

Langstone Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116207
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	357906
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Otton
Headteacher	Mrs L Stallion
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Nine different teachers were observed teaching 12 lessons. The inspectors held informal discussions with pupils and also held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents including the school development plan, data on pupils' progress, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, and the results of questionnaires returned by 18 staff and 40 parents and carers.

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

- The impact of the school's actions to raise attainment and progress in writing and mathematics, especially of more-able pupils, and to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- How well teachers use assessment to match work to ability to ensure a good pace of learning for different groups of pupils, especially the more-able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the different areas of learning from assessed starting points, and what impact this has on their performance at Key Stage 1.
- Whether pupils' personal development and well-being and the quality of care, guidance and support are as good as the school indicates.

Information about the school

This is a three-form-entry infant school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is currently just below average. In some years, the proportion of pupils joining the school beyond the normal starting points is above average. The school has a number of awards including Healthy School and Activemark awards. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in three Reception classes. There is an independently run on-site Nursery, which is 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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to raising attainment and progress, especially in writing and mathematics, and particularly of more-able pupils.

In recent years, attainment has been low at the end of Key Stage 1, especially in writing and mathematics. Although there has been a gradual improvement in the proportion of pupils who reach the expected level by Year 2, no pupils have reached the higher Level 3 in writing and mathematics. At the last inspection, an area for improvement was to raise achievement and standards of higher attaining pupils in these subjects. There have, however, been improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children now make good progress in the different areas of learning, with a considerable proportion meeting or exceeding the early learning goals by the end of their Reception year. This indicates that there are children with the potential to reach above-average standards at the end of Key Stage 1. Improved procedures for tracking pupils' progress have helped the school to see this potential and to take action. Since the start of this academic year, more-able pupils in Year 2 have received weekly sessions that are focused on raising their attainment and progress in writing and mathematics. These are proving effective in accelerating pupils' progress. This is due to the additional challenge they receive that helps to boost their confidence. However, in whole-class lessons, this progress is not fully complemented as learning here is mostly satisfactory. Although teachers have the skills to make accurate assessments of the different levels at which pupils need to be working in order to make good progress, this is not always reflected in lessons. Activities too often do not sufficiently match pupils' different abilities and aptitudes. This means that the more-able are not sufficiently challenged and the work for less-able pupils, although often supported by teaching assistants, is at times beyond their immediate grasp, so that progress slows. Lessons have clear objectives that are shared with pupils, but insufficient opportunities are provided for them to talk with adults throughout lessons about their learning. Consequently, any difficulties and misunderstandings are slow to be picked up and supported, and pupils themselves are insufficiently aware of how well they are doing.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their improved attendance. Good care, support and guidance ensure that pupils feel safe in school and that those who are potentially vulnerable are settled and can play their full part. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is shown in pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes.

Senior staff regularly monitor the quality of teaching in lessons and provide points for development which are followed through. However, observations focus more on general

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classroom practice than its impact on pupils' learning and progress. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning remains satisfactory. The school's self-evaluation is broadly accurate, although inspection questionnaires received from staff show that a small minority feel they would like to contribute more to this process. Whilst the school improvement plan identifies priorities for future development, the many planned actions do not focus sharply enough on areas where significant improvement is required. Nor does it provide a timescale for implementation or details of how the impact of these actions is to be evaluated. Consequently, the rate of school improvement slows. Nevertheless, improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage, tracking procedures and attendance and the rise in the proportion of pupils now reaching expected levels of attainment, show that the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and progress, especially in writing and mathematics and particularly for more-able pupils, by improving the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring that:
 - assessment is used more rigorously to match work to pupils' different aptitudes and abilities and to guide them in their learning
 - teachers, and particularly teaching assistants, talk more with pupils throughout lessons to help them develop their ideas and understanding of what they are learning and to help them evaluate how well they are doing.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, ensuring that:
 - all staff contribute to the school's self evaluation
 - plans for school improvement have clear timescales, are sharply focused and show how they are to be monitored for their impact
 - the monitoring of teaching and learning is more rigorous and focuses closely on the progress made by different groups of pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Children start school in Reception with a level of knowledge and skills generally expected at this age. They make good progress, but this does not continue at Key Stage 1, where the learning and progress of all groups, including boys and girls and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. The low attainment of more-able pupils, however, means that overall achievement is inadequate. Lessons observed during the inspection showed a picture of mostly satisfactory learning and progress, with occasional good practice. In a good literacy lesson pupils were writing sentences about African animals. Good questioning throughout the lesson and a strong reminder for pupils to refer to the group targets displayed on their tables effectively supported their good progress. Less-able pupils were well supported by a teaching assistant and more-able pupils were challenged to extend their sentences through the use of connective words such as 'because'. In many other lessons, this level of challenge and support was not so evident, so that learning and progress were no better than satisfactory. In a numeracy lesson, the mental starter did not challenge more-able pupils sufficiently. During the activity to share numbers into smaller groups, many pupils quickly finished their activity

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sheet, with some saying it was too easy. Some more-able pupils were getting stuck and needed more discussion on how to use a number line to count backwards in order to solve division sums.

