

North Newton Community Primary School

Church Road, North Newton, Bridgwater, TA7 0BG

Inspection dates 9–10 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has made a very good start in his leadership of this improving school. With a strong team of senior and middle leaders, he has correctly identified areas in need of improvement and is taking appropriate corrective action.
- The curriculum is a notable strength. It excites pupils and contributes strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Tolerance and other British values are well developed.
- Governors know the school well and are effective in supporting senior leaders in bringing about improvements.
- Parents and carers are highly positive about the school and correctly believe it to be a safe and happy place.
- Pupils behave well. Bullying is rare and is restricted to minor incidents that are handled well.
- All pupils, including the most able, achieve well, especially in mathematics and reading. They leave well prepared for secondary education.
- Pupils also make good progress in subjects such as physical education, music, French, art and information and communication technology. In part this is due to effective specialist teaching.
- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Recent improvements in marking and feedback to pupils are beginning to raise their achievement still further. The Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Pupils make increasingly good progress due to recent improvements in the assessment of their skills and knowledge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- While pupils make good progress in writing, too few make exceptional progress because there is too little emphasis on writing at length and in depth.
- In the recent past, weaknesses in marking, and in assessment in the early years, have slowed progress. There is too little evidence as yet to determine the long-term impact of recent changes to bring about improvements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of 12 lessons and an assembly, almost all jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' written work, including that completed in the previous school year, in order to analyse their achievement over a period of time and assess the quality of teachers' marking.
- The inspector reviewed school documents, including those relating to pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and safeguarding.
- The inspector held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, a group of parents and carers and with members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector analysed and took into account the views of 49 parents and carers who submitted them on the Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire, and of 15 staff who completed a questionnaire.
- During this inspection, the inspector asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement for children looked after, those eligible for free school meals and the most able pupils. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of support services.

Inspection team

Paul Sadler, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. It serves a rural area including part of the Somerset Levels, which were subjected to severe flooding in the spring of 2014. At the time of the inspection a few pupils and their families continued to live in temporary accommodation as a result of the flooding of their homes.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is average. This is the case both for those whose needs are met through school action and those at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. These pupils have a wide range of physical, learning or behavioural difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children who are looked after and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. In most year groups there are fewer than three pupils who attract this funding.
- In 2013 the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school provides childcare before school in the form of a breakfast club.
- The school is a member of The Compass Group, an informal network of many local primary and secondary schools that work together to improve educational opportunities for young people in the area.
- The headteacher and the early years leader both took up their positions in April 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable more pupils to make outstanding progress, especially in writing, by:
 - increasing the range of opportunities for pupils to write at length
 - widening teachers' understanding of the features of teaching that lead to outstanding progress
 - checking the long-term effect of recent changes to marking and assessment on improving children's and pupils' progress, and adapting the approach if this proves necessary.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- This is a school where consistently good teaching leads to good achievement and behaviour among pupils.
- It is also an improving school. The new headteacher and other senior staff have carried out a thorough check of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have come up with an accurate analysis and have a good plan to put right things that need improving.
- Senior and middle leaders are an effective team. Leadership of the curriculum and the early years are particular strengths.
- Pupils talk with great excitement about the curriculum. They enjoy learning through themes such as the ancient Egyptians. They also enjoy the huge range of additional activities and visits to places such as Stratford-on-Avon and Cornwall. Theatre and cinema visits are particularly popular.
- Very good progress has been made on adapting the work to meet the demands of the revised National Curriculum introduced at the start of this term. Rightly, staff are working with other local schools to develop an approach to assessment that meets everyone's needs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a further strength. Pupils are tolerant of others. Some learned at first hand at the time of the local floods that British people of all backgrounds and faiths are keen to help others in crisis.
- At an assembly led by a local vicar, pupils prayed and sang together. A few parents and carers feel that the ethos of the school is 'too Anglican for a community school', but there is plenty of evidence that pupils are taught about a wide range of faiths.
- The school makes good use of the government's additional funding for physical education (PE) and sport. A range of expert sports coaches is employed. Pupils are encouraged to excel in a wide range of team and individual sports including netball, athletics and equestrian sports. Regular checks are made on pupils' growing understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.
- Teachers' performance is managed very effectively. Regular checks lead to appropriate decisions about their responsibilities and levels of pay. Teachers rightly consider that the process supports them to become better teachers through good quality training and opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example, for leadership of a subject.
- Parents and carers are highly satisfied with what the school offers their children. All of the high proportion responding to the Parent View survey would recommend the school to others. They rightly believe that the good quality breakfast club provides them with safe and useful childcare.
- The school's arrangements to safeguard children meet legal requirements. However, some record-keeping was not accurate. The school was able to correct minor errors quickly during the inspection. However, this factor and the lack of evidence of the long-term impact of recent improvements are the reasons why leadership and management are not outstanding.
- The local authority has brokered useful support for the headteacher in starting his new role. The Compass Group of local schools has provided very good quality help. As a result, the most able pupils receive support and have opportunities to attend, for example, master classes in mathematics and science. School leaders value the contributions of the behaviour support and governor services teams. These aspects of the authority's work are of good quality.
- Governors, the headteacher and relevant parents and carers consider that the additional resources provided by the local authority for the education of pupils with more complex disabilities and/or special educational needs are insufficient. However, these pupils make good progress in line with other pupils, and no direct evidence was found to support this view.
- When pupils' needs require the intervention of a wider range of local authority services, they are sometimes let down by one or more of these agencies, hence the pupils' needs are not met. Direct evidence of this was obtained during the inspection showing that this aspect of the authority's work requires improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**

