

Neroche Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123673
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340394
Inspection dates	30 November –1 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Alwyne Jolly

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Liggins
Headteacher	Joann Baker
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2007
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Introduction

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who visited six lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and senior leaders. They observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books, the school development plan, curriculum documents, assessment information and monitoring records. Ninety parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. The school holds the Healthy School and Activemark awards, Forest School accreditation and the Intermediate Award for International School status.

The inspection team viewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- varying levels of attainment among different cohorts of pupils in national tests
- the levels of progress made in Years 1 and 2, particularly in mathematics
- how teachers match work to the different abilities and ages of pupils
- the quality of marking, target setting and academic guidance offered to pupils.

Information about the school

Information about the school

This smaller than average primary school is situated in the small village of Broadway, close to Ilminster. Almost all pupils are of White British background. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion that has special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The most common needs are connected with speech and language difficulties and dyslexia. The school operates four mixed-age classes including one for both Reception and Year 1 children.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a caring school providing a satisfactory education with several good features. It is a welcoming, harmonious community where pupils feel supported, safe and valued. Pupils enjoy their lessons and, as a result, behave consistently well. Marking has improved since the last inspection so that pupils have clearer guidance on how to improve their work.

Pupils' attainment varies because of the small numbers in each cohort but over the last three years it has been broadly average by Year 6. Last year's test results and current work suggest it is improving. Pupils make least progress in Years 1 and 2 because they do not build well enough on the satisfactory start they receive in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Standards in Year 2, while improving in writing, remain particularly low in numeracy.

The school offers a good varied curriculum, summed up by one parent's comment that, 'All the staff work very hard to provide an exciting, enriching curriculum for the children'. Pupils are encouraged to promote a Fair Trade initiative, learn two foreign languages and be environmentally aware. There is an outstanding commitment to developing a healthy lifestyle for all pupils through healthy eating and drinking strategies and a wide range of sporting activities.

Although teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, it is at its best in the Year 5 and 6 class, which explains why pupils make greater progress in this year. Learning proceeds at too slow a pace in Years 1 and 2 and sometimes work is not matched precisely enough to different needs throughout the school. There has been significant disruption to staffing since the last inspection which has had a detrimental effect on pupils' progress and explains, in part, the volatility in test results.

The headteacher has given strong leadership during this unsettled period and ensured that overall standards have not fallen. She receives effective support from the governors. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses but this has not been translated yet into actions which have ensured consistently high achievement. The key issues of the last inspection report have been largely tackled successfully and the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress made by pupils in Years 1 and 2 by:
 - building on what pupils have learnt in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - increasing the urgency and pace of learning in lessons

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- increasing pupils' understanding of number when questioned in written mathematical tests.
- Ensure work is matched more consistently to the specific needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in classes throughout the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils enjoy their lessons and clearly want to learn. Their positive attitudes are reflected in consistently good behaviour and satisfactory attendance. Progress seen in most lessons was satisfactory overall until Year 6 where progress accelerates due to a more precise match of work to different ability levels and a faster pace in lessons. The weakest area is in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 where performance in tests has been below the national average for the last two years, notably in the key skill of numeracy. Pupils find it difficult to understand the mathematical language used when they have to answer written questions, rather than straightforward calculations.

Overall, pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve appropriately due to the well-targeted support they receive from teaching assistants. Pupils enjoy a good range of sporting activities both at school and at their main link secondary school. Some pupils have been trained there so they can act as play leaders in their own school. The provision of free fruit and milk to the younger pupils, many sporting activities and very good resources for lunchtime play, all contribute to the school's outstanding promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are thorough and pupils emphasise how safe they feel in school. This was also confirmed by their parents. They have a good appreciation of the importance of being involved in both their school and local community. For example, they are currently designing panels for the local church and looking forward to being centrally involved in the village Christmas illuminations 'switch on'.

There are a number of ways in which pupils are developing their workplace skills. For example, some pupils are designing Christmas cards which they will sell, while last year, others were given the task of investing $\square\square2$ in an activity such as selling cakes, in order to make more money. This makes a good contribution to their future economic well-being.

Visitors from the Jewish and Hindu faiths, along with a local minister, have all visited the school and contributed to fostering pupils' good spiritual and cultural awareness. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and get on well together which is illustrated by older pupils helping younger ones both in their learning and in the playground. Their social and moral development therefore is also good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

While teaching is satisfactory overall, there are some good aspects throughout the school. Caring relationships characterise all teaching and this is best reflected in the consistently good support given by teaching assistants to pupils who have particular needs. Learning is brought to life by the effective use of interactive whiteboards, which is a key feature of lessons in most classrooms. Exceptional teaching in a lesson in Year 6 combined both modern technology and quick-fire tasks to stimulate pupils who responded with great enthusiasm. Teaching is least effective when the work is not matched to meet the needs of different ages and abilities. These lessons call for common levels of prior attainment and neither support the least able nor challenge the most able sufficiently. There is good provision outside of normal lessons for gifted and talented pupils, however, and the needs of able older pupils are generally better met. Consistency in the quality of teaching has been significantly disrupted by staff absence, particularly in Key Stage 1, which has had a negative impact on pupils' progress. Marking, however, has improved since the last inspection and pupils receive more useful and detailed feedback on their work.

