

Newington Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Newington, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 7LB

Inspection dates 16–17 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not good enough over time, particularly in English in Key Stage 2. Targets until this year were not ambitious enough.
- A legacy of poor teaching caused a fall in performance in all subjects for Year 2 in 2012.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good in all year groups because the pace of lessons and the work given to more able pupils are not consistently strong in all classes.
- Not all teachers are skilled at asking questions that help pupils to make extended answers nor in reshaping tasks to help all pupils understand new work.
- Work is very carefully marked but pupils are not always given the time to follow advice and improve their work. They do not always have clear ideas about the steps necessary to reach the next level.
- The proportion of pupils last year who met the expected national standards for six-year-olds in reading by recognising individual sounds (phonics) was slightly lower than that for schools nationally.

The school has the following strengths

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress across all areas of learning as a result of good teaching. Progress in Key Stage One is also faster than in 2012 because teaching is now good.
- Provision in the school for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Behaviour is good and has improved in recent years. Pupils, known and valued as individuals, enjoy school, and their families are confident that they are happy and feel safe.
- School leaders and governors now plan effectively for improved teaching and pupil attainment. Monitoring of teaching and pupil progress is systematic, accurate and linked to precise support for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- One inspector spent five hours observing 11 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers. Additional activities included observations at break time, breakfast club and a school assembly.
- One lesson was observed jointly with the executive headteacher. The inspector also made visits to a series of parts of lessons to observe how pupils were learning to recognise sounds and letters (phonics).
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, school leaders and subject leaders. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 34 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as views communicated during informal discussions with parents. The views of the staff were gathered through meetings and 15 staff questionnaires.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and examined the work in pupils' books.
- The school's own attainment records for the current academic year, as well as previous years, were checked in addition to published information on pupil achievement. Planning and monitoring documents, records relating to pupil safety and welfare including the school's single central record of checks on staff and attendance records were also examined.

Inspection team

Patricia MacLachlan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Newington Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage is provided in one Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (extra money provided by the government for some pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is broadly in line with the national average.
- A very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is very slightly above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils supported through a statement of special educational needs or school action plus.
- The proportion of pupils who spend all their primary school years in this school is lower than the national average, with 14% of pupils joining the school during Key Stage 1 or 2 and at times other than the start of the school year.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment expected by the government.
- Extended provision includes a breakfast club run by the school.
- The school, since the previous inspection, has experienced turnover in staff. The deputy headteacher is now the head of school in a team led by an executive headteacher in a federation, formed in July 2012 with a nearby primary school. There is a new appointment to literacy leadership and three class teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To consolidate the improvements in teaching so that all is at least good and some outstanding by:
 - allowing enough time for pupils to respond to teachers' marking and record improvements to their answers in their books
 - helping pupils to identify for themselves the next steps that will improve their work to meet higher levels of attainment
 - enlisting the most skilled teachers across the federation to model for all adults the ways in which frequent and probing questions can help to assess understanding and to reshape tasks, if necessary, for pupils who need more time to understand new ideas
 - providing opportunities in Key Stage 2 for using and developing pupils' writing skills for a range of purposes in different subjects.
- Improve the leadership and management of teaching by:
 - continuing to monitor teachers' planning to make sure that tasks for the more able pupils incorporate success criteria that will help them to attain higher levels
 - helping pupils, after the termly pupil progress meetings, to plot their own next steps by making sure that they fully understand their own targets for improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is not good because it is inconsistent across different year groups. Progress in English by the end of Year 6 has been significantly below the national expectation for some time. Pupils do better in reading than they do in writing. Attainment and progress in mathematics by the end of Year 6, on the other hand, are now broadly in line with national averages.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 also requires improvement because last year pupils all performed significantly less well than seven-year olds nationally. In addition, attainment in reading at the early stages of Key Stage 1 requires improvement because fewer six-year-olds than the national average reached expected standard in phonics screening in 2012. Leaders recognised this weakness, recruited new teachers and provided training for the teaching of phonics, but the improvements are not yet sustained over time. However, lesson observations, hearing pupils read and scrutiny of work indicate that progress in lessons has accelerated.
- Systems have been strengthened for moderating teachers' assessments. Progress information on the current Year 6 indicates that they are now making better progress in reading and writing than 11-year-olds did in this school at the same time last year.
- In the lower Key Stage 2 year groups, progress is generally improving in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teachers track pupils' progress carefully and give extra support for any who are falling behind. However, this is not true of the older pupils because a substantial proportion of pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not yet making good progress in all subjects.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because most children join the school with skills that are below age-related expectations. With carefully planned teaching, they leave the Reception classes with levels of communication, language and literacy that are in line with the national average.
- The extra money provided under the pupil premium initiative is used for a range of booster sessions for pupils in the target group. As a result, pupils in receipt of the premium, particularly those in Year 4, have narrowed the gap between their English and mathematics scores and those of their classmates
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same progress as their classmates across all the year groups because additional support is carefully planned and regularly evaluated.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not promoted consistently good progress, especially in English, as a result of historic weakness in planning and assessment.
- The school's own evaluation of the quality of teaching shows that some in the past has had a negative impact on pupil performance. Teaching has now improved, particularly in the younger year groups. This is improving pupils' achievement, but pupils are not yet making good progress over time in Key Stage 2 because teachers are not yet providing systematic opportunities to develop and assess writing in all years and subjects.
- When the pace is brisk, pupils are fully engaged. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils were focused because they knew that they could be called upon to explain how they had worked out and checked their answers and then further challenged to develop some general rules for subtraction. However, not all teachers maintain such a rigorous pace nor question so skilfully and some pupils consequently do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils who find the work difficult have good, focused support in class and make progress. However, the pupils who are capable of making more rapid progress are sometimes set tasks that are not hard enough nor linked precisely enough to the criteria for higher attainment levels.
- Marking is now thorough, with useful written advice from teachers. However, some pupils do not