The relatively small governing body is effective in holding school leaders to account, such as through targets set for the new headteacher, and provides appropriate support. Good use is made of the Chair of the Governing Body's expertise in improving primary school literacy. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance in relation to schools locally and nationally, and of how well groups such as those eligible for additional funding achieve. Governors know the overall quality of teachers' performance and how their pay and responsibilities are decided. They were fully involved in a recent renegotiation of the school's pay policy. Governors fulfil their legal responsibilities, but the checking of paperwork concerning safeguarding is not rigorous enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well both in lessons and around the school. They get on well with each other, showing that the school fosters positive relationships.
- There is considerable pressure on space in the school and pupils deal with this well, for example, by showing politeness and good manners when eating lunch.
- On occasion, pupils interrupt the teacher with answers to questions before being asked. This is a sign of their enthusiasm for learning, but it is sometimes not sufficiently corrected and limits the opportunities for less assertive classmates to show what they know. This is why behaviour is not outstanding.
- Pupils and parents and carers express little concern about bullying. They are aware of occasional minor incidents but say these are dealt with well. Pupils know about different forms of bullying and are particularly well informed about the dangers of misuse of electronic media.
- Pupils show caring attitudes towards those who are disabled or who have experienced trauma such as the effects of the recent flooding. This shows that the school is effective in tackling potential discrimination.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are well supervised by adults and ideas such as the 'behaviour raffle' organised by lunchtime staff to reward good behaviour are effective. This aspect is not outstanding because of a few minor shortcomings in record-keeping concerning safeguarding.
- There are good risk assessments for the many activities that take place off the school site. Early years children were seen departing for their first swimming lesson. All were wearing high-visibility jackets and staff very skilfully taught the children to line up and board the minibus safely.
- In 2013/14 attendance improved significantly, having previously been average. This improvement occurred despite the impact of flooding on a number of pupils and their families. Pupils are punctual to school and to their lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils make good progress because of consistently good teaching across the school. Teachers plan work that is demanding and stretches the diverse groups of pupils in the class. For example in mathematics, pupils are often seen solving problems of different levels of complexity.
- Reading is taught particularly well, so that almost all pupils can read confidently and fluently by the end of Year 2.
- Marking of work and feedback to pupils have improved notably since the introduction of a new approach in the summer of 2014. Pupils have a simple guide, so that they understand what is required to improve their work. This is beginning to lead to improved progress, especially in writing.
- Very good use is made of specialist teachers and coaches to teach particular subjects. For example, all pupils learn to play a musical instrument and many reach high standards.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and are heavily involved in offering a very wide range of additional activities. This increases pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their respect for their teachers, and also enables them to achieve well in a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils' disabilities or special educational needs. As a result, they use additional adults in the class well to ensure that these pupils achieve as much as possible.
- Teaching is not outstanding as pupils have too few opportunities to write at length and in depth. Teachers have few opportunities to study the features of outstanding teaching in both their own or other schools.

The achievement of pupils is good

- All pupils achieve well and make at least the progress expected of them. This shows the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. Many make better progress than this, especially in mathematics and reading. In writing, while all make the expected progress, few do better than this.
- In 2013 and 2014, almost all pupils reached the required standard in the check made on their reading at the end of Year 1. This was well above the national average. By Year 3, almost all are reading widely

and independently. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 discuss the authors and styles of books they enjoy and comment favourably on the school's well-stocked library.

- The most able pupils achieve well, with many attaining high standards in subjects such as music and physical education. While they also achieve well in mathematics, reading and writing, few attain the very highest standards. Senior leaders are rightly seeking improvement in this area. Reasons include the limited opportunities to write at length and in depth.
- The number of pupils who attract additional funding is too small to make statistical comparisons of their progress with that of other pupils. However, examination of their work and progress shows that these pupils make similarly good, and in some cases better, progress when compared with other pupils. The school rightly uses the additional funding to ensure that these pupils have the same opportunities as others to succeed in the wide range of subjects offered.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress. Past weaknesses in systems to identify pupils in danger of falling behind have been corrected, so these now catch up quickly.
- Pupils are immersed in sport and many reach high standards. They enjoy competition against other schools. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and few, if any, are noticeably obese.

The early years provision

is good

- Overall, children start school with levels of skills and knowledge that are broadly as expected for their age, although this masks large variations between individual children. In 2013/14 children made progress that was slightly above average. They made good progress with their knowledge of letters and their sounds and in their mathematical development, but less good progress in learning to write.
- Although children observed during the inspection had been in school less than one week, in some cases it was possible to detect progress, even across the two days of the inspection. Most, for example, were beginning to recognise the initial letter of their first name. They were also learning to share, take turns and to ask or answer questions appropriately.
- Activities allowed the most able to demonstrate their understanding. A child was using a keyboard with eight numbered buttons and one which was blank arranged in a square. The child correctly told the inspector that the missing number was five.
- The good achievement observed during the inspection was due to well-planned activities taught skilfully, for example, by subtle use of questions such as: 'How many?' with the answer 'Three'; and 'And if there were two less?' with the answer, 'Err, one'.
- Good behaviour was developed, for example, by the teacher making a gently restraining gesture to a child who wished to answer too quickly, and by encouraging children to line up in an orderly fashion.
- The newly appointed leader has introduced more rigorous approaches to assessment and rightly intends to work even more closely with pre-schools to ensure that there is an accurate picture of the child's skills when he or she starts school.
- Staff work well as a team and parents and carers value the very effective communications between home and school. An example is a set of activities that parents and carers were asked to complete with their child over the summer before starting school.
- This aspect is not outstanding as it is not yet possible to determine the impact of recent changes on children's progress over a significant period of time.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	123689
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	448690

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	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Cook
Headteacher	Nick Arnold
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 May 2010
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