

New Close Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126232
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315450
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Anna Sketchley

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Hayward
Headteacher	Mrs K Ancell
Date of previous school inspection	11–14 October 2004
School address	30 Imber Road Warminster Wiltshire BA12 9JJ
Telephone number	01985 212304
Fax number	01985 219303

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

New Close Community School is situated in the centre of the military town of Warminster. A large percentage of children from military families attend the school and mobility is very high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased in recent years and is now above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

New Close is a good school. It has some outstanding features. Despite significant disruption to the education of many pupils, the school ensures that they are exceptionally well supported and cared for, and make good progress by the time they leave the school. The progress in English is outstanding. There is a very real team spirit and the headteacher and the whole school community are fully committed to raising achievement. Rigorous monitoring, tracking and thorough assessment arrangements are used consistently to identify the needs of all pupils. This has resulted in successful changes to teaching which is now good throughout the school. The curriculum supports teaching and learning very well and is rich, interesting and motivating for pupils. Intervention strategies introduced into the teaching of mathematics are beginning to impact upon pupils' standards and progress, especially of girls and more able pupils, and there are already signs of significant improvement.

Children start school with skills that are below those expected for their age but they achieve well during their first year. Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that most reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year and some exceed them.

Pupils' personal development and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. This is partly due to the way in which all pupils embrace the school's 'Values' system, about which they say, 'the Values system helps you think about your actions'. Pupils appreciate the very real family feel of the school. They are very aware of how well looked after they are and say, 'This really helps when your parents are in the army. It is a very fair, firm school where I feel really safe.'

Care, guidance and support for all pupils are outstanding. Pupils are respected and listened to and, as a result, their behaviour is exemplary and they have very positive attitudes to their work. Academic guidance is strong. Pupils know their individual targets well and marking helps them to know what to do next to improve their work. However, pupils are not always given sufficient time to respond to suggestions for improvement. There is a high priority given to ensuring the school is genuinely inclusive and provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Pupils who need extra help, including those with statements for special educational needs, are enabled to adjust to school, to make good progress with their learning, and to flourish.

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and has an accurate view of its effectiveness. She has involved staff fully in decisive action to address previous weaknesses. This has culminated in rapid improvement since the last inspection demonstrating that the school has a good capacity for further enhancement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school has good induction procedures for parents and for getting to know children in their pre-school setting. These help the children to develop confidence and make a settled start to the Reception Year. Although the indoor teaching space is a little cramped, it is very well organised and there are extensive, safe but exciting outdoor facilities. A carefully planned curriculum takes account of the needs of both Reception children and Year 1 pupils, and good links are established across all areas of learning. Basic skills are very well taught and children make good progress because daily assessments are carefully collated for each child and used to plan the next step in their learning. Teacher directed tasks are followed up with well thought out activities to consolidate learning. However, sometimes activities are heavily weighted towards teacher-initiated work and this leaves children with insufficient time to choose their own activities through which they can learn independently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics for girls and more able pupils so that they achieve as well as they do in English.
- Ensure that pupils have time to respond to improvements identified in marked work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards have risen throughout the school over the past three years. Although boys do not reach such high standards as girls in Key Stage 1 because more boys than girls begin school with lower skills, school tracking shows that they make good progress. The rise in English results has been dramatic and this is directly attributable to the methods to improve writing that the school has put in place. There was a slight dip in mathematics last year and the school has taken radical action to address this. For example, new resources have been purchased and investigative opportunities in mathematics have been introduced in which girls have been encouraged to take a leading role. Booster groups are run for those who could achieve a higher level as well as for those below the expected level. As a result, pupils' progress has improved. Despite a higher percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, Year 6 pupils are on track to exceed the targets set for them in mathematics this year. They are also on track to exceed targets in English. Pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills mean that they are well prepared for the future.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' exceptionally well-developed personal skills are an important reason for their good progress. They enjoy lessons and all the clubs on offer, attend regularly and are justly proud of their school. They have a good understanding of the need to live healthily and appreciate the variety of professional sports coaching they are offered. The excellent quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness results

