

Newchurch Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111189
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	325308
Inspection date	7 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	185
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Chris Stafford
Headteacher	Mrs Sara Walker
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Glebeland Culcheth Warrington Cheshire WA3 4DX

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	7 July 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how the school ensures and sustains continuous progress across the year groups and key stages; the impact of teaching and the curriculum on pupils' standards and achievement, particularly in writing; and the impact of leadership and management on driving up standards across the school.

Evidence was collected from the self-evaluation form (SEF), national published assessment data, assessment records, policies and minutes of meetings, observation of the school at work, including lessons, discussions with governors, members of staff and pupils and the questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own evaluations, as given in its SEF, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This small school serves a village area on the outskirts of an urban borough. The area is socially and economically advantaged and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small number from other heritages. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than that found in most schools.

The school holds the Gold Eco Award, the Activemark, the Healthy Schools Award, the Artsmark and the Primary Quality Mark for Basic Skills.

There is an out-of-school club on site, which is run by a private provider and did not form part of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pupils work and play together very harmoniously and achieve well in this good school. Its ethos of self-respect and respect for others is central to its happy and effective learning community. 'The school has helped our children develop into bright, happy and confident individuals,' is a comment which typifies the positive views expressed by parents.

On entry to Key Stage 1, children's skills are above expected levels for their age. They continue to make good progress throughout the school, consistently reaching above average standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. In 2008, an above average proportion reached the higher level in all subjects. Pupils make faster progress in reading than in writing. In Key Stage 1 in 2008, no pupils in Year 2 reached the higher level in writing. However, inspection evidence shows the proportion reaching the higher level in writing in the current Year 2 is above average, as a result of an effective whole school drive to raise writing standards. The proportion reaching the higher level in writing by the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average. The school is not satisfied with this and acknowledges that more remains to be done to ensure all pupils achieve as well as possible in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well, in both key stages, in relation to their abilities and starting points.

Pupils' good overall achievement is the result of good teaching, a good curriculum which engages their interest and good pastoral care that helps them to be confident and secure. Teachers use questioning well to develop pupils' thinking skills. They provide effective guidance which points pupils to the next steps in their learning and shows them how to reach their challenging targets. Progress is assessed and tracked carefully and lessons are planned well to take into account individual learning needs. The curriculum motivates pupils well and they say they enjoy their lessons. Increasingly, opportunities are provided for them to practise and improve their writing skills through topics that bring subjects together. This development is at an early stage and has not yet had time to impact sufficiently on improving standards in writing. Resources and provision for information and communication technology (ICT) have improved significantly and contribute well to pupils' overall good achievement. The curriculum is also enriched by good opportunities to develop pupils' skills in sports and the performing arts and by the school's partnerships with schools in France and South Africa. The professional partnership between teachers and well-trained teaching assistants is an important element of the school's successful provision for pupils of all ages and abilities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from good additional support in lessons and effective individual learning programmes.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding, confirmed by their excellent behaviour and attendance. The school's strong emphasis on praise and valuing each individual ensures that pupils grow in self-esteem and form good quality relationships with staff and each other. They feel they are listened to and cared for. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They enjoy taking responsibility as school councillors and eco officers. They collaborate well in groups and when working with partners in lessons. Extensive involvement in fundraising for charitable causes is helping them to be aware of the needs of others. They have an excellent awareness of issues of personal safety and healthy lifestyles. All of these factors, together with their good basic skills, prepare them well for the future. They enjoy a good range of extra-curricular activities including opportunities for residential visits. Good links with the high school prepare them well for the move at the end of Year 6.

The headteacher's strong leadership provides clear vision and direction. She is well supported by an energetic new leadership team who play an active part in assuring the quality of provision. Supportive, knowledgeable governors hold the school to account. Leaders know the school and its community very well and their self-evaluation is largely accurate. Assessment and progress tracking systems have been strengthened and help the school to address underachievement of individual pupils effectively. However, the school does not produce a formal analysis of its termly reviews of pupils' progress to share with governors and staff, relying on informal methods to share information. This means that, although the school has a good overall awareness of how well it is doing, the picture is not always as detailed as it might be. This inclusive school promotes equal opportunities well. It contributes well to community cohesion through its wide range of community partnerships and its international links. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. There is good capacity for further improvement and the school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision, including effective leadership, gives children a good start to their education. Children join Reception with skills that are above expected levels for their age. They progress well and by the end of the year, they have gained significantly in confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Sessions focusing on letters and sounds have a positive impact on achievement in literacy. The quality of teaching is good and stimulates learning well. The curriculum provides activities well matched to the children's needs, with plenty of interest and fun. Use of the outdoor area is helping to promote learning through investigation and discovery and the school is currently working to extend its outdoor provision. Very good arrangements are in place to ensure children's welfare. Children interact well with each other and enjoy warm relationships with the caring staff. Parents appreciate the good communications and the very good levels of care. The staff team work together well to promote the children's progress and well-being. Vulnerable children and those with additional learning needs are all supported extremely well. Children's progress is observed carefully and assessment is systematic, so that additional support is given promptly. Good links with external agencies promote children's health, welfare and progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing across the school to bring them into line with standards in reading, mathematics and science.
- Formally analyse and report the termly progress of each year group to staff and governors to form a more detailed picture of progress.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. We found that Newchurch is a good school and that you are being given a good standard of education. These are some of the good things we discovered about the school.

- Your education gets off to a good start in the Reception class and you go on to make good progress and achieve well in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are caring and thoughtful young people. This makes the school a happy place in which to learn and grow.
- The grown-ups in school look after you well.
- Your teachers make lessons interesting and this is helping you to achieve good skills across the subjects and to improve your skills in writing.

There is still some work to be done to make Newchurch into the best school it can possibly be. This is what I have asked the headteacher and the staff to do next.

- Continue with the drive to improve your standards in writing, so that they match the high standards you already achieve in the other subjects.
- Produce a report for each year group every term, after your progress week, to show how well you are getting on in all your subjects. Share the report with all the staff and the governors to help everyone know exactly how well the school is doing.

You can help by keeping up your good work and continuing to be happy learners.

With my very best wishes for the future