

Siskin Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116174
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357896
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Saunders

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Tiltman
Headteacher	Rose Smith
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 11 lessons delivered by eight teachers. They met with senior leaders, groups of pupils, staff and governors and spoke to parents and pupils informally. They observed the school's work, and looked at records for tracking pupils' progress, pupils' work, teachers' lesson plans, school policies and procedures, records for monitoring of teaching and learning, school development plans, minutes from meetings and questionnaires received from 88 parents and carers, as well as responses from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What recent results of teacher assessments indicate about the attainment of pupils at Key Stage 1, and whether boys achieve as well as they should, particularly in writing.
- How effectively teachers use assessment to inform and adapt the tasks provided for pupils, and to plan lessons and appropriate additional support.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in improving teaching, evaluating the strategies introduced, for example to improve writing, and ensuring high quality provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized infant school in an urban area of Gosport. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high, exceptionally so in some cohorts. These pupils include those with: moderate learning difficulties; behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; and speech and language difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises four Reception classes which each include a small number of Nursery children, who attend morning or afternoon sessions. The school has the Enhanced Healthy School award and has been accredited with the Effective Early Learning Programme quality assurance award. The governing body has recently federated with the governing body of the junior school, located on the same campus. A Sure Start Children's Centre is located on the campus, which was not part of this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. The leadership team and staff have been focused on improvements in reading and mathematics and have brought about a steady rise in attainment. There has also been a strong emphasis on the importance of pupils being at school regularly and the school deserves recognition for improving attendance considerably. Strategies to improve writing are more recent and attainment in this aspect is rising more slowly. In lessons the levels of boys' and girls' writing are now similar, because of a focus on enhancing boys' achievement. Teaching is satisfactory and improving, because helpful strategies have been introduced and are increasingly implemented by teachers. However, on occasions, more-able pupils are not challenged by the work they do, and they do not have enough opportunities to work on their own. In some instances, teachers are not sufficiently clear about what pupils need to do to reach the higher levels of learning. Systems to gather information about how well pupils are doing are well established and form the basis of discussions about which pupils may need additional help. In the best examples, this leads to well-focused activities to help pupils reach the next level of their learning, but this is not consistent. As a result, progress, and therefore achievement, is satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified accurately and they are provided with an effective range of support; some make exceptional progress. The determination to overcome considerable barriers to learning for many pupils, the hard-won success in raising attainment through well-focused self-evaluation, and the admirable success in raising attendance mean that despite the newness of the governing body the school's capacity to improve further is good.

Teachers care a great deal about the pupils and take time to listen to them with respect. The pupils' welfare and personal development are a high priority for the staff. As a result, relationships are good and pupils feel well cared for. They are proud to be part of the school community and appreciate the welcoming, cheerful environment and the opportunities the school gives them. Their understanding of the beliefs and culture of those who may be different to themselves is limited, because opportunities to develop this are not wide enough. As a pupil said, 'My school is fun because our lessons are great, the teachers are brilliant and everyone is fantastic and friendly.' Parents expressed similarly positive views of the school, and appreciate how the school has helped them to support their children's learning. As one parent said, 'I think Siskin is a brilliant school and has always helped my children through their education.' Training and procedures to keep children safe are robust and met government requirements at the time of the inspection. Pupils told inspectors that they feel particularly safe, and that the school deals effectively with any incidents. Pupils and families who face considerable difficulties in their lives are well supported.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress, particularly for more-able pupils, by:
 - increasing opportunities to work independently at a high level
 - providing greater challenge in the tasks pupils do.
- By December 2011, raise the proportion of good or better teaching by developing a more precise understanding of what pupils need to do to reach the next level of their learning.
- Improve pupils' understanding of the beliefs and lifestyles of others by increasing opportunities to learn about a wider range of cultures represented within the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy being at school because learning is put into relevant contexts. For example, there was great excitement over the arrival of a pair of birds to nest in the school garden, as viewed via a video link. This resource is used to give pupils a real purpose for writing. During the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress, often from very low levels of skill and knowledge, because the environment is well resourced and staff put a great deal of effort into providing interesting activities to promote learning. Observations of lessons in Key Stage 1 and analysis of data show that progress is slower, although it accelerates during Year 2. A well-established strategy to improve reading has been effective in raising attainment, and in developing good partnerships with parents by helping them to support their children. The focus on using numbers within realistic contexts and good strategies to develop problem solving have helped raise attainment in mathematics. Lessons observed, work in pupils' exercise books, and teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 show that attainment is now broadly average. Alongside satisfactory progress, this means that their achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils are well aware of what they can do to keep healthy, and know how to keep fit; they enjoy doing exercises which make sure that 'blood goes all around your heart'. This helped the school to achieve the Enhanced Healthy School award. Pupils said that bullying is not something that happens in the school and that everyone plays with different people. As a pupil said, if 'people do naughty things, teachers help to sort it out'; along with the deep care of staff, this helps pupils to feel particularly safe. Behaviour is good; pupils are clear about the high expectations of the school and the opportunity to choose their own activities on Friday afternoons encourages them towards this. Pupils who find it difficult to live up to these expectations, or are finding their lives particularly stressful, are very well supported, for example through the nurture group. Consequently, their behaviour does not disrupt learning and they are helped to be positive members of the school community. Pupils have some opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example in recycling, which won a local competition. Pupils said that they would like more opportunities, such as having a school council. They are clear about what is right or wrong and get along amicably during free time, but their understanding of the beliefs and lifestyles of more diverse cultures within the United Kingdom is not as well developed. Pupils have

