

Newington Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118649
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358409
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Sheila Browning

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Parry
Headteacher	Jacky Darling
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2008
School address	School Lane, Newington Sittingbourne ME9 7LB
Telephone number	01795 842300
Fax number	01795 843964
Email address	office@newington.kent.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2011
Inspection number	358409

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, one of whom focused on safeguarding. They observed eight lessons taught by seven teachers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form, records of pupils' progress in each year group, monitoring records, the school's improvement plan and safeguarding records and procedures. Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and the local authority's school improvement advisers. They also analysed questionnaires completed by 68 parents and carers and those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the school has raised attainment and accelerated progress for all groups of pupils and especially in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- The impact of the school's work to improve pupils' attendance.
- How effectively teachers use assessment to support learning and the tracking of pupils' progress.
- The extent to which leaders and managers have embedded recent initiatives and whether these are sustainable.

Information about the school

Newington is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a small number from other ethnic heritages including settled Travellers of Romany and Irish heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is broadly average, although higher in some year groups. The school has experienced significant staffing changes over recent years. Since the last inspection, staffing and the governing body have been restructured and a new deputy headteacher appointed. The school has been awarded a French Bronze accreditation. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in a mixed Nursery and Reception class. Years 5 and 6 are also taught in a mixed-age class. There is an independently run Early Years Foundation Stage setting on the school site and an independent after-school club that were not part of this inspection.

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

Newington Church of England Primary School is a satisfactory school. Pupils' good personal development is fostered by the school's good care, guidance and support for them. In this welcoming and inclusive school, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and, as a result, so is their behaviour. Pupils of all backgrounds enjoy school and have a good awareness of the importance of keeping safe and healthy. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start to their education.

By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average. Pupils' attainment and progress are tracked carefully but, in the past, tracking was not rigorous enough to identify weaknesses in pupils' progress, resulting in a trend of low attainment and slow progress in English and mathematics. Better teaching, more effective interventions and robust checks on pupils' achievement and attainment have enabled them to make up for previous periods of underachievement. While pupils' attainment has risen, there remain weaknesses in pupils' skills and understanding in writing, problem solving and number work. School information and the inspectors' analysis of pupils' work show that pupils' progress across the school has improved significantly in most, but not all, year groups. Pupils are now working at age-related expectations and make at least satisfactory progress. Different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress, but more-able pupils are insufficiently challenged in their learning. Attendance levels are rising more steadily and unauthorised absence reducing. There remains a small minority of families who struggle to get their children to attend school regularly, despite the school's initiatives and hard work to encourage it. A minority of parents and carers believe that communication, especially about their children's progress, could be improved.

The curriculum, teaching and learning are improved because senior leaders have led the way in showing staff how to apply good practice and how to use assessments more rigorously. Staff are held to account more and expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving have been raised. Consequently, lessons are more focused on what pupils will learn so attainment is rising. There is some exemplary feedback through teachers' marking, but this is inconsistent, as are opportunities to maximise pupils' involvement in their learning and to gauge their own and others' progress.

Monitoring and evaluation are undertaken largely by the restructured senior leadership team, which has enhanced the school's capacity to sustain improvement. The role of middle leaders is less well developed. Leaders and members of the governing body have a good oversight of the work of the school. Sound self-evaluation and close partnerships with the local authority, other professionals and other agencies have led to clear priorities and targets being set, with good support and advice to drive forward school improvement. The school's success in reversing a declining trend in attainment, and progress in English