follow up their teachers' suggestions and need more time to revise their work properly. Other, quicker, pupils correct their work but are nonetheless unclear about how to reach the next level.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Adults skilfully exploit the children's interests in playing at 'shop', for example, by posing stimulating questions that extend the children's mathematical thinking and use of vocabulary.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They want to live up to the school's golden rules and value the recognition and house rewards that come from behaving well. Pupils of all ages work very cooperatively with each other. Behaviour is good rather than outstanding because pupils have sometimes been given activities that do not require independent working.
- Pupils feel well looked after by the adults around them. Pupils who have previously displayed challenging behaviour speak of the supportive ways in which they have been helped to improve: 'I am better than I was because I have known my teacher for a long time and know what does and doesn't go.' Well-mannered, courteous behaviour is typical because the pupils were involved in drawing up the golden rules and reward system. Pupils who join part way through a year or key stage are quickly made to feel welcome.
- Pupils understand what bullying means, believe that the number of incidents has declined and speak of the ways in which help from adults is forthcoming if there is any unkind behaviour. School records support this view and pupils themselves are proud of acting as buddies to help and comfort young children.
- Pupils have a good awareness of personal safety, including cyber safety, because it is well covered in memorable assemblies as well as with visits from police officers.
- Pupils are given opportunities in lessons and assemblies to discuss fair treatment of each other and participate in lively songs and role plays during school services. This reinforces social and moral development as does the sociable start to the day for those who attend breakfast club.
- Attendance is improving steadily each year because effective strategies are now persistently deployed to reduce absences among a small group whose families find it difficult to maintain good attendance.
- Parents believe that the school provides a safe and caring environment and inspectors agree. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are pleased with the play equipment and clubs that have been provided for them.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management are not good because leaders have not yet fully rectified weaknesses in teaching and achievement, particularly in the upper years of Key Stage 2. However, more ambitious targets have been set and improvements in the quality of teaching steered since the appointment of the executive headteacher.
- The executive headteacher and her restructured leadership team are beginning to raise the standard of teaching. This has had some positive impact on pupils' progress but, as the team's own monitoring shows, not yet consistently across the school.
- Subject leaders, some new to their role, have also been instrumental in recent improvements by analysing pupils' performance, checking their books and monitoring teaching. They are helping colleagues to increase their expertise in marking, using a recently introduced marking and feedback policy. This has yet to be fully implemented because pupils are not yet clear about the precise steps necessary to improve their work. The energetic head of school has usefully coached teachers by modelling improved techniques in their classes.
- The school's checks on how well it is doing focus accurately on the areas requiring improvement, indicating the school's capacity to improve. The current staff is fully supportive of the drive for improvement.

- The executive headteacher has introduced a strong system for monitoring performance and uses the Teachers' Standards for the teachers' self-review. The system makes sure that only those teachers who meet required standards move up the salary scale. The executive headteacher has not shied away from difficult conversations about teaching performance and making new appointments when necessary. There has been a robust approach to improving weaknesses in teaching.
- A recently changed curriculum focuses on literacy in all subjects but this is not yet fully implemented by all teachers. Encouragement of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is planned in activities. Pupils express moral viewpoints in the prayers that they write, for example for Christian Aid week. Opportunities to interact with visitors in costume and to perform as pirates, mermaids or as waiters in a community restaurant are relished, as are the clubs provided in response to pupil surveys. All these contribute to widening pupils' cultural horizons and building social confidence.
- Management of the Early Years Foundation Stage shows a good understanding of progress information at this age and arrangements for transition from children's centre to school are sensitively handled. There is a good curriculum with a balance of adult-led and activities that children choose for themselves.
- Safeguarding systems meet statutory requirements and policies are rigorously applied. Leaders promote equal opportunities and are assiduous in tackling any discrimination that may arise.
- The local authority assists the school with support for newly qualified teachers, tracking attendance figures and supporting the head of school in the introduction of a much improved marking and feedback system.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The reconstituted governing body knows the standards of achievement and teaching in the school because the executive headteacher provides regular summary reports under these headings. In addition, one of the governing body visits the school and reports her analysis to the leadership and development committee every six weeks, after pupil progress meetings. Governors have an accurate understanding of how pupils are performing compared with national standards because they use the data dashboard reports and some have attended training in tracking pupils' progress in the school compared with national figures. Governors understand the link between teachers' pay progression and their pupils' progress because they receive summaries of teachers' performance from the executive headteacher. Checks are made that the pupil premium funds are spent on the intended groups because the school leadership reports on the impact on attainment made by the funds. Oversight of safeguarding is systematic and the governing body takes a strategic role by checking the school development plan.

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	118649
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	405800

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	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Marshall
Headteacher	Catherine Walker
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 July 2011
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