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responded very well to the focus on improving attendance, and can be congratulated on taking up this challenge so successfully. There are good opportunities for pupils to think about spiritual, moral and social matters and they are reflective and respond respectfully. Clear arrangements at times of transition, increasing partnership with the junior school, and improving outcomes for pupils mean that their preparation for the next stage in their education is satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The care, guidance and support pupils receive are outstanding, because staff are highly aware of the many difficulties and barriers to learning for pupils and do all they can to help. The school recognises pupils cannot succeed in their work unless their personal development, and emotional and physical well-being are supported. As seen in an assembly, the sensitive manner in which pupils are encouraged and supported to improve attendance is typical of the care of the staff. Parents said the school 'bent over backwards' with practical help and guidance to deal with difficult circumstances, or in finding ways of giving pupils wider opportunities. Further examples are the excellent provision for those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, through the care in the nurture group, and the good support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils make up considerable ground in their learning.

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While teaching is satisfactory overall, it is improving. For example, teachers encourage pupils to use talking partners to share and develop ideas, and regularly share the objective of the lesson with pupils, in language they can understand. In the best lessons, the tasks pupils are given to do are well matched to their needs and provide them with challenge. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoyed doing number work for a health centre. However, this is not always the case and the curriculum has not yet been sufficiently developed to ensure pupils who are more able are given work that helps them to reach the next stage of their learning. Some lessons rely too heavily on the teacher's input so that pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently. The curriculum has been adapted to reflect the interests and needs of the local community, and provides practical, hands-on experiences. For example, pupils particularly enjoy the regular visits to Oxstall Meadow, to observe seasonal changes. There are increasingly effective links between different subjects so that writing and the use of numbers are emphasised across the curriculum. The development of computer skills is a strength of the curriculum.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and her leadership team are passionate about giving pupils the best possible opportunities, and are highly regarded by parents, pupils and staff. They have accurately evaluated the work of the school, and identified key areas for improvement which they are tackling effectively. As a result, staff are dedicated to the well-being of pupils, attainment is rising and attendance is greatly improved. While improvements in some areas, such as writing, have been difficult to bring about, the school continues to review how it can tackle this more decisively. Strategies to improve teaching are evident in some lessons, but this is not consistent. Pupils are helped to overcome barriers to learning because of the strong, effective partnerships the school has with other professionals, such as the children's centre, the family link worker and the speech and language therapists. Such links also benefit the families and the school provides innovative opportunities for parents to participate and contribute to pupils' well-being, such as cooking courses. The school provides a stable focal point in the community, particularly in the midst of a large regeneration programme in the area. The governing body is satisfactory. It recently federated with the governing body of the junior school, following consultation and strategic planning, and is still getting to grips with its new responsibilities. Governors are particularly well informed about safeguarding and ensure that statutory requirements are met. The governing body is beginning to increase the level of the challenge provided to the school so that it can help drive improvements and in this way support the school's capacity for further improvement. School leaders have started to evaluate how effectively