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

and mathematics, including the continued good Early Years Foundation Stage provision, demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for further sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing, and problem solving and number, by:
 - making sure work is set at the appropriate level for pupils' abilities and provides increased challenge, especially for those more able
 - providing pupils with more opportunities for independent learning, time to explain their thinking and good opportunities for self- and peer-assessment
 - consistently embedding good marking practices throughout the school, and ensuring that pupils are clear about next steps and how to improve.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they robustly monitor and evaluate teaching and learning quality in their areas of responsibility to drive forward improvements
 - improving the communications and engagement with parents and carers.
- By June 2012, improve attendance levels for a small minority of pupils by working with their families to raise awareness of the negative impact of repeated absence on their children's life chances.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils say they feel safe and happy in school. They are kind to each other, have a clear sense of right and wrong, and show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils fundraise, and contribute well to the local community as eco-warriors, and were involved in the unveiling of the new village sign. The school council members were involved in staff interviews, and have influenced healthy life choices for classmates by requesting a healthy tuck shop. Pupils participate in a range of physical activity from Bikeability to 'wake and shake', and also plant and grow their own fruit and vegetables. Year 5 and 6 pupils have learnt good skills in relation to teamwork, hospitality and enterprise working alongside a local restaurant. Pupils apply their numeracy, literacy, and information and communication technology skills in various contexts, preparing them soundly for their future economic well-being. Despite the school's best efforts, a minority are persistently absent.

The current very small Year 6 cohort was most affected by previous significant staffing changes. They have made up for lost ground to reach broadly average attainment levels. This represents at least satisfactory progress from their starting points. In previous years, attainment in English and mathematics was low, and there are still weaker areas of understanding in pupils' writing, problem solving and number work evident in their books. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson calculating time spent at the zoo, pupils had difficulty grasping time concepts. This was not picked up and they became increasingly confused. Pupils' achievement across the school has improved more rapidly since September. Inspection evidence, the school's checks on pupils' progress and unvalidated data from recent national tests confirm the upward move in 2010 is sustained. Pupils with more

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

specific learning needs and those from differing backgrounds attain as well as their classmates whereas more-able pupils do not always reach their potential.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The proportion of good teaching is steadily rising because teachers make sure pupils are clear about what they are going to learn and better use of assessment data is leading to improved lesson planning. In a Year 5/6 mathematics lesson interpreting train timetables, clear planning with an emphasis on engaging pupils through lively teaching and activities closely matched their needs. However, teachers do not always adapt plans sufficiently and check all pupils' learning needs are met. Teachers increasingly use real-life situations to consolidate learning; for example, in a Year 3 mathematics problem-solving activity, pupils really enjoyed working out the coins needed to purchase books and answered probing questions well. Several said, 'I want to do more!' Teachers use interactive whiteboards to enliven learning. In a few lessons, the pace of learning is slow and activities lack sufficient challenge with too much teacher input limiting opportunities for pupils to work independently and develop their own ideas. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson, the teacher did most of the work modelling the beginning of a story, missing opportunities for pupils to contribute their ideas and develop their writing skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are usually well supported in class and through additional intervention programmes, as are those from different heritages.

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

Good systems for checking pupils' progress are further strengthened by regular progress meetings used to check pupils get the right support. Initiatives, particularly 'talk for writing', guided reading sessions, small group and one-to-one intervention in writing and mathematics, are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Nonetheless, pupils' attainment in writing, problem solving and number work is inconsistent across the school. Pupils like the oral and written feedback from teachers but the quality and consistency of this varies across year groups. As one pupil said, 'When marking is good, you know what to do to improve.' There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of pupils' basic skills across the curriculum. Pupils are consulted on curriculum themes, and enjoy learning French -for which the school has an award. They attend breakfast club and many other clubs. Additional adults make a significant impact, supporting vulnerable individuals and groups. All staff are trained in nurturing pupils' well-being. Transition between the nursery and the school is good. Events from play therapy and 'Dad Saturdays' to 'chatter books club' help involve families in their child's learning. The school is working hard to engage families to reduce absence, has issued penalty notices and is involved in 'Project 90' targeted at those with less than 90% attendance.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders' ambition and drive are well grounded in improving attainment and progress. The headteacher has faced some significant challenges to improve staffing quality but is determined to develop responsibilities and accountabilities among staff. The skills and roles of middle leaders are developing and, although they are beginning to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, this is not yet robust. The restructured governing body contains real expertise. It undertakes routine monitoring, understands performance data well, and challenges the school's performance effectively. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. All staff are vetted and trained in safe practices. The school promotes equal opportunity and tackles any discrimination appropriately, and is closing the gap in attainment between boys and girls. The school promotes community cohesion well at local level, for example celebrating pupils' Romany/Irish heritages and, further afield, through an annual European Day, diversity week and links with schools in Putney, France and the Ascension Islands. Partnerships with the on-site independent nursery, multi- agencies and local schools provide valuable staff training and moderation opportunities. Parents and carers receive regular newsletters, and can use contact books and the school website, but a minority responding to the questionnaire felt that communications could be improved, especially about their child's progress. The school is

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

keen to remedy this. Parents and carers have appropriate opportunities to attend courses and events, from making resources for mathematics to puppet making.

