

# New Close Community School

30 Imber Road, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 9JJ

## Inspection dates

18–19 January 2017

|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Inadequate</b>           |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Inadequate</b>           |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Inadequate</b>           |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Inadequate</b>           |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | <b>Inadequate</b>           |
| Early years provision                        | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good                        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leaders' views about the school are overgenerous. They do not adequately reflect the school's poor performance over time.
- Leaders have not acted quickly enough to tackle the school's weaknesses in teaching. As a result, pupils' progress is not good enough.
- Frequent changes in staffing and teachers' absence have limited leaders' capacity to improve the school.
- Assessment information on pupils' progress and attainment has not been accurate in the past. As a result, teachers do not know pupils' academic needs well enough. Consequently, pupils fail to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not plan work based on what pupils can already do, know and understand. This results in work either being too easy or too hard for pupils to complete.
- The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not taken into account sufficiently when planning learning.
- Most-able pupils do not have work that is challenging enough. Consequently, too few have the opportunity to learn at higher levels.
- The teaching of reading is weak. Despite gradual improvement, outcomes in phonics at Year 1 remain below the national average. Expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading are too low.
- There is not enough emphasis on some aspects of national curriculum requirements. Problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics are not adequately taught.
- There is not enough welfare support for pupils who have special educational needs/and or disabilities or for pupils who enter or leave the school mid-year.
- Early years provision is limited by an absence of a secure area where children can play and learn independently.
- Governors are poorly informed about both the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement. This hinders their ability to hold the school's leaders to account.

### The school has the following strengths

- Most pupils are keen to learn and do their best.
- Pupils' outcomes in early years are now above national averages.
- Leaders have improved the breadth of the curriculum so that a wider range of subjects are now taught.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school so that:
  - teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' learning and achievement
  - leaders insist that teachers use assessment information effectively to give pupils, particularly the most able, the right level of challenge
  - teachers check on pupils' understanding in lessons and take effective action to accelerate pupils' achievement
  - pupils' barriers to learning are tackled and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs met
  - planned activities in mathematics develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills
  - phonics skills and reading comprehension are consistently well taught across the school.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - checks on the quality of teaching focus strongly on the impact to improve pupils' achievement over time
  - teachers' assessment is accurate and used effectively to plan work that meets pupils' needs and takes account of their different starting points
  - leaders provide teachers with accurate feedback about the quality of their teaching so that they know how to make the required improvements
  - the school's approach to teaching in mixed-age classes allows enough learning time for pupils
  - leaders insist that their guidance is acted upon swiftly
  - leaders' self-evaluation of the school's performance is accurate
  - governors receive accurate and robust information about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement so they can hold senior leaders to account for the school's performance
  - action plans provide clear milestones so that governors can hold leaders to account for tackling weaknesses within set timescales.
- Improve pupils' personal development and welfare by:
  - improving the attendance of the few pupils who do not attend regularly enough

- meeting the welfare needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - increasing parents' confidence that their children's welfare needs are met and any concerns are quickly resolved.
- Improve the early years by ensuring that:
- indoor and outdoor environments stimulate children's learning effectively and develop their independence
  - assessment is improved so that learning builds consistently on what children know, can do and understand.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Senior leaders overestimate the impact of the school's work. Self-evaluation is inaccurate. Areas for improvement are not tackled effectively by senior leaders. As a result, the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate.
- Although leaders and governors understand the school's priorities, they have not taken rapid enough action to tackle them. The school's action plan does not focus precisely enough on the key areas that need to improve quickly. It does not provide clear milestones for improvement and does not focus adequately on raising pupils' achievement across the school.
- Frequent changes in staffing and absence over the last 18 months have hindered the school's improvement journey and limited the leaders' capacity to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes across the school.
- Additional funding for service pupils is not fully used to support the high proportion who join or leave the school other than at the normal times. Leaders have not ensured that the impact of this funding is reported effectively to governors.
- Training and support initiatives to develop teachers' subject knowledge are not monitored sufficiently and their impact to date is too limited. This results in some aspects of the curriculum being poorly planned, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Historically, leaders have not ensured that assessment is accurate. This has limited their ability to tackle effectively the weaker or inconsistent performance of pupils.
- Leaders have made some changes to assessment practices this year. However, changes are very recent and impact is variable. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils' progress speeds up and slows down at different points across the school depending on the quality of education they receive.
- Teachers' assessment judgements at the end of key stages have been overgenerous. Until recently, leaders have not ensured adequate moderation of teachers' assessment and pupils' work books. Leaders did not ensure that the expectations of the national curriculum were taught effectively in reading and mathematics. As a result of this, some pupils did not reach the standards expected in these subjects at the end of key stage 2.
- The impact of leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning over time has been limited. Monitoring of teaching provides detailed records. However, leaders do not insist that their recommendations are acted on and followed through. Teachers do not respond to the advice they are given to improve their teaching. This results in expectations of pupils that are too low.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not aligned consistently with legal requirements set out by the Department of Education. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is accurate in his self-evaluation and is making determined efforts to secure widespread improvement. However, senior