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they promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. They are particularly effective in ensuring that pupils from different backgrounds are given similar opportunities. For example, they pursue support and funding to enable pupils to have resources, or to participate in clubs and activities beyond the school. Leaders have ensured that the school and its pupils are viewed very favourably within the community. There are some links with national and global organisations, for example through giving to charities, and pupils display concern for the rights of children elsewhere. However, the school has not yet developed pupils' understanding of wider cultures and religions within the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge which are often well below those expected for their age, particularly in their personal development and communication skills. The opportunity to attend the Nursery for morning or afternoon sessions helps them to become used to the routines and expectations of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The stimulating, bright environment of the classrooms and extensive outdoor area mean that children are fully engaged and there are plenty of activities to suit a wide range of interests. All the areas of learning are well provided for, both inside and outdoors. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has a clear view of the skills and knowledge of the children and ensures that children's needs are accurately identified and met. As a result, children and their circumstances are well known and they make particularly good progress in their personal development. Well-established routines ensure children are introduced to expectations in a systematic way and develop their independence. Behaviour is good and children play and learn well together. There is a

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strong emphasis on developing good communication skills and staff reinforce verbal language sensitively. A wide range of interesting opportunities for reading and writing helps children to develop these skills. Consequently, children make good progress in these areas, and begin to make up ground, although most do not reach the goals expected for their age by the time they move to Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires received from parents and carers represented over half of the pupils, above the average response rate. Responses indicated that parents and carers hold highly positive views of the school and the overwhelming majority agreed or strongly agreed with most of the questions. A very small minority of parents disagreed that the school informed them about their child's progress, that the school ensured children were well prepared for the future, or that the school takes account of parents' suggestions or concerns. Written comments and the informal views expressed by parents to the inspectors reinforced the positive views in the questionnaires. Parents were keen to give examples of how helpful the school had been, and how staff were always ready to listen to whatever concerns parents had. Inspectors found that the school has a wide range of opportunities for parents to participate or seek support or clarification from the school. There is a noticeable 'open-door policy' and many parents make use of this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Siskin Infant and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 161 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	64	30	34	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	68	27	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	48	55	35	40	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	55	37	42	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	56	64	32	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	55	37	42	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	53	35	40	3	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	43	49	37	42	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	58	35	40	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	44	43	49	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	47	36	41	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	55	36	41	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	60	34	39	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Siskin Infant and Nursery School, Gosport, PO13 8AA

Thank you for welcoming us in your school and showing us your work. We heard from many of you that you like being at school, and that you feel very safe there. We have judged that your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that there are some things that it does well, but there are a few things it could do better.

Here are some of the things we found.

- The staff care for you extremely well and make sure that you feel confident they will help you when you need it.
- The staff have emphasised the importance of being at school regularly, and you can be proud of how well you have improved your attendance.
- The staff have been working hard to improve the satisfactory teaching. Some lessons are already good, but this needs to go even further.
- Teachers have helped improve your reading and mathematics, and you are doing better at these. Writing has also improved, but more slowly. Overall, you make satisfactory progress.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are well supported and make good progress; some of you make excellent progress in your skills and knowledge.
- Those of you who find learning easier are not always given work that is difficult enough, and sometimes the teachers help you too much.
- You like helping children in places such as Romania, but do not yet know enough about the beliefs and lifestyles of other cultures in the United Kingdom.

These are the things we have asked the school to improve.

- Help those of you who find learning easier to make quicker progress, particularly in your writing, by giving you harder things to do and letting you work on your own more of the time. You can help by working without the teacher's support as much as you can.
- Increase the number of good lessons you have, by making sure teachers know what you need to do to reach the next level of your learning.
- Help you to understand more about the beliefs of people from different cultures within the United Kingdom and about their lifestyles.

You should continue to enjoy your learning and help to make your school an even better place to learn and have fun together.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Saunders

Lead Inspector

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