

Newchurch Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111189
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	378244
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2012
Lead inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bruce Deakin
Headteacher	Sara Lawrenson
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson
Clare Daniel

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons taught by seven teachers, talked to pupils and reviewed some of the work in their books. Meetings were held with staff and members of the governing body. Some informal discussion took place between parents and carers and inspectors. In addition, inspectors took account of the views expressed in the 102 questionnaires returned by parents and carers. There were no comments from parents and carers on the online Parent View system. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at national assessment data and the school's own assessments, minutes from governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation, the school's self-evaluation and plans for future development.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A higher than average proportion has special educational needs. There are currently no pupils with disabilities in the school. The school has achieved Healthy School status, and gained Activemark, Artsmark and EcoGold awards. The school meets the current floor standard.

Before- and after-school care is available on site. This is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Since her appointment in 2010, the headteacher's leadership has had significant impact in the school. Good improvement is evident in many key areas of the school's work. As a result, attainment has risen and pupils' overall achievement has improved
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given a good start to their learning and development from broadly expected starting points for their age on entering Reception.
- Good progress continues as pupils move through the school because they are taught well. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is average and improving quickly. Pupils' current work in Year 6 indicates that most are on track to meet at least expected levels and significant numbers to achieve higher.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well around the school. They are keen to learn and are diligent in lessons. Typically, they take pride in what they do and are mindful of others needs. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for and this view is consistent with views expressed by parents and carers.
- The quality of teaching and learning is mainly good and some is outstanding. Teaching has improved under the new leadership and contributes well to the school's effectiveness. Nevertheless, there is some less effective teaching in some lessons.
- Leaders and managers enthuse and motivate the staff well. All share the vision for, and are committed to, school improvement. The headteacher and teachers are supported by an effective governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure good or better teaching throughout the whole school by:
 - improving behaviour for learning, particularly listening skills, for pupils in Key Stage 1
 - ensuring that all marking matches the highest quality of that seen across all subjects in all classes
 - developing the roles of middle leaders to enable them to monitor performance and quality in their subjects more actively and to promote continuous improvement.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' good attitudes contribute well to their learning. They are attentive and hard working in lessons and they mostly behave well. Nevertheless some younger pupils do not always demonstrate good listening skills and this affects the pace of learning in some lessons. Pupils enjoy working in groups especially when there are problems to be solved, such as working out secret mathematical codes using shapes and numbers. Pupils know their literacy and numeracy targets and teachers make clear to them what is expected in each lesson. Lessons usually end with a review of what has been learned so that pupils can measure their own progress.

School assessments and pupils' work show that year on year they make good progress, resulting in the current above average standards in Year 6. Attainment in English at end of Year 6 has been consistently above average over time. Attainment in mathematics dipped to average over the past two years due to some previous lack of rigour in monitoring of progress. However, this has been quickly and effectively rectified by strengthening leadership, careful evaluation and prompt action. Key Stage 1 attainment and progress is improving quickly from broadly average levels in the past due to strengthening of teaching and more accurate and rigorous use of assessment. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and attain above the national average for this group. Well planned, skilful support in lessons, combined with close checking of daily progress against their targets, engages them well and helps them to enjoy their learning. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals also perform better than that group of pupils nationally. The school monitors the progress of all groups carefully and has taken effective action to ensure that none underachieve. Children in the Early Years Foundation stage make good progress in all areas of learning. On entering Year 1, most are working securely within expectations for their age.