Pupils' satisfactory grasp of key skills, including information and communication technology (ICT), and good aspects of their personal development, mean that they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education. They are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles, as recognised in national awards, and know the importance of a healthy diet and physical exercise. Pupils are proud of the produce they grow in the school garden. They take part in events such as the City Music Festival and help to raise funds for local charities. The school 'helpers' carry out their role well, for example by running the friendship station in the playground. This role is now being extended with the recent formation of a school council to enable pupils to contribute to school improvement.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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	3
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	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	3
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?

Effective classroom management and good relationships ensure that pupils quickly settle in lessons, are attentive and well behaved. Lessons are generally prepared well so that little time is wasted on organisation. Although teachers plan activities for different abilities, these do not always take enough account of what pupils have previously learnt, particularly the more-able, nor are they explained well enough for pupils to be able to work independently and gauge how well they are doing. Teaching assistants are not

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sufficiently involved in the introductions to lessons. At times they act in more of a supervisory capacity during group activities, rather than supporting pupils' learning and understanding effectively through questioning and discussion.

The curriculum satisfactorily meets the needs of different learners, with provision for more-able pupils starting to improve. Opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their literacy and ICT skills in topic work, which provides interesting themes that add enjoyment and relevance to pupils' learning. The school has yet to fully evaluate the impact of this approach on raising pupils' attainment and progress. Good provision is made for pupils' personal and social development. A wide range of well-attended clubs, including ICT, gardening, recorders and sports, effectively promote pupils' social development. Many trips and visitors help to enrich the curriculum and provide enjoyable first-hand learning experiences.

Staff know the pupils well and look out for their safety and well-being. Excellent provision is made for pupils who are potentially vulnerable, drawing on the good support of outside specialists. A number of parents and carers commented on the high level of support both they and their children receive, often in difficult and sensitive circumstances. The support for pupils with specific needs, such as behavioural and speech and language difficulties, is well managed and effective. Pupils who join the school during the course of a school year are well supported so that they quickly settle and make similar progress to others. Transition arrangements both within school and with the junior school are good.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are clear about where the school needs to improve. The school's improvement planning is not as precise and helpful as it could be in enabling it to move on as swiftly as possible, particularly as it does not provide the means to fully monitor and evaluate its impact on raising attainment and progress. This limits the governing body's effectiveness in challenging the school. Nevertheless, the governing body seeks answers to pertinent questions on the school's performance and is supportive of its work. It ensures that satisfactory safeguarding procedures are in place, and that staff training in these matters is up to date, recognising where improvements need to be made.

Home/school computer links, regular newsletters, opportunities to work alongside their children in class, workshops and family learning groups help parents and carers to be involved productively in their children's learning. Partnerships with external agencies are effective in supporting the care and personal development of pupils, but less so in helping

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the school to improve its academic performance. Weaknesses in the progress of more-able pupils mean that the promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory rather than good. The school knows where it needs to promote pupils understanding and respect of different cultures and communities within and beyond its own locality, and has started to adapt its curriculum with this in mind and to foster links, for example with a school in Spain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their time in Reception and make good progress in the different areas of learning, providing them with the skills and knowledge to effectively support their transition to Year 1. Good induction procedures ensure that children quickly settle. They help to promote good links with parents and carers, who have regular slots in the week where they can work and play alongside their children. Along with good links with the on-site Nursery, this helps staff to assess children's interests, aptitudes and starting points. Effective management and good provision ensure that children quickly become active learners. They behave well and understand the rules set for their own safety. Relationships are positive and contribute to children's good attitudes to learning. They willingly participate in all teacher-directed sessions and cooperate well during child-initiated activities, helping each other and sharing, and moving freely between the classrooms and the much-improved outdoor area. Staff work well together and are sensitive to children's needs and welfare. They generally engage well with children in their play and in the directed activities. They make careful observations of children's progress and development, but do not always use these well enough to plan activities that fully meet the learning and developmental needs of individual children. Action plans show that this has been identified, along with the further development of the outdoor area, as a priority for improvement.

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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

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly happy with their children's experience of school. One comment sums this up: 'As parents we are very happy with Langstone Infant School. The teachers really care and they engage with the children to make a very positive environment.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Langstone 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	58	17	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	68	13	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	48	21	53	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	45	22	55	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	53	19	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	58	17	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	53	18	45	0	0	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	43	15	38	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	58	17	43	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	40	18	45	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	45	19	48	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	50	18	45	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	55	18	45	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	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.



19 January 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Langstone Infant School, Portsmouth, PO3 6EY

Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were interesting to talk to, polite and helpful. You told us how much you enjoy school and about all the things you do. Your school does some things well but needs to improve other things quite quickly. You will have another visit from an inspector to check how well the school is improving.

These are the things that the school does well.

- Children in the Reception classes get off to a good start.
- The school looks after you well and helps those of you who find learning difficult.
- You are well aware of how to keep safe and know who to turn to if you have any problems.
- You know the right things to eat and the importance of taking exercise.
- The school encourages your parents and carers to help you with all that you do in school.

We have asked the school to work on the following things:

- help you to do better in writing and mathematics, especially those of you who can cope with harder work; this means giving you work that is right for each one of you, neither too hard nor too easy, so that you all make the best progress possible
- plan more carefully how to improve your lessons and check to make sure you are all making faster progress and reaching higher standards in your work.

Thank you again for your help. You can all do your bit to help by working hard in lessons and continuing to enjoy all that you do in school.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell
Lead inspector

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