leaders' support to tackle the weaknesses in provision for these pupils is ineffective. They do not ensure that the additional advice they provide is acted upon by staff.

- A central display captures pupils' recent work relating to British values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This demonstrates, for example, learning about the royal family. As a whole school, pupils engage in learning about local, national and international charities. Last term, there was a focus on 'Walk for the Wounded'. Pupils also talked about the well-established house system which enables family groups across the school to encourage and celebrate one another's achievements, such as in team sporting events.
- Leaders have ensured that the sports premium grant is used effectively.
- Subject leaders provide governors with reports on the curriculum which outline the current actions taken in their subjects. Leaders have improved the planned curriculum coverage, for example, in science. However, too often, activities are poorly planned by staff and the wider curriculum does not capture pupils' interest or challenge them to achieve well. Consequently, the quality of the curriculum hinders pupils' progress.
- A high proportion of parents expressed concerns about the education their children receive in their responses to the Parent View online survey during the inspection. Nearly a third of all parents who responded raised concerns about the progress their children make. Leaders have recently taken the positive step to develop opportunities for parents and children to work together on homework projects.
- Falling numbers on roll have resulted in the school restructuring to six classes, which are mainly mixed-age. However, leaders have not tackled the inconsistencies of provision in mixed-age classes and so teaching fails to meet pupils' needs. Parents have valid concerns about their children's progress.
- Over time, external local authority support has endorsed the school leaders' inaccurate self-evaluation. However, current assessment by the local authority accurately identifies considerable weaknesses in leadership. The local authority has planned a comprehensive menu of support for the school's leaders. The headteacher has acted quickly to implement recent advice but it is too early to see sustained improvement.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have been poorly informed about both the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement across the school.
- Minutes of governors' meetings confirm that they ask questions but they do not provide sufficient challenge or follow through on previously identified weaknesses. They have not held school leaders to account for the impact of the frequent changes in staffing and have been too accepting of weak performance over time.
- Governors track the use of pupil premium funding. However, they have not made sure that the school's website contains the specific information required by the Department for Education. For example, there is no explanation for the current barriers on pupils' achievement or for how additional funding for service children improves pupils' outcomes.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Inspection evidence confirms that leaders are rigorous in their approach to safeguarding. Regular multi-agency support, along with leaders' persistence in following up referrals, ensures that risk is reduced.
- Checks and vetting procedures for staff are meticulously carried out and safer recruitment procedures accurately followed.
- Effective staff training ensures that all staff know what to do if they have concerns. Staff spoken to on inspection knew exactly what to do if they consider pupils are at risk. Staff have completed all appropriate training, including a recent update on 'Keeping children safe in education', and training in the 'Prevent' duty. Guidance on how to refer concerns is fully understood by staff and information is readily visible in communal areas of the school.
- Local authority safeguarding and health and safety audits are completed in line with guidance. Occasionally, health and safety checks have been missed. Inspectors found risk assessments, including personal evacuation plans, to be robust and any actions identified had been followed up quickly.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Inadequate

- Leaders of teaching, learning and assessment have not made the necessary improvements in teaching. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes for pupils are inadequate in key stages 1 and 2.
- The school's policy for teaching mixed-age classes is in its infancy and is not yet fully effective. In some classes, pupils waste learning time while they wait their turn to work with the teacher. Teachers do not routinely check pupils' understanding in lessons. As a result, learning stalls because the activities provided are too often determined by inaccurate ongoing assessment.
- Teachers do not routinely pick up on wasted learning time in lessons. For example, when pupils finish tasks early, additional activities are not always provided or do not extend or deepen pupils' understanding. Leaders' efforts are not bringing about improvement in all classes because they do not insist that their recommendations are acted upon consistently. Consequently, entrenched weak teaching across some classes is typical and results in inadequate progress for current pupils.
- Teaching does not challenge pupils. Teachers do not accurately identify pupils' next steps in learning. Nor do they use assessment information to plan work that builds on pupils' current knowledge and understanding. Many activities planned fail to challenge pupils and limit pupils' progress.
- Teaching does not meet the needs of the most able pupils. Fragility in teachers' current subject knowledge and understanding of the national curriculum is reflected in the work on offer for these pupils. Teaching does not reflect or prioritise the skills, knowledge and understanding required to meet the higher standards, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive specific intervention and targeted support to meet their needs. However, in some cases, pupils'

access to the curriculum in class is restricted because teachers do not fully recognise their needs or plan tasks to deal with individual barriers to learning. Consequently, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disability varies considerably.

