

Inspection of Newtown Primary School

Clifton Road, Exeter, Devon EX1 2BP

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff make this a friendly and welcoming school. Newtown Primary School is the hub of the community. Pupils join the school from many different cultures. Staff ensure that all pupils are welcome and accepted.

Pupils feel safe at Newtown. They enjoy school and attend regularly. Pupils explained how there are very few incidents of bullying. Pupils say that if it happens, staff sort it out quickly. Pupils trust staff and say that staff are always on hand to offer reassurance if they have any concerns.

Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for every pupil. Parents are unanimous in their praise for the school. However, the quality of education is not yet good. The curriculum in some subjects is underdeveloped. As a result, pupils do not learn all the essential knowledge they should in every subject.

Sometimes pupils' behaviour is not good for all members of staff. A small proportion of pupils raised concerns that poor behaviour can sometimes interrupt their learning.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The headteacher is highly ambitious. She is working with determination to improve the quality of education pupils receive. However, continual staff changes have had a detrimental impact on the rate of improvement. This has resulted in most teaching staff being new to their role. Not all subject leaders have had sufficient training.

Some subjects are not planned well enough to help pupils to know more and remember more. Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is well sequenced between the early years and Year 1. As such, the early years curriculum does not prepare children for key stage 1 as well as it should. Conversely, in subjects where the curriculum is well planned, such as mathematics, pupils develop their knowledge and skills well. Leaders accept that the curriculum is not yet where they want it to be.

Leaders' actions since September 2020 have been successful in securing improvements in the teaching of phonics across the early years and key stage 1. Many children start in Reception with weak language skills. Staff provide these children with precise and effective support. This is having a positive impact on their ability to learn to read well. However, the transition from learning to read in key stage 1 to becoming a fluent reader in key stage 2 is not effective. The school's approach to assessment does not enable teachers to identify appropriate reading books. Some pupils do not read books that are matched to their reading abilities. This slows pupils' progress and hampers their ability to read fluently.

Personal development is a strength of the school. Staff in the early years quickly establish routines and expectations. The school's four core values of 'creativity, community, communication and confidence' are pivotal to pupils' development. Staff

support pupils to have their own opinions. In these ways, and in many others, pupils develop a good understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils take part in lots of activities to broaden their horizons, such as the 'Exeter Respect Festival'. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governors share the headteacher's ambition to continue to improve the school. Leaders, including governors, place a high priority on staff well-being. Staff appreciate leaders' focus on their well-being. Teachers early in their career feel well supported.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is ensuring effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The SENCo ensures that pupils' work is carefully planned and adapted to support their learning well. As a result, pupils with SEND thrive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure staff receive appropriate training. Staff understand the need to report any concerns. Leaders ensure that any concerns are followed up swiftly. Checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils are robust.

Pupils know how to stay safe. This includes when using the internet. Pupils told inspectors that, 'The internet can be a dangerous place, you need to know how to stay safe.' Older pupils understand the meaning of words such as 'consent' and 'harassment'. Pupils feel confident in reporting any concerns they may have and feel that they will be acted upon.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not well organised and does not include all the essential knowledge pupils need to learn. Leaders have not considered well enough how pupils develop knowledge by building on prior learning and securing key ideas. Leaders need to ensure that the content of all subject curriculums is carefully organised, and that learning is well sequenced.
- In key stage 2, the reading curriculum does not build on the early reading curriculum. Once pupils have secured the necessary early reading skills, their progress is hampered. This is because the key stage 2 reading curriculum and approach to assessment guide teachers to provide pupils with reading books that are not well matched to the sounds and letters they know. Leaders need to ensure that the reading curriculum in key stage 2 builds on pupils' prior knowledge and skills so that pupils become fluent readers.
- Many members of staff are new to their roles. This has had an impact upon teachers' ability to deliver a well-organised curriculum. Senior leaders need to

ensure that teaching staff continue to be supported to improve the quality of education.

- The curriculum in the early years does not enable children to gain the essential knowledge they need. Leaders need to ensure that the early years curriculum is well designed and implemented, so that children in the early years are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Staff do not apply the behaviour policy and systems consistently. In some lessons, and at social times, pupils do not behave as well as they should. Leaders must ensure that all staff have equally high expectations of pupils' behaviour.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113083
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10200959
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jill Mather
Headteacher	Sally Herbert
Website	www.newtown.devon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes in the teaching staff since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, the SENCo, a representative from the local authority and teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector also met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to

teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding records, tested staff's safeguarding knowledge and spoke with pupils. The lead inspector also met with the designated safeguarding leader.
- Inspectors considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also took into consideration the 14 responses to the staff survey and 19 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Matt Middlemore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jayne Keller

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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