low standards in literacy and numeracy. Pupils feel safe and are confident in the way that the school deals

with any bullying or bad behaviour. They also understand how to stay safe. Attendance is satisfactory. The school does all it can to promote good attendance, but not all parents follow the school's guidance.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and work and this results in pupils trying hard and behaving well. Teaching assistants are skilled in providing good support and this helps pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to learn as well as the others. Teachers plan work that interests and motivates the pupils. However, sometimes the whole-class teaching part of lessons goes on too long. This restricts the opportunity to cater as precisely as possible for the needs of all the different ability groups. Good systems have been implemented to enable teachers to track pupils' progress. Teachers use the information gained well to spot any underachievement. However, they do not analyse test results in enough detail to pinpoint areas of weakness in pupils' work. This hampers their ability to target future improvement as precisely as they could.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum is greatly enhanced by the wide range of exciting clubs, visits and visitors. Science and art weeks successfully boost pupils' learning. Year 6 pupils really benefit from their training within the national 'Junior Sports Leaders' programme. The school's emphasis on being physically active helps pupils understand how to stay fit. School productions are much enjoyed and contribute significantly to pupils' confidence. Good links between most subjects help to boost pupils' understanding and provides good extra opportunities for them to practise their literacy and numeracy skills. However, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) in different subjects. This means that their ICT skills are not fully extended as much as they could be. The good curriculum in the Foundation Stage ensures that there are plenty of opportunities for children to use the good range of resources, including the good quality outdoor play equipment.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school is vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety. All procedures, including those to ensure child protection, are effective. The school has developed an excellent range of ways to help pupils who join partway through the year to settle in, gain confidence and get the most out of school life. In particular, the school provides high quality support for any pupils experiencing social difficulties. In this respect, the excellent work of the teaching assistants in their learning mentor role ensures that pupils with particular difficulties have regular daily opportunities to talk about their problems and gain pastoral support and guidance. Transition to secondary school is extremely well organised to help pupils move on successfully. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the very effective support they receive. Although teachers mark work regularly and carefully, pupils do not have a precise enough understanding about how well they are getting on. Also, although they have targets in reading,

writing and mathematics, they do not have a detailed enough understanding about how to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has created a clear shared vision for the school and, as a result, there is much momentum to keep things improving. The school has placed a strong emphasis on providing the best possible pastoral care for all individuals. This is now paying off by ensuring that pupils develop confidence and good levels of motivation to improve their achievement. On this firm basis, standards are rising steadily, although the full impact of improvements to pupils' attitudes to learning is yet to be realised. The headteacher has guided the school well through a two-year period of staff turbulence. She has moulded a new staff team that is now working well together to drive up standards further. In the main, the school accurately evaluates and analyses its own performance so that good quality plans are made for future development. The headteacher has implemented effective systems to monitor and evaluate the school's performance. However, occasionally, lesson evaluations are not detailed enough to show the finer points that would help improve teaching. From the clear briefings they receive, governors are well informed. They have a clear view on what works well and where improvements are needed. The governing body have identified the need to strengthen the range of work they do to enable a sharper overview of the school's performance.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	3
The behaviour of learners	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

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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

January 28th 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newtown Primary School, Trowbridge BA14 0BB It was good to come and to see you at your school! Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us and helping us during the school's inspection. We especially enjoyed the good discussion we had with some of you from Year 6. We learned a lot. I think you would all make very good future inspectors! Right now, your school is doing a satisfactory job but it is improving steadily. Here are some of the most important bits of the inspection report that I thought you might like to know about.

- You work hard in lessons and make sound progress. Although standards are still much lower than they should be, you and your teachers are making good efforts to improve this.
- Your personal development is good. You clearly enjoy your time in school and know a lot about how to be healthy and fit.
- Your teachers have been busy working hard to improve things. They provide satisfactory, and sometimes good, teaching.
- Your teachers work hard to give you a good curriculum with lots of opportunities to help you become more confident.
- The school does an outstanding job to make sure that you all feel safe, settled and secure.
- Your headteacher has done a good job of helping everyone work together and to make lots of good plans with the staff and governors to keep things improving.

To improve further the school should now:

- help you to improve your writing by focusing even more on developing your spelling and sentence construction skills
- look at your test results even more carefully so that teachers can find out about the areas in your work where you need the most support and guidance to help you improve
- make sure that you know how well you are doing and precisely what you need to do next to improve your work.

Thank you again for all of your help.

Joanna Pike Lead inspector

January 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

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Joanna Pike  
Lead inspector