- In mathematics, too few activities deepen pupils' understanding and enable them to make connections across mathematical ideas, reason and solve problems. Recent school initiatives are beginning to develop pupils' mathematical fluency but considerable inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics remain.
- The teaching of reading is weak. The teaching of phonics has not brought about outcomes that are in line with national expectations. Current whole-school initiatives to develop comprehension strategies are not yet bringing about the required improvements. Some pupils told inspectors that they are not motivated or interested by the reading materials on offer and prefer to read their books at home. Activities using high-quality texts are lacking and hinder pupils' development of their reading and writing skills further.
- When pupils apply their writing skills across the curriculum their skills improve more rapidly. This is most effective in Years 5 and 6 where writing activities are relevant and purposeful.
- Teaching assistants provide regular additional support for identified pupils. Intervention and support for pupils with English as an additional language is timely and results in progress for these pupils that is accelerating. However, the impact of teaching assistants is inconsistent across the school. When accurate assessment information is provided, teachers help pupils to move forward in their learning. However, when the books read by some key stage 1 pupils and lower-attaining pupils in key stage 2 are chosen by staff they do not take account of pupils' interests or preferences and their progress falters. The headteacher has rightly identified this as a weakness and has plans to promote pupils' enjoyment of reading further.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Some parents voice concerns that pupils' welfare needs are not sufficiently met and that inconsistent expectations of pupils' behaviour have a negative impact on pupils' personal development and well-being.
- The number on roll has fallen. This is not the result of children arriving at times other than the expected points of transition. Inspection evidence confirms that a considerable number of pupils have left in the last year to go to other local schools.
- Current transition arrangements for pupils when they join or leave the school are not effective. Historically, pupils' needs have not been identified quickly enough so that no learning time is lost. Systems are in place with army welfare services to support service pupils' attendance.
- Current pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with personal support and care. However, the school has not always been timely in seeking

additional advice to support pupils' individual academic needs. This has had a negative impact on their ability to gain access to the full curriculum.

- Pupils' overall attendance is in line with national averages. A small group of pupils do not attend regularly enough. Systems to improve attendance are robust but, to date, attendance for these pupils is not rising quickly enough and remains considerably lower than that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the school. They talked to inspectors confidently about the teaching on e-safety they receive and how this helps them keep safe online.
- Supervision at lunchtime is appropriate. However, some pupils do not routinely listen and act on instructions or take note of school rules. Conversely, other pupils walk calmly in corridors and show high levels of respect for adults and one another.
- Exclusions of pupils are higher than national averages and have remained high since the previous inspection. Inspection evidence found that exclusions have been reducing over the last two years but remain comparatively higher than the national average.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. When work set by the teacher does not challenge and hold pupils' interest they become restless or demonstrate off-task behaviour. For example, some most-able pupils become bored or disengaged in their learning.
- Many pupils are compliant. They work through tasks provided but do not apply their best effort. This limits the progress they make. Very recently, presentation in books in some year groups has improved and pupils are demonstrating a sense of pride in their work.
- Pupils are generally polite and well mannered. Older pupils support younger pupils at lunchtimes.
- Pupils report that incidents of bullying are dealt with. Pupils told an inspector that when pupils misbehave they get warnings and this calms the pupils down. Pupils who spoke with inspectors demonstrated a firm understanding of behaviour systems across the school. They talked confidently about the rewards and sanctions routinely applied.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- The school's current assessment information does not reflect the quality of the work seen in pupils' books and is overgenerous. Leaders identify that assessment information has been inaccurate and are now taking swift action to rectify this. Leaders' recent work is ensuring that pupils' progress is now tracked from the time they join the school. This includes monitoring pupils eligible for additional funding, such as service children. However, this is very recent and is not yet used effectively to plan learning that builds on what pupils can do, know and understand.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was considerably lower than that achieved nationally. End of key stage 2 outcomes reflect weak progress in reading and mathematics. Historically,

