

Newcroft Primary School

Trueway Drive, Shepshed, Loughborough, LE12 9DU

Inspection dates 9–10 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school's outstanding improvement since the last inspection is due to the exceptionally skilled headteacher, the very effective senior leadership team and to high-quality teaching.
- In reading, writing and mathematics, pupils made outstanding progress in 2013-2014 as the school accelerated their learning. At the end of Year 2 in 2014 attainment was above average. This shows outstanding progress from their starting points when joining the school.
- Much of the teaching is outstanding in all years and in most subjects. Teachers plan and teach lessons that enable pupils to learn exceptionally well.
- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. They use a range of different methods, which capture pupils' interests and enthusiasm. As a result, all pupils make excellent progress and their achievement is outstanding.
- The senior leadership team check rigorously on the quality of teaching. This means that all teachers know what they do well and what needs improving so that pupils' needs are fully met.
- Leaders, governors and staff have secured excellence in nearly every aspect of the school's work since the previous inspection, including teaching and achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are polite, caring and courteous, and they show great respect for all members of the school community. Pupils say they feel very safe and they are very well cared for.
- The subjects taught and very caring environment promote pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The outdoor provision for children in Early Years has improved since the previous inspection. This has enhanced their physical well-being and has helped to consolidate their excellent progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, three of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff, a group of pupils and four members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them informally at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of the 47 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's most recent parental survey. They had conversations with parents and carers as they dropped off their children at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- School documentation was examined, including data on pupils' current progress and records of governing body meetings, teachers' performance, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Documentation relating to the care of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs was also carefully reviewed.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David West

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Newcroft Primary is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has two classes in Nursery, Reception and Year 1, one class in Years 2 and 3 and three mixed age classes in Years 4/5. There is no Year 6.
- The Early Years children are taught in a Nursery unit and a double Reception class.
- The vast majority of children are White British, with a very small, but growing number, from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is average, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the additional funding allocated by the government, for example, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is lower than average.
- In September 2013, the governors appointed a new headteacher. In September 2014 they appointed a new deputy headteacher, a new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage and a new special educational needs coordinator. In addition, one new teacher started at the school in September 2014.
- The school is a member of the Symphony Primary Schools Partnership, which is a group of 13 Leicestershire schools who have jointly agreed their approach to the requirements of the new national curriculum and an associated assessment system. The school is also a member of the Shepshed Learning Partnership.
- A residential visit for 29 Year 4/5 pupils took place during the inspection.
- There is a before school breakfast club, and an after school club that is managed by the governing body, and formed part of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve guidance on spelling and grammar for the minority of pupils to enable achievement in writing to match the high levels attained in reading.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have a clear strategy and relentless drive to improve standards. The aims set out by the new headteacher have been inspirational and have made sure that high levels of pupil achievement are reached across the school.
- The headteacher is exceptionally skilled and has extremely high expectations of staff and other leaders in the school.
- The school has rigorous systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders provide clear guidance to teachers and teaching assistants on how to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and raise standards further.
- Subject leaders, and those with specific areas of responsibility, rigorously track how well pupils are doing and put support in place for any pupil who falls behind. They accurately check on how well teachers are performing, which leads to very clear steps for action.
- The school has developed its preferred approach to assessment of the new curriculum and is on its way to implementation.
- All teachers and teaching assistants have clear targets for improvement, which are monitored regularly. This has had an exceptional effect on raising the quality of teaching and learning across the school since the previous inspection because everyone knows exactly what is required of them.
- Performance management and salary progression are linked closely and effectively to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. The school's strong caring environment has an immense impact on the daily life of the school. It places high value on developing pupils' basic literacy skills, expression of feeling, enjoyment and independent learning.
- The outstanding curriculum combines literacy at every opportunity and connects subjects and areas of learning through imaginative approaches, which support pupils' understanding and promotes their autonomy. As a result, pupils make significant gains in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are developing a very good understanding of democratic procedures, for example, by applying for posts of responsibility in the school, and whole school assemblies lead to tolerant appreciation of the differences that exist in modern Britain.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all current requirements.
- The school works very well with parents and carers, and in the local community and with other schools. The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education and has used his expertise in the Symphony Primary Schools Partnership to pioneer approaches to addressing the requirements of the new national curriculum, and how to accurately assess pupils' outcomes. The leader of the Early Years and the Key Stage 1 leader both contribute their expertise to the development and assessment of the new curriculum in the partnership. The headteacher and three teachers lead on their areas of expertise in the Shepshed and Castle Donnington Learning Partnership and the Symphony Primary Schools Partnership. The governors confirm that this work has benefited the leadership of the school and helped to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement at Newcroft.
- A number of initiatives have been successful in raising attainment. For example, pupils participate widely in physical education and sports, and this raises their self-esteem and helps to support improvement in their academic performance. The school has received the new primary school sports funding, and in partnership with staff from the local high school, and training for its own staff, the school has vastly increased participation in sport and in successful inter-school competitions. The appointment of a Sport Apprentice has enabled the school to improve the quality of physical education lessons and this is helping

to enhance pupils' health and well-being. Older pupils act as sports leaders to improve participation with the younger children.

