

Napier Community Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118425
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	312935
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	553
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	R Short
Headteacher	Zerina Slade
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	Napier Road Gillingham ME7 4HG
Telephone number	01634 574920
Fax number	01634 574920

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2008
Inspection number	312935

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Napier Primary and Nursery School is a larger than average primary school. Children begin the Nursery the term following their third birthday dependent on available places. While most pupils are of White British background, about one fifth of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. One third of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportions of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those entitled to free school meals are around the national average. The headteacher has been in post for two years. The school has obtained two national awards for basic skills and inclusion.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has some good features. For example, it is a happy school which pupils are proud to attend. It is very well led by the headteacher. She is ably supported by the assistant headteachers in extending the skills of other staff who are at an earlier stage in developing their management roles and responsibilities. She is determinedly making changes to improve the overall provision for pupils. The governing body is supportive of her clear vision for the school's future.

Pupils' personal development is good. They develop a good awareness of safe and healthy living and fulfil various responsibilities in the school community well. They are involved productively with the local community. For example, Year 5 pupils were due to go to the town's football club immediately following the inspection to focus on 'kicking racism out of sport'. Pupils clearly enjoy school, as shown by the older pupils' attendance at extra sessions during holidays to sharpen up their skills in English, mathematics and science.

The children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and this prepares them well for the more formal structure of learning in other classes. Pupils generally achieve satisfactorily and usually reach broadly average standards by Year 6. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in mathematics. Their progress in writing is not as good as in other aspects of learning and this is exaggerated by the significantly weaker attainment of boys in writing. The school is working hard to overcome this problem, for example using writing styles and content that appeal more to boys.

Most parents are supportive of the school which works hard to engage them in their children's learning. Parents took the opportunity to visit several lessons during the inspection to see how their children are taught. Regular meetings with parents about teaching approaches in mathematics and literacy keep them well informed about ways in which they can help their children. Parents praise the approachability of staff, who are always willing to discuss their children's progress. One parent writes, 'Mrs Slade and her team should be praised highly for their obvious commitment to the school and children.'

There are examples of good and outstanding teaching in some classes, but it is satisfactory overall. Teachers work hard in the pupils' interests and care very much about their general welfare. Several aspects of the school are developing and improving. For example, the curriculum is being reviewed to make it more exciting for pupils. Assessment is also being reviewed because current systems do not provide staff with clear information about pupils' rates of progress from year to year. The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection. It is alert to meet new demands. The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the Nursery varies from year to year but it is slightly below expectations overall and notably so in communication, language and literacy. This is mainly because several children speak little English when they first start. Attainment is broadly in line with the national average by the time children enter Year 1. Good teaching and a stimulating curriculum ensure children's good progress, although staff miss opportunities to extend the children's thinking further when questioning them. Language is the weaker area of their development, but first-hand experiences develop their imagination and range of vocabulary well. The good balance of adult

led and free choice activities builds carefully on children's previous learning and their individual needs. Staff give a good priority to personal and social education so that the children develop good attitudes to learning. They manage the children skilfully. The provision is well led. The outside accommodation is good, but is not always fully used so that Nursery children are able to learn alongside Reception children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in writing across the school, particularly that of boys.
- Develop an assessment system that provides reliable data so pupils' rates of progress are tracked accurately from year to year.

A small number of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards in Year 2 have improved in the last three years. Attainment in mathematics in 2007 was above average and almost all pupils reached the minimum expected level in science. Writing is the weaker aspect of achievement and standards. Few Year 2 pupils reach the higher levels. In the present Year 2, attainment is below average as almost one-third of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Year 6 pupils are on course to reach broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Years 3 to 6 and good progress in mathematics. Girls attain much better than boys in English throughout the school, especially in writing. There is little difference between their respective attainments in mathematics and science. Pupils who speak a language other than English as their first language make similar rates of progress to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school 'because teachers make lessons fun'. They participate well in the extra-curricular activities. Pupils behave well. Most adopt a positive attitude to their work and take a good deal of pride in it. They know how to keep safe and are aware of the dangers of harmful substances. Pupils are confident to approach a known adult if they are worried. They understand the importance of a balanced diet and of eating healthily and choose wisely when selecting lunchtime food. They carry out various school responsibilities conscientiously and effectively. They help to organise playground games and resolve minor disputes using the skills that they have been taught to do this. The school council contributes well to school improvement, such as ideas for toilet refurbishment. Attendance is broadly average and most pupils are punctual. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and are respectful of different ethnic groups. They have a satisfactory understanding of enterprise and economic awareness.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning have a number of good features, yet there is some inconsistency in quality across the school. Lessons are usually planned well and cater for different needs. Teachers generally make good use of time and manage behaviour well, although some staff are more skilled than others in these respects. Questioning is often good but in some lessons teachers do not draw enough from pupils to keep them keenly involved. The pace of lessons is often good. In the best marking, staff show good interest in what pupils have written. They evaluate long pieces of writing constructively. However, they do not consistently indicate to pupils how they can improve important aspects of grammar. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Teaching assistants are involved well with learning during activities but are sometimes not involved sufficiently during the first part of lessons. Teaching is strongest in Year 6 and this leads to accelerated progress in this year group.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is undergoing a change and moving towards a greater integration of subjects with more opportunities being planned for pupils to learn through first-hand experiences. There is good attention to the basic subjects, although the school recognises it needs to do more to improve the provision for writing. Good resources enable pupils to apply their computer skills well in different subjects. The extra provision for Year 5 pupils in the summer holidays prepares them well for Year 6. Year 6 pupils benefit further from additional lessons in the Easter holidays. The provision for personal, social and health education is thorough and contributes well to pupils' personal development, as does the good range of extra-curricular activities. There are good arrangements for pupils who are still learning to speak and understand English.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care and pastoral arrangements are good. The welfare and safety of pupils receive high priority. The school has very good links with parents and families and so staff know the children well. Procedures for child protection are good. Good attention is given to health and safety and risk assessments are rigorous. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties have clear and helpful plans to enable them to make progress.