across a three-year period, boys have not made enough progress from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Published outcomes in 2016 in mathematics and reading show that pupils who have attended this school without interruption do less well than those who have arrived recently. Pupils' achievement in mathematics has been weak over a number of years. Currently, pupils' weak reasoning and problem-solving skills and their inability to apply mathematical skills across a range of contexts are limiting their achievement. Historically, too few pupils have achieved the higher standards in mathematics.
- The teaching of reading does not build on pupils' current knowledge and understanding and progress is inadequate. Year-on-year, outcomes in the phonics screening check in Year 1 have been below those achieved nationally. While outcomes are gradually improving, inspection evidence confirms that pupils are not catching up quickly enough.
- Numbers of disadvantaged pupils are small across the school and therefore it is not possible to make comparisons with pupils nationally.
- The most able pupils are not achieving well enough across the school. They do not reach the high standards they are capable of. This is because teaching is not challenging enough and does not require pupils to think deeply and apply their knowledge and understanding, limiting pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Over the last three years the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development, the standard expected at the end of early years, has risen rapidly and is now well above the national average.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make variable progress because their access to appropriate learning differs from class to class.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- The leadership of early years requires improvement. The school's self-evaluation of early years provision is overgenerous.
- Children's learning in early years is sometimes limited by the activities on offer. There is no designated outdoor area. Adults make concerted efforts to deploy resources well and use the school's playground space during learning time. However, activities available outside are predetermined by the resources provided set out by adults and dependent on adult supervision. Senior leaders have not prioritised the development of a permanent outdoor early years area. Consequently, it is difficult for children to routinely access all aspects of outdoor education and enhance their learning every day.
- Children start school with different starting points. Assessment information shows that their personal, social and emotional development is well below the level expected for their age. As a result of teaching that prioritises this aspect of learning, children catch up quickly and this helps children access other aspects of learning effectively.
- The teaching of phonics is regular and systematic and appropriately challenging. Children are encouraged to improve their letter formation alongside developing their understanding of phonics and their early reading and writing skills.

- Assessment information is used to support planning for each cohort of children. Some bespoke assessment is evident. However, inspectors observed a lack of sufficient challenge during activities that children choose for themselves, particularly for the most able children. Children play confidently with their peers and form secure relationships.
- When adults intervene in children's play to ask questions to support children, the children's learning is consolidated or deepened. For example, adults reinforce children's prior learning in phonics and 'one more than' in number.
- Early writing is celebrated in the classroom and application of phonics work is evident in children's writing books. Children write with some independence. However, most-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in their writing to extend their sentences.
- Strategies for engaging with parents about their children's learning are developing. For example, transition arrangements in the summer term include settling-in activities and parents' events so that they can play and learn alongside their children.
- Across the last three years the proportion of pupils meeting a good level of development has increased and is now well above the national average. As a result, pupils are better prepared for Year 1.
- Children benefit from the caring and nurturing support and consequently their routines are well established. They build effective relationships and enjoy school.

## School details

|                         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Unique reference number | 126232    |
| Local authority         | Wiltshire |
| Inspection number       | 10025020  |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 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 | 147  |
| Appropriate authority               | The governing body   |
| Chair                               | Sarah Hayward  |
| Headteacher                         | Jane Brown   |
| Telephone number                    | 01985 212304   |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.newclose.wilts.sch.uk">www.newclose.wilts.sch.uk</a>   |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:head@newclose.wilts.sch.uk">head@newclose.wilts.sch.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 20–21 February 2013  |

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are six classes. There is an early years classroom. Other classes are mixed age. Children in Reception attend on a full-time basis.
- A large proportion of pupils are from service families.
- A higher proportion of pupils than is average join or leave the school at other than the usual times.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement, or education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.

- In 2016 the school did not meet the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website in relation to pupil premium funding.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning across the school. Some lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, school business manager and a small group of school staff.
- A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority. A further meeting took place with the school's newly appointed improvement adviser.
- A meeting took place with two governors.
- Inspectors scrutinised school documents including the school's action plan and the school's self-evaluation document. Records relating to behaviour and safety, attendance and safeguarding were also reviewed.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at lunchtime.
- An inspector conducted a walk around the school with pupils to seek their views of the school and discuss how they feel about their learning and development.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books to establish the quality of their current work and their progress over time, and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors considered 33 responses to the online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also considered comments provided by parents' text messages and spoke to parents during the inspection. The views of staff were also considered through an online survey and meetings with an inspector.

## Inspection team

|                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Julie Carrington, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Gina Cooke                       | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Wendy Hanrahan                   | Ofsted Inspector        |

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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