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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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 successfully sustained the good provision for the youngest children since the last inspection. As a result, children make good progress, often from low starting points, in communication, language and literacy, social and emotional development, and calculation to reach broadly age-related attainment by the time they enter Year 1. Leaders have a good understanding of how young children learn and work closely as a team, together with parents and carers, to ensure a smooth transfer for all children. Through 'plan, do and review', they carefully assess children's progress.

Visiting pre-school children happily joined in the good mix of adult- and child-led activities and learning experiences. The well-organised learning environment, however, has no cover or shade outside for all-weather use. In the lessons observed, while playing in the 'garden centre cafe', some children chose to write the recipe for the cup cakes they had made and produced leaflets to advertise the garden centre. Others, dressed as police officers, enjoyed recording and discussing the sentence for a boy arrested for stealing plants, although five years in prison seemed rather harsh! Outside, children happily rode trikes, played softball and explored letter shapes in shaving foam. Adults interact constantly with the children, seeking to extend children's knowledge and understanding through careful questions. Nursery- and Reception-aged children worked well together sounding out letters and shapes with some writing simple sentences. Teachers respond well to children's needs and interests by modifying activities, often following children's own suggestions. Good attention is given to ensuring children's health, safety and well-being at all times.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The response rate of parents and carers who returned questionnaires was higher than average. Almost all said that their children were safe and enjoyed school. Most were happy with their child's experience at school. A minority felt that the school was not led and managed effectively and a small minority felt that their children were not making enough progress, and several parents and carers commented that communications were not good enough, especially about their child's progress. During this inspection, inspectors found pupils' progress in the past had been inadequate but that it was now much improved, although more-able pupils could be further challenged. Improvements in pupils' achievement and provision have been driven by the headteacher and senior leaders, and the inspectors judged the school to be appropriately led and managed. Inspectors found that the school has increased the communication channels for parents and carers, and meets reporting requirements on pupils' progress. Nonetheless, leaders are keen to review these areas.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newington Church of England 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 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 128 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	56	29	43	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	65	23	34	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	29	36	53	10	15	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	24	32	47	14	21	5	7
The teaching is good at this school	20	29	30	44	13	19	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	31	29	43	11	16	3	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	32	37	54	4	6	2	3
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)	22	32	29	43	11	16	3	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	26	34	50	11	16	3	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	26	35	51	8	12	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	21	34	50	12	18	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	14	21	29	43	15	22	10	15
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	31	37	54	7	10	2	3

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 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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



15 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newington Church of England Primary School, Sittingbourne, ME9 7LB

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We found you polite and well behaved in lessons and around the school. Yours is a satisfactory school which is showing signs of improvement. By the end of Year 6, your attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average, and is improving quickly. You make satisfactory progress overall and several of you make good progress.

Here are some of the good things we found.

- You are making much faster progress than a year ago and have made up a lot of lost ground, but some of you still find it difficult to write confidently or tackle number problems.
- The adults look after you very well, so that you feel very safe, know how to keep healthy and take a full part in the life of the school and community.
- You always try to do your best, even when you are having difficulties.
- All of the people who are responsible for making the school even better are looking for ways to improve the school for you.

We have asked the school to improve the way that activities in lessons are planned, to help all of you, especially the more able, make faster progress in writing, problem solving and number work. We have also asked teachers to be sure to involve you more in your learning and to check that you all understand how to improve your work. We want leaders to check that teaching and learning are always good. Some of your parents and carers would like the school to improve the way it keeps them informed about the school and how well you are doing so we have asked the school to review this. We have also asked leaders to work more closely with those of you and your families who do not attend regularly to help improve your attendance. All of you can help by continuing to work hard, and coming to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.