

Northern Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116030
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357869
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Ken Bryan

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shelley Rogers
Headteacher	Gay Shelley
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, observed five teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, school leaders and governors. They looked at school documentation including policies, pupils' progress data, attendance figures, school improvement planning and pupils' work. They analysed 32 questionnaires sent in by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- How the school's self-evaluation relates to provision and outcomes.
- The effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The current rates of progress and levels of attainment across the school.
- The effectiveness of the school's senior and middle leaders in evaluating the quality of provision.
- The impact of the school's strategies to promote community cohesion.

Information about the school

Northern Infant School is smaller than average. Over the last year, the school has experienced a number of staff changes and the headteacher has been absent since June. Temporarily, the school's leadership consists of an acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, supported by an advisory headteacher.

Almost all pupils come from White British families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average but increasing. These pupils have a range of needs that includes speech, language and communication issues and moderate learning and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

The school has gained awards which demonstrate a commitment to developing healthy lifestyles and care and concern for others, for example, the Healthy School award and the UNICEF Rights Respecting School status.

The school accommodates the local pre-school but does not manage the provision

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Northern Infant is a good school. Since its last inspection, staff and governors have worked hard to maintain the high levels of care, guidance and support provided for pupils. There is a strong focus on every aspect of the school's pastoral care. Consequently, pupils and their families are well supported. The acting headteacher and her senior team have managed the challenges of changes in staffing and a changing pupil profile very effectively. All staff work diligently to ensure that pupils achieve well in their learning and develop as caring individuals. Pupils benefit from very supportive relationships with all staff and display an enthusiasm for learning. They contribute effectively to the school and wider community. Pupils participate enthusiastically in the school council as well as willingly taking on responsibilities such as playground buddies and eco-monitors. The school's emphasis upon rights, respect and responsibility for the whole school community impacts extremely positively upon its ethos and atmosphere. Pupils have a good appreciation of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. However, the school's leadership team has identified that developing meaningful links with diverse United Kingdom communities would enhance pupils' understanding of these further. Most children behave very well and are considerate, and this helps to make the school a very safe and welcoming place.

Pupils' achievement is good because the school adapts its curriculum particularly well to ensure that pupils' individual needs are met so that most pupils are able to fulfill their potential. This has enabled pupils to make good, and at times outstanding, progress from their below average starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A decline in achievement has been swiftly and effectively addressed through changes in the organisation of classes and the introduction of small group provision in Year 1. Staff are rapidly developing their understanding of the needs of each pupil through the newly-introduced progress review meetings. This initiative is highly effective in ensuring that checks are regularly made on pupils' progress, and in targeting the well-focused support it gives individual pupils and groups as a result. Teachers are increasingly, through marking, setting individual targets and discussion, sharing with pupils how well they are doing and the next steps in their learning. Consequently, pupils are becoming better informed about what they need to work on to improve. Leaders recognise that greater consistency is required in this area.

Pupils have a calm and purposeful approach to school. Attendance is now at an above average level, which represents a considerable improvement over the last year and since the last inspection. The acting headteacher provides effective leadership, her senior team and governors have managed to build upon the good levels of pastoral care seen at the time of the last inspection and have managed the recent period of uncertainty extremely well, which demonstrates that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the use of assessment to guide pupils consistently in their learning by:
 - setting individual targets for all pupils to aim for
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of others
 - improving the quality and consistency of marking and feedback to pupils.
- Extend the strategy for community cohesion by creating more opportunities for pupils to appreciate and value people from a wide variety of backgrounds and communities within the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy all aspects of school life. Their understanding of how to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle is good. This is demonstrated well through their good take-up of physical activities in sporting clubs and in making the most of the opportunities to exercise at playtimes. The 'trim trail' is a popular addition to the school grounds. Pupils of all ages talk confidently about the benefits that exercise and eating healthily can bring.

Pupils are quick to explain the healthy choices they make in what they eat and do. Their behaviour is good in lessons and at play, where they show considerable support for one another. Most pupils work well together from an early age. These are key factors in pupils' rapid development of basic skills and preparation for the next stage in their education. Pupils achieve well academically. Many talk with confidence about their learning and share their ideas willingly with one another. During an English lesson on 'The Lighthouse Keeper's New Adventures', pupils in Year 2 enjoyed talking with their partners about what makes an interesting story opening and contributing their own suggestions. They confidently discussed different alternatives, considering which ideas were most interesting in creating an opening to a story they most wanted to read. Pupils of all ages speak eagerly about what they have been learning and increasingly talk confidently about their targets that help them to improve their work. Assessments at the end of Year 2 over the last three years show that attainment has been consistently above average. The school ensures different groups and individuals, such as higher-achieving pupils, are targeted very effectively to enable them to learn effectively. This has improved considerably since the last inspection. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make the same good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
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 quality of teaching is effective in all stages of the school. The key features of this are: the very good relationships adults have with pupils, the particularly well-targeted use of additional adults both in class and in leading small groups, very effective behaviour management and the good use of talk partners to allow pupils to try out and share ideas. Together, these contribute to helping pupils develop their very positive attitudes to learning. Assessment procedures have been developed successfully to set high expectations for pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics and are being successfully adapted to raise standards in reading still further, particularly for boys. Opportunities for discussions between adults and pupils in lessons are currently being refined and made more consistent to ensure that pupils are aware at all times of how they can improve their own learning.

