

Pennington Infant School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115983
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	379180
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2012
Lead inspector	Janet Sinclair

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	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Corden
Headteacher	Diane O’Grady
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 February 2009
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

Inspection team

Janet Sinclair

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent five hours observing teaching and learning in 13 lessons or part-lessons. She observed six teachers and several teaching assistants. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, listened to a sample of pupils read and looked at examples of pupils' work. She considered a wide range of documentation, including school policies, particularly for safeguarding, the school development plan and records of pupils' progress. The inspector also held meetings with members of the governing body, senior staff and two groups of pupils. The inspector considered the 37 responses from questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

Pennington is smaller than the average-sized school, with a below-average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average; the needs are mainly moderate learning, emotional and behavioural, and speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are in two classes.

There is a high level of turbulence caused by pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the usual times.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is a very inclusive school, where high levels of care and the promotion of academic achievement ensure that all pupils flourish. It is not outstanding because teaching and learning are not above a consistently good quality.
- Attainment is average by the end of Year 2 and reflects the good progress pupils make, given their starting points. A strong focus on improving reading and creative writing, and on raising the attainment and rates of progress of all groups of pupils through rigorous tracking, has been successful. The school has correctly identified the need for a more consistent approach to improving pupils' handwriting and punctuation skills.
- Teaching is good across the school. Excellent relationships, strong support for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and well-organised and managed teaching promote effective learning. Occasionally, work is not well sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs and this slows learning. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good overall, but there is not enough attention to planning and provision for outdoor learning and this detracts from the quality and effectiveness of the overall provision.
- Pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel very safe and say that there is no bullying, only occasional boisterous play and this is quickly dealt with by staff if there is any falling out.
- The headteacher provides strong, caring and thoughtful leadership that promotes effective teamwork and a supportive learning environment for all. A clear focus on the rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and the monitoring of teaching and learning is successfully driving up standards. Performance management is well established.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so that practice is always good or better by ensuring:
 - a more consistent match of work to the differing needs of pupils

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- a consistent approach to developing pupils' handwriting and punctuation skills in order to improve presentation of work overall and to further accelerate progress in writing.
- Improve provision and planning for the outdoor area of the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to ensure it fully supports all areas of learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are mainly below those expected for their age, particularly in key aspects of communication – sounds and letters knowledge – and calculating, which are low. These aspects remain below expectations on entry to Year 1 despite good teaching and overall progress.

Attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 2, including in reading. Attainment in reading is rising and systematic daily phonics (linking letters with sounds) taught in small groups is helping to accelerate progress. Even low attaining pupils use their phonic skills well when decoding unknown words and are pleased with their success. The school is effective in closing any gaps in performance between the different groups represented within it through the careful tracking of progress and effective interventions to support those not achieving well enough. This ensures good progress overall.

The strong focus on improving writing through the 'Big Write' has been effective in engaging all pupils, but particularly boys, through exciting stimuli such as 'How to catch a dragon'. This topic generated a huge amount of lively discussion and pupils' determination to get all their ideas down on paper. However, there is not enough emphasis on punctuation or handwriting and this slows overall progress. Good attention to problem-solving in mathematics engages interest. For example, pupils in Year 2 enjoyed investigating whether a pattern emerged when they added three consecutive numbers together and were excited by their findings. One pupil commented that, 'if you multiply the first number by 3 and then add 3 you get the same answer as you do when you add them all together'. Their communication skills are developed well through the many opportunities they get for discussion in pairs and small groups. Pupils also listen well to each other's contributions.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress due to early identification and well-planned interventions such as precision teaching and speech programmes. Teaching assistants are well trained to give effective support and good use is made of outside agencies such as the behaviour support team and educational psychologist. There is also an effective nurture group and emotional literacy support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

Pupils eligible for free school meals make similar progress to their peers due to

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rigorous tracking and effective interventions. Pupils who join during the school year are helped to settle and make the same progress as other groups.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire consider that their children achieve well and this view is supported by inspection evidence.

Quality of teaching

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, supportive relationships and a purposeful learning environment promote children's learning well. The teaching of letters and sounds through teacher-led activity is effective and ensures children make good progress. Children enjoy the range of activities on offer, particularly those relating to the stories of Nick Sharratt involving socks and pants. They had great fun painting socks and decorating pants using repeating patterns. The teacher made good use of photographs taken during these activities to consolidate children's learning. Although children have access to the outdoor area, it is not as stimulating or well organised as the indoor provision and this limits its impact.