in thoughtful, considerate and polite behaviour and attitudes. Pupils spoke earnestly about 'buddying' and the need to look after younger pupils and are keen to take on responsibilities within the school community. They feel that the school council works well and that points taken up by the council, such as the re-introduction of 'Book Day', illustrates that they really do have a voice. Through such activities as learning a modern foreign language, raising money for children in Africa and taking part in the local International Day they have a very good awareness of cultures other than their own and make a good contribution to the wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships in the classroom are excellent and behaviour is very well managed. Pupils are praised regularly and this contributes to their good attitude to learning during which they are often to be found totally engrossed in the task in hand. They respond enthusiastically to interesting and well-planned lessons that match their differing needs. Lessons include clear introductions that ensure pupils know exactly what they are to learn. These are often followed up by helpful instructions about how to tackle the task. Resources are well organised, ensuring a good pace in lessons. 'Working walls' in every classroom are an excellent aid to learning. One pupil commented that in a recent test in the hall she was helped to remember something by picturing the classroom wall in her mind. Well-deployed and highly skilled teaching assistants support and encourage lower achieving pupils, helping them to make the same good progress as other pupils. Marking often explains to pupils how they can improve their work but this good practice is not consistent across all subjects and sometimes pupils are not given sufficient time to correct their mistakes or to work on improving their efforts.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Intervention strategies are used very successfully to improve standards. At the heart of this is effective use of resources and robust and accurate monitoring of pupils' progress. This is used to plan the curriculum to ensure that lessons are adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. The curriculum is enriched through a wide range of clubs and after school activities and there are excellent sporting opportunities provided through links with the local sports college. There is a very good range of school trips and visits for all classes that not only support topic work but also enhance personal and social development. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively by teachers and pupils and a weekly club for information and communication technology (ICT) is now well established. However, although plans to increase the use and understanding of ICT in other subjects are growing, they are not all fully implemented. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. It is planned into the curriculum and enhanced by visitors from, for example the police, who talk to pupils on specific issues such as Guy Fawkes Night and Halloween, contributing to their knowledge of how to keep safe.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are very well cared for and well known to staff who provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment in which to learn. Parents are delighted with the level of care and support offered to their children and, in the words of one parent, 'New Close is a warm and caring school setting out to instil a sense of worth in all our children'.

Individual and group targets are extremely effective in helping pupils to improve their work. Targets for pupils with individual education plans are sharply focused and help them make good progress. One parent of a child with special educational needs commented, 'I feel that the school has excelled in meeting my son's needs and raising both his academic abilities and his social skills.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the headteacher are outstanding and she is respected by pupils and staff alike. The whole school community form an excellent team under her dedicated and purposeful leadership and share her vision of improvement for the school. Subject leaders are developing their skills well with the help of the headteacher, ensuring that plans are put into action quickly. The school has good procedures in place to identify priorities for further development and accurately measures and evaluates their success. Governors have a good relationship with the headteacher and staff. They are involved in school planning and improvement and are committed and enthusiastic. However, they do not have a deep enough understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement so that they can play a more effective role as critical friend. The school is a stable, welcoming and purposeful place within the community and parents are overwhelmingly appreciative and satisfied.

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Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
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 effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Annex B



1 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of New Close Community School, Warminster, BA12 9JJ

Thank you very much for the warm welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed spending time with you and talking to you. Your school provides you with a good education.

These are some of the things we found.

- You work hard and make good progress so you achieve well by the time you move to secondary school.
- You enjoy school very much and appreciate all the extra activities the school provides for you.
- You know how to keep healthy and safe.
- You care for one another, get on exceptionally well together and your behaviour is exemplary. Well done.
- You and your parents told us how well the school takes care of you and we agree that the support and guidance you are given are excellent.
- Your headteacher, teachers and all other adults lead your school very well.

We have suggested two things to make your learning even better.

- We have asked your teachers to make sure that girls and those of you who are quick to learn make the best possible progress you can in mathematics.
- We have also asked them to give you time to respond to the improvements you need to make after your work has been marked.

You can help too by reading your teachers' comments carefully and making sure you follow what they say.

With best wishes

Anna Sketchley
Lead inspector