The curriculum is very well matched to pupils' individual needs. Personalised learning groups in Year 1 and 2 are particularly effective in enabling the school to target individuals or specific groups, ensuring they all make good progress. Pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics are effectively developed. The school's 'Read Write Inc.' literacy programme has been particularly effectively. Consequently, since the last inspection, the school has been successful in raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum is brought alive by the creative links made between subjects. It is enhanced by visits, themed topics and visitors who share their expertise with pupils. The children spoke

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enthusiastically about memorable experiences, such as the 'African Adventures' project, performing at a local theatre, creating a totem pole, putting on a pet show and playing the ukulele.

Pupils' welfare and personal, social and health needs are catered for very well because the school works closely with parents and carers, as well as with other partnerships such as the Sharing Professional Expertise Cluster. The school's efforts to support its whole school community are evident in many ways. For example, home-learning projects, where parents and their children attempt joint challenges at home, have been particularly popular.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher provides effective leadership and a clear vision for how the school can move forward. She has been instrumental in maintaining and improving the quality of teaching and the caring ethos of the school, commented on very positively by parents, carers and staff alike. There is a strong team atmosphere of 'can do' amongst the staff. They have risen well to the challenge of staff changes, taking on additional responsibilities and ensuring that outcomes for pupils have not been compromised in any way. As part of the school's improvement planning, the governing body and leaders at all levels are involved in analysing the school's results and monitoring teaching to see where it is most effective and where improvements are needed. As a result, all leaders have a clear understanding of the school's areas for development and they have acted swiftly and with great skill to accommodate changes in staffing.

All staff play their part in ensuring that safeguarding procedures are adequately managed, as well as supporting the school's sharp focus on pastoral care. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Staff ensure that there is no discrimination between groups so that all have the opportunities to flourish and achieve well. Staff and the governing body have been partially effective in promoting community cohesion at school and local levels. The school now recognises that the next step is to develop meaningful links with other more diverse communities within the United Kingdom.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception classes with skills and knowledge that are below those typically expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. They grow quickly in confidence, and become enthusiastic explorers and learners by the time they enter Year 1. This is due to a particularly strong focus on pastoral care, guidance and support and effective teaching. Despite most children making good progress, especially in those areas where their skills are weaker, some are now starting to enter Year 1 with below average attainment. Transition arrangements to Year 1 for these potentially vulnerable pupils are very effective. The curriculum is adapted effectively to engage learners. Much has been done in the Reception classes to develop aspects of their outdoor learning environment in order to provide rich and stimulating surroundings, especially to encourage boys in writing. The 'Year R Garage' was a hive of activity as children enthusiastically completed urgent repairs for their large play equipment! Activities are increasingly well planned so that children can build on their knowledge and understanding and develop social skills both indoors and outdoors. Teaching is good and the children learn well from the quality interventions they receive from staff. Links with parents and carers are effective, with home-school 'my news' cards being developed well to give them an opportunity to record their children's accomplishments. Strong links exist between the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Pre-School Group. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader and team use assessment information effectively to promote learning and are able to demonstrate the good gains that children make. They effectively share expertise during joint planning sessions.

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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 vast majority of questionnaires completed by parents and carers were positive and most of the written comments expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. They commended the caring attitude of the school, its support for pupils and appreciation for the way the school has been led and managed during a time of uncertainty. Typical comments included, 'The induction into Year R is superb. My daughter has settled very quickly, staff are very friendly and helpful and she looks forward to coming to school' and 'The school is a stimulating and safe environment and my child arrives home animated with stories of all the exciting school activities'. A very small minority of parents and carers reported concerns over how the school deals with disruptive behaviour. While there are occasional displays of challenging behaviour by pupils, these are effectively managed and the impact on other learners is minimal.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Northern Infant 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 98 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	72	9	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	72	9	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	59	13	41	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	53	14	44	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	63	10	31	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	59	12	38	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	56	12	38	1	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)	17	53	14	44	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	47	16	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	31	19	59	0	0	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	47	16	50	0	0	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	11	34	18	56	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	75	7	22	0	0	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



10 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northern Infant School, Portchester PO16 8DG

Thank you for giving us such a warm and caring welcome to your school and for helping us during the inspection. We found that you are getting a good education. You are clearly very happy and you are well supported by your teachers and other adults in the school. Here are some of the many strong features we found:

- The teachers plan and provide interesting lessons that enable most of you to enjoy learning and make good progress in your work.
- Your behaviour and attitudes are good and you support one another very well.
- All adults in the school take good care of you and you are keen to come to school.
- You understand the importance of being physically active and having a healthy diet.

The school runs smoothly. We are very impressed by the way you understand your rights, how you respect one another and how you take responsibility. The headteacher, staff and governors clearly know what is needed to make things even better. We have asked them to:

- make sure that all the teachers' marking and advice always tells you what you have to do to improve your work and to allow you to check your work and that of others
- to help you understand more about other communities further away in the United Kingdom.

You can play your part by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Ken Bryan

Lead inspector

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