In Key Stage 1, teachers make good use of resources such as puppets, interactive whiteboards, video clips and easy scopes (magnifiers) to excite interest and engage pupils in their learning. Planning is mostly well matched to pupils' learning needs, and pupils are grouped by ability for their literacy and numeracy. Occasionally, the use of whole-year group introductions and one task for the whole ability group does not ensure that all pupils are challenged enough to move them on fully in their learning. Effective open-ended questioning by teachers helps pupils to extend their knowledge and develop a good understanding, for example when developing addition and subtraction skills using a number ladder in Year 1 and when working out coordinates in Year 2. Good small group and individual teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs ensures their needs are well met.

The well-planned curriculum is broad and balanced, with exciting topics such as the Year 2 topic on *Titanic* and Year 1's work on the story of Jack and the Beanstalk with its opportunities for drama. The development of creative writing skills is well established but the school recognises the need to ensure that pupils' handwriting and punctuation skills are taught in a more systematic manner to add to the good quality content. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted well through the many opportunities for collaborative work and when posed moral questions such as, 'Was Jack right to steal the goose that laid the golden egg?'

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire consider that their children are well taught and this view is supported by inspection evidence.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

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The school has effective systems for promoting good behaviour that are consistently implemented across the school and are longstanding in nature. Relationships are excellent and this supports an ethos of kindness and care for each other. Pupils enjoy being in school, behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning.

During the inspection, all groups of pupils said they felt safe and that adults took good care of them. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were unanimous in their view that the school kept their children safe. The curriculum is used well to promote safety through, for example, 'stranger danger' and safe use of tools, particularly when gardening. Pupils confirmed that there was no bullying, in any form, and staff were always there to take good care of them.

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire consider that behaviour is good and this view is supported by inspection evidence. Pupils say that behaviour is good overall, with only occasional boisterous behaviour in the playground. They say, 'Mostly we are nice to each other.' The school is inclusive. There is a very small number of pupils with identified behaviour difficulties who do not always manage to control their behaviour successfully, but they are catered for extremely well within the school so that disruption through anti-social behaviour is minimal and sensitively handled by all staff. There have not been any permanent or fixed-term exclusions in recent years. Punctuality is good and attendance is average. Pupils are kind and caring towards each other and ensure that new arrivals feel welcome so that they settle quickly.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides a strong steer to the work of this small school. She is developing senior staff and subject leaders well through effective professional development such as training for their roles, involvement in assessing their own performance in teaching against set criteria and responsibility for staff meetings. This has ensured a well-motivated staff and a good team ethos.

The school strategic plan and associated raising attainment plan are the key drivers for school improvement based on accurate self-evaluation. They are used effectively and reviewed regularly to ensure progress towards key improvement targets. This has helped the school to improve its previously satisfactory provision and shows a good capacity for further improvement. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and the achievement of different groups is monitored carefully to ensure that all pupils get the support they need if they are falling behind. This demonstrates a positive whole-school commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. Senior leaders and governors ensure good attention to safeguarding, with effective policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety of pupils. The school council is also usefully involved in ensuring a safe environment through checking playground equipment and establishing playground rules.

The curriculum is well managed by year group leaders who provide effective support for their colleagues. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted

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well. Pupils are kind and caring towards each other and are proud of the achievement of others, for example in celebration assemblies. The teaching of philosophy for children encourages them to think for themselves.

There are excellent links with parents and carers, who value the opportunities to visit the school on 'family-to-school' days so that they can see their children at work. They are delighted that their children are well cared for and appreciate the Thursday club where they can meet with each other to have a chat. Good links with pre-schools and the junior school ensure a smooth transition. The governing body provides a good level of support and challenge to the school through their committees and involvement in the work of the school.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pennington Infant School, Lymington SO41 8HX

I am writing to tell you how much I enjoyed my visit to your school. I liked talking to you and was pleased to learn that you enjoy school, that your teachers are kind and helpful and there are fun things for you to do.

I judged that your school is a good school, where your headteacher and all the staff work hard to take good care of you and help you achieve well.

Here are some other things I particularly liked about your school.

- You make a good start to your education in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You behave well and feel very safe in school.
- You enjoy working together and are helpful and kind.
- Your teachers provide you with interesting activities that you enjoy.
- You like the lunch-time and after-school clubs.

These are the things we have asked your school to do to make it even better.

- Help you all do even better by making sure work is always well matched to your needs.
- Help you to improve your handwriting so that your work is neater and easier to read, with good spelling and use of full stops and capital letters so that your writing gets even better.
- Help those of you in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learn more quickly by providing more exciting outdoor learning.

You can help by improving your handwriting and making sure you put in those capital letters and full stops.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Sinclair
Lead inspector

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