- The local authority has reduced its work with the school as the school has improved. It now monitors to confirm the school's self-evaluation of its performance to be outstanding.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has a very clear understanding of the school's effectiveness, including the quality of teaching and the data relating to pupils' performance. Governors are very knowledgeable, professional and skilful. The governing body shares the high expectations of the senior leadership team and has a visible presence in the school. It provides strong support and challenge to the senior leadership team. Governors carry out their statutory duties very diligently, making sure that the headteachers' performance is rigorously assessed through annual objectives. Governors manage the budget effectively and check closely how the pupil premium funding is used in the school and its impact on pupils' progress. Governors are fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. They take the management of teachers' performance seriously and regularly check the performance of staff and its link to pay so that they can reward good teachers with salary progression. Governors attend training regularly and make sure that all statutory duties are met. Governors contribute to the school's weekly newsletters to inform the local community of its intentions and actions, and regularly audit their impact on achievement and the quality of teaching through close links with individual members of staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This makes a major contribution to their outstanding achievement.
- Staff agree that pupils' engagement in the vast majority of lessons and around the school is exemplary. They are enthusiastic and articulate learners, supportive of each other's views, feelings and abilities.
- Pupils display consistently positive attitudes to learning, whether with a teaching assistant, class teacher or in assembly. They take great pride in their school, and its appearance, and talk enthusiastically about their learning and achievements.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. Pupils are very well aware of different forms of bullying, including the use of derogatory language, e-safety and cyber-bullying. There have been very few incidents of bullying or poor behaviour or serious incidents. Pupils told inspectors that instances of bullying of any kind are extremely rare, but the school is quick to act in such circumstances. The school is very effective at tackling any form of discrimination.
- The school undertakes rigorous procedures, including risk assessments, to ensure all health and safety measures are in place, both on and off the school site. As a result pupils say they feel safe.
- The school has a well-established behaviour management policy. When needed, teachers are highly skilled in behaviour management. Pupils say that behaviour in the school is excellent. Parents' and carers' response in Parent View is overwhelmingly positive about behaviour in the school.
- The school successfully fosters very good relationships; pupils are courteous, respectful and well-mannered, and display outstanding behaviour throughout the school day. Pupils' enjoyment of the school is reflected in the high rates of attendance.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills in a safe and stimulating environment, both at the beginning and end of the school day and in the breakfast and after-school clubs.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught very well. Much of the teaching over time is outstanding and teaching is never less than consistently good. Teachers have high expectations regarding pupils' attitudes in lessons and what they are capable of achieving. They plan a range of interesting and captivating activities, for example, in the Forest School, which provide pupils with motivating learning experiences.
- The value put on effective learning in the school is very strong. All viewpoints and responses from pupils are highly appreciated. Teachers make clear at the start of every lesson what pupils are expected to learn in the lesson, and the high level of challenge set, especially for the most able, helps pupils to achieve as well as they can. The requirement that all pupils carry out mathematical exercises at the start of every mathematics lesson has improved pupils' ability to apply their problem-solving skills in numeracy. This makes a very significant contribution to the rapid rates of pupils' learning.
- Teachers use a wide variety of methods and approaches to meet and respond to pupils' different learning needs. For example, in Year 2, pupils were studying Bengal tigers and researching using hand-held computers to inform their skills in writing factual reports. In Year 4/5, pupils were writing persuasively, using emotive language, after discussing alternatives with partners. They were inspired and used a variety of language devices demonstrating their sophisticated use of language which was advanced for their age. This was effectively linked to learning about how to present arguments skilfully.
- Pupils show high levels of engagement and excitement in their learning. For example, in Year 4 history studies, pupils had written about the impact of evacuation on children from cities in Britain in the 1940s and writing about the feelings of estrangement in a new setting. Pupils clearly benefited from the interesting information provided by the teacher, from focused discussions and notes made earlier, to guide their writing. Their work reflected their enthusiasm for the project and how they had made excellent gains in historical knowledge, and in their moral and social development, through extended writing.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Planning is thorough and takes into account fully the skills pupils need to learn and develop in all subjects, particularly in mixed age groupings. Teachers make sure that there are strong links with pupils' prior learning, and check pupils' learning and progress throughout each lesson. Resources are very well organised and the classroom environment is very conducive to learning.
- Specialist support and teaching for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are highly effective and enable them to make excellent progress. Teaching assistants show excellent understanding of pupils' needs and support them effectively.
- Overall the quality of marking and feedback is very good. Teachers give constructive feedback to pupils, which help them in deciding what to do next and how to influence their own learning. Pupils respond to teachers' feedback regularly. All pupils know their targets and next steps in learning.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The achievement of all groups of pupils is outstanding and has improved since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils, including the most able pupils, making and exceeding expected progress by the end of each school year is very high. By the time pupils leave Newcroft, they are exceptionally well prepared for their time in secondary school.
- For the most able pupils in Year 5 in 2013-2014, half made better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 4 the average was that eight out of ten made better than expected progress in key subjects; and in Year 3 the average was that over half made better than expected progress in key subjects. This represents outstanding progress for the most able (those that attained the highest level at the end of KS1), and who are currently on track to attain the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Children join the Reception year with skills and knowledge that are typical of those expected for their age.