Reading is taught well and has been a strength in the school for some time. Attainment in reading is above average by the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. An effective programme for teaching letters and their sounds gets the youngest pupils off to a confident start. They become fluent readers as they progress through the school. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils generally have good knowledge of books and different authors and express clear preferences for what they enjoy. The vast majority of parents and carers are happy with what the school provides for their children and they, with the pupils themselves, are confident that they make good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. It is stronger in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 where both good and satisfactory lessons were seen. Where lessons are satisfactory teachers do not always promote good listening behaviour from all the pupils. Overall, teachers plan lessons well and demonstrate good breadth of subject knowledge, as a result of a more creative approach to learning across the curriculum. Resources, particularly technology, such as electronic boards, computers and calculators are used well to improve the pace of pupils' learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and pupils' confidence levels are high enabling them to work well independently and collaboratively. Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers. They are well trained, well informed and manage group teaching well whatever the pupils' abilities. Where teaching is most effective the lessons are exceptionally well planned and matched precisely to pupils' varying needs. The contribution from all supporting adults is of the highest quality, and pace and challenge from them throughout the lessons are relentless. Such were the features of a mathematics lesson, for example, where pupils showed excellent mental agility in exploring equivalent fractions, before using that and other prior learning to sort out the 'real life' problems of a 'nightmare wedding.' Pupils say that they enjoy lessons because teachers make them fun. Comments from parents and carers indicate that they would agree. Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and usually provide good guidance about pupils' achievements and what they need to do to improve. The most consistent marking is in literacy books but the highest quality seen is not matched across all subjects and in all classes. Teaching promotes pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well in the way pupils learn to collaborate and support one another in their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most pupils are polite and well mannered. They behave well around the school and contribute much to its everyday life. For example, the school council is intent on improving a covered area of the playground to make it a more useful outdoor classroom. The eco club members have planted flowers that will bloom in the colours of the South African flag to remind them of the links they have with schools in Soweto. Pupils' understanding of the core values which the school promotes is a strong platform for their good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. They are resourceful and respectful and show resilience in the way they strive for awards given for good behaviour and when rising to the personal challenges offered in lessons. Pupils' attendance is above average and they arrive at school punctually. Pupils' awareness of cultural diversity, both in this country and overseas, is deepened through pen pal links with South African children. Pupils say they have learned 'not to take things for granted'. They recognise others' needs and do what they can to help.

Pupils say they feel very safe in school and claim that there are no 'unsafe areas' to be found. They are confident of help from adults when needed. That they are well cared for is a view endorsed unanimously by parents and carers. Pupils have sensible attitudes towards maintaining a healthy lifestyle and know how to stay safe out of school. They understand the potential dangers of peer group pressure, internet use, and harmful substances as well as situations which may cause emotional distress. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying and no incidents of racist behaviour have occurred. Pupils take on responsibility for reporting on safety matters noted in the playground.

Leadership and management

The school has experienced a considerable change under the current leadership. The roles of staff and the governing body have undergone significant development which has brought a cohesive drive and ambition for success. In a relatively short time senior leaders have improved teaching quality, strengthened systems for assessing pupils and checking their progress, improved the curriculum and increased the effectiveness of the governing body. As a result, attainment has risen and pupils' progress and achievement have improved, amply demonstrating the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

The governing body has made an effective and crucial contribution. It provides good challenge and support in equal measure and holds the school fully to account for standards and quality of provision. Particularly effective has been the astute and successful appointment of staff which has added quality to the teaching team. Well planned professional development has had noticeable impact, especially on the leadership and teaching of mathematics which the school targeted for development. There is scope to extend the roles of teachers leading subjects other than English and mathematics in order to monitor teaching quality even more effectively across the curriculum and to ensure that good progress continues.

Pupils' learning benefits from a challenging and well planned curriculum which meets their needs well and fosters their enjoyment of learning and their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers, pupils, parents and carers applaud the revised ways of learning which allow pupils to practise and develop skills imaginatively across different subjects. Literacy skills are developed well, as are mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' achieve well in art and music and their physical skills are nurtured in a good range of after school clubs.

The school strongly opposes all forms of discrimination and ensures that each individual has the opportunities needed to achieve well. The governing body has established good systems and practices for safeguarding pupils. All adults, including members of the governing body, are appropriately trained and fully aware of their responsibilities.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



13 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newchurch Community Primary School, Warrington WA3 4DX

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. It was a pleasure to talk to you about your school and to see how enthusiastic you are about your learning. Your attendance is above average, well done! Overall, your politeness and good manners were also very noticeable, as well as the way that you take good care of each other and get on so well.

The inspectors found that Newchurch is a good school and that there have been many good improvements over the past year or so. The standards you reach in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 have improved. You make good progress in your work and you are achieving well. You are especially good at reading. This is because your school leaders do a good job and your teachers, just as you told us, make lessons fun.

To help make your school even better, inspectors have asked your teachers to make every lesson as good as the very best. To do that, we have asked your teachers to help some of the pupils in Years 1 and 2 with their listening skills.

We noted that teachers mark your work often and that the comments are really clear and help you to improve your work in Literacy. We have asked that when teachers mark your work in other subjects the comments are always as clear as those in literacy so that you know how to improve. The final thing is for teachers to carefully check on how well you are doing in subjects other than English and mathematics, so that you continue to improve in these as well.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson
Lead inspector

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