The school offers a stimulating curriculum. All Key Stage 2 pupils study both French and German to prepare them for high school. The headteacher leads the Forest School initiative, enabling pupils to learn life skills such as how to light a fire, build a shelter and use tools. For one and a half hours a week the school runs a 'university' where pupils select to study different skills such as origami, logo, cycling awareness and applique□□. Neroche is a caring school and governors highlight the importance given to the inclusive family atmosphere. Pupils now receive better guidance and clearer targets to help them

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improve than at the time of the last inspection.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership of the school has been instrumental in steering the school on a steady course during a period of high staff absence, ensuring the school provides satisfactory value for money. The headteacher has ensured that almost all of the issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed, but this has been limited by staff absence, and she has been determined to improve the provision further. The middle leadership, in key areas such as English, mathematics, and special educational needs and/or disabilities, are all new to their positions, although not all are new to the school and so have been able to quickly identify some of the priorities. However they have not yet been able to monitor the quality of teaching to further highlight any important deficiencies or strengths so they can devise strategies to raise standards. The headteacher regularly visits classrooms and carries out lesson observations on all staff. Although her comments are thorough and constructive, they sometimes lack the rigour to identify the root cause of a problem so its solution can be accurately identified.

The governors give effective support, benefiting from a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They bring areas of particular expertise, for example, financial experience, pre-school knowledge and previous school leadership. They recognise the need to ask probing questions and identify the priorities associated with a declining school roll and hence reduced budget. Safeguarding requirements were fully met at the time of the inspection.

The school has good links with parents and every term parents receive home learning details and an information sheet on what pupils will learn, in addition to regular newsletters. The school takes part in effective partnerships with locality teams, including the Parent Family Support Adviser, to meet pupils' needs. There are good links with the local high school, to which transfer is an effective process. The most significant link is being part of the Pentagon, a partnership of five local schools, which share in-service training days, sporting events and initiatives such as extra provision for gifted and talented pupils.

The ethos of the school is one that actively promotes equality of opportunity, typified by the school's Dyslexia Friendly status, and the school is effective in promoting community cohesion. It carried out a thorough audit, identifying particularly strong links in the local

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community. There are also international links with a school in Germany, a Kenyan child is sponsored and a French student came to talk to pupils through links with the high school. The school has added national links by associating with both a multicultural school in London and a school in Exeter, which has pupils from many nationalities. In this way pupils are gaining a greater understanding of life in other cultures both nationally and internationally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school has good links with pre-school settings so that the induction programme works well to help children settle quickly into the Reception class. One parent commented, 'The school has a friendly, open atmosphere which makes it seem like a family'. Attainment on entry is broadly as expected but varies year on year and is weaker in writing and reading. All children, however, make secure progress, particularly in those key areas, so that their attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly at the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning. The weakest area is in number and calculation. They form good relationships with all adults who are deployed well. The indoor learning environment has been improved to enable more role play. The outdoor play area remains rather stark and uninteresting but the school has clear plans to improve it.

During the inspection, the work tended to be teacher-led and insufficient emphasis was given to developing children's independence. They responded enthusiastically to the activities, however, and behaved appropriately, with good attention given to their welfare and safety. Regular, ongoing assessments enable suitable planning for future

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work Leadership shows a clear understanding of the requirements of this age group.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers are happy with their child's experience of school. They are particularly positive about the way the school promotes a healthy lifestyle and how safe they feel their children are in school. A small minority felt the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judged behaviour to be good, with only minor restlessness occasionally in a few classrooms, which was dealt with effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Neroche Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 142 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	50	44	49	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	53	41	46	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	27	63	70	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	33	53	59	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	48	44	49	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	30	57	63	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	4	1	4	8	53	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	26	29	53	59	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	31	55	61	6	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	29	48	53	8	9	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	22	60	67	7	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	36	56	62	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	42	48	53	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2nd December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Neroche Primary School, Ilminster, TA19 9RG

Thank you very much for your warm and friendly welcome during the recent inspection of your school. It was a pleasure to meet you all.

Your school is a satisfactory school with several good features. The curriculum you learn is varied and interesting and all the teaching is at least satisfactory. The leadership and management of the school are sound and you receive good encouragement to take an active interest in the local community and wider world. From the moment we arrived we were impressed by your good behaviour. The school makes sure you are safe and well cared for and that you get the help you need to do well. You also have outstanding opportunities to stay healthy.

We have asked the staff and governors to make your learning even better by addressing two issues:

- improve the progress made by those of you in Years 1 and 2 by ensuring your work in Year 1 follows on from what you have learnt in Reception, that you are encouraged to work as fast as you can and understand better how to answer mathematical questions in tests
- ensure the tasks you are given are the right ones for your abilities and needs. You can also help by continuing to work hard and concentrate in all your lessons.

I hope you enjoy all the end of term celebrations.

Yours sincerely

Alwyne Jolly

Lead Inspector

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