They make sustained and rapid progress in Reception classes, particularly in developing their early reading, writing and mathematical skills. In September 2014 three quarters of all pupils who have moved into Year 1 did so with knowledge and understanding at higher levels of development than those usually found for their age.

- Pupils enjoy reading. As a result of good and targeted teaching in the Early Years and Key Stage 1, pupils have a secure understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). In 2014, school's records show that the proportion of Year 1 pupils attaining the standard in the phonic screening check was extremely high and is much higher than last year. This represents outstanding progress for these pupils from their low starting points.
- Overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2013 was broadly average, however, the boys' attainment was below that of girls, especially in reading and writing. School's records show that by the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014, progress accelerated considerably, especially for boys, and attainment has improved vastly in both English and mathematics. All Year 2 pupils who took the phonics screening check reached the standard.
- For each year in both key stages the school's internal assessments show that pupils are now making outstanding progress in English and mathematics. Writing overall is not as strong as reading because, for a small minority of the younger pupils, spelling and the use of grammar are not consistently excellent.
- Pupils say that the most helpful thing they do is exchange ideas with a partner before they start to write. Standards in writing have improved dramatically, but are still not as strong as in reading. This is due to the opportunities all pupils have to write at length in a range of subjects, with high expectations from teachers for the standards pupils must reach. In the national tests, many more pupils reach the higher levels than seen nationally.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is outstanding, as is the achievement of the most able pupils and the very small minority from different ethnic backgrounds. This is because these groups are very well supported and appropriately challenged.
- In 2013, at the end of Year 2, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was two and a half terms behind those nationally and four and a half terms behind their classmates in English and five terms in mathematics. Current school records show that disadvantaged pupils in Year 5 in 2014, and others across the school, made outstanding progress in 2013-2014. For the Year 5 pupils the gaps between them and their classmates are closing rapidly and are now three terms behind in English and four terms behind in mathematics. The school uses the designated funds well to support these pupils, including small-group support and special teaching and support programmes in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The rapid rate of pupils' progress demonstrates the success of the school in making sure that every pupil gets an equal chance to succeed while valuing differences in their backgrounds and beliefs.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children join the Nursery classes in the Early Years with a variety of experiences and skills but the range of abilities is below what is typical for their age. They settle very quickly, enjoy what they are doing, and go on to make very good progress.
- The inspection took place early in the year when the youngest children had only been in school a short time and for some it was their second day in school. Despite this short experience of school, they were already using the resources with confidence, joining in whole-class discussions with pleasure and actively offering answers to questions.
- Highly effective teaching in the Early Years enables children to make outstanding progress. Accurate assessment leads adults to be able to plan appropriately for the next steps children need to take in their learning. As well as effective teaching of key skills, children are helped to think about what they are

learning and to develop the skill of working by themselves and collaborating with others. Staff make sure that there is the right balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. Children are motivated and challenged and are very enthusiastic learners.

- Across the whole Early Years a great variety of opportunities are provided each day for adults to work with children, either as a separate group or on an individual basis, to observe and assess their knowledge and skills and to develop activities to promote their individual development and interests.
- As a result, children in the Reception year now make outstanding progress from their varied starting points, and in 2014 children entered Year 1 with levels of development above average. Their reading and number skills are now above those typical for children of that age, with writing for a minority broadly as expected. This is an area for development identified by the school and is a focus for improvement.
- All adults contribute positively to the caring and supportive environment and this very effectively promotes children's safety, welfare and social skills.
- Children spend much of their time appropriately in choosing their own activities, in experimenting, and exploring the resources and their surroundings. The very well-resourced outside areas are available to extend their physical activities and the opportunities for investigation and creative development are promoted well outside the classroom, and particularly in the Forest School.
- Staff are superbly led by an enthusiastic leader. Staff training is closely linked to ensuring the well-being of the children and improving the quality of their learning. For example, staff have been highly trained to successfully teach how to link sounds and letters to promote rapid development of children's' early reading.
- Staff work very hard to be fully inclusive and involve all children and their families. They have formed close links with the local community, which have led to good relationships and a better understanding of how parents can support their children as they start school. Parents are able to contribute to their child's assessment by making entries of their observations of their child's developments in the 'Learning Journals'.

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	119950
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	449086

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	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Gilmour
Headteacher	Alex Smythe
Date of previous school inspection	11 December 2012
Telephone number	01509 503214
Fax number	01509 508700
Email address	office@newcroft.leics.sch.uk

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