Pupils understand what they must do to get to the next stage in their learning in English. Staff and pupils share this knowledge well and it is helpful to pupils, but these arrangements have not yet been extended to mathematics and science. The systems for assessing and tracking pupils' academic progress are not yet rigorous enough to give teachers an accurate picture of pupils' progress over time.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has made a very good start to her headship and leads the school very well. She has been courageous in tackling some difficult issues and has worked successfully to harness the whole school community to realise the school's vision. She is well supported by a hardworking team of assistant headteachers who have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and its areas for improvement.

Monitoring of provision and standards is developing well. Senior leaders have generally been astute in picking out strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work and in teaching quality.

The work of subject leaders is developing, but there has not been a consistency in the quality of their work and this has resulted in differing rates of progress in key subject areas. Subject leaders are being well trained by the senior staff and, as a result, they are becoming more perceptive when undertaking their roles.

The school improvement plan identifies the correct areas for development and has a strong focus on raising standards. The governing body is satisfactory. It is supportive of the school's work. Links with subject areas give some individual governors a good understanding of what is happening in the school. They are learning how to contribute more effectively to school planning and how to challenge the school as it continues to develop.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Napier Primary and Nursery School, Gillingham, ME7 4HG

Thank you so much for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school, for sharing your work with us and talking to us about what you do. At the moment, your school is giving you a satisfactory education, but it also does some things well.

You develop well as confident young people. You understand the importance of a healthy diet and know how to keep yourselves and others safe. You enjoy the duties you undertake, such as membership of the school council, as Red Caps at playtime and as mediators, and you help the school a lot by what you do. Most of you behave well and enjoy school. You are making satisfactory progress and many of you reach the standards expected for your age. However, you do not do as well in writing as in some other aspects of your work, mainly because the boys are not doing as well as the girls. We have asked your teachers to help you to improve and we know that the teachers have already made a start on this.

Mrs Slade has made a very good start as headteacher and leads your school very well. She has the good support of other staff and the school's governors. The staff take good care of you and ensure that you are well looked after. They are working to improve the school further. We were impressed that many of you in Years 5 and 6 attend extra lessons in your holidays and these certainly help you. The staff keep records of your progress as you go through the school. However, these are sometimes confusing because different systems are used to judge your progress and it is not always clear how fast your progress has been. We have asked your teachers to improve this.

We hope that you will continue to work hard and that you will lead happy and successful lives.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth Lead inspector



13 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Napier Primary and Nursery School, Gillingham, ME7 4HG

Thank you so much for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school, for sharing your work with us and talking to us about what you do. At the moment, your school is giving you a satisfactory education, but it also does some things well.

You develop well as confident young people. You understand the importance of a healthy diet and know how to keep yourselves and others safe. You enjoy the duties you undertake, such as membership of the school council, as Red Caps at playtime and as mediators, and you help the school a lot by what you do. Most of you behave well and enjoy school. You are making satisfactory progress and many of you reach the standards expected for your age. However, you do not do as well in writing as in some other aspects of your work, mainly because the boys are not doing as well as the girls. We have asked your teachers to help you to improve and we know that the teachers have already made a start on this.

Mrs Slade has made a very good start as headteacher and leads your school very well. She has the good support of other staff and the school's governors. The staff take good care of you and ensure that you are well looked after. They are working to improve the school further. We were impressed that many of you in Years 5 and 6 attend extra lessons in your holidays and these certainly help you. The staff keep records of your progress as you go through the school. However, these are sometimes confusing because different systems are used to judge your progress and it is not always clear how fast your progress has been. We have asked your teachers to improve this.

We hope that you will continue to work hard and that you will lead happy and successful lives.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth
Lead inspector