

Northern Parade Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116191
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	357900
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Laurie Lewin

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	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Barr
Headteacher	Sue Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 23 lessons taught by 11 different teachers. The inspectors met with pupils, staff, parents and carers and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation including teachers' planning, assessment information and safeguarding policies; they also scrutinised samples of pupils' work. The inspectors analysed 93 questionnaires from parents and carers and 33 questionnaires from staff.

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

- How well do more-able pupils progress?
- How effective is the school's provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- To what extent are the pupils aware of how people from other cultural backgrounds live their lives?
- Does the school make sufficient use of its pool of expertise and resources across both schools in the federation to help improve teaching, the curriculum, and pupils' achievement?

Information about the school

This is a slightly above average sized school. The number of pupils on roll is increasing. It serves the local area, but with some pupils coming from further afield. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most of the pupils are White British, with a few coming from a mixture of minority ethnic backgrounds. The school has nine classes, three of which cater for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school is accredited with Artsmark Gold, Healthy School status and the ICT Mark. A pre-school, Northern Parade Junior School, and a children's centre share the same site but are inspected separately. The school has had significant turnover in the teaching staff, with six new staff coming to work at the school over the last two years. The school became federated with the junior school in September 2010. The junior school underwent an inspection in March this year.

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

This is a good school. Parents and carers are happy with their children's experiences. Typical comments received included, 'Staff are always helpful and cannot do enough for the children• the children are happy and keen to progress.' Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are taught well and make good progress, and this continues throughout the school so that by the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well. Pupils do especially well in reading, where attainment is high by the end of Year 2. Pupils' attainment in writing, whilst above average, is not as good as in reading and mathematics.

Staff have good relationships with pupils and use these well to help all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to become confident and enthusiastic learners. Teachers provide interesting lessons based on a well-planned curriculum that incorporates a wide range of practical activities and topics that appeal to the pupils. Especially good provision is made for helping pupils to develop the skills to work independently. Occasionally, in some parts of the lessons seen, activities did not extend the more-able pupils sufficiently and they did not therefore always progress as rapidly as they should.

As part of the drive to sustain the Healthy School and Activemark accreditations, pupils are involved in a wide range of sports and health promoting activities. Pupils are healthy and fit and talk knowledgeably and enthusiastically about what it takes to stay that way. Through their school council activities and support for local charity fundraising, pupils learn to make a good level of contribution to the immediate and wider community.

Good provision for care, guidance and support ensures that all pupils feel completely safe and enjoy their time at school. They have no hesitation about seeking help should they need it. Those spoken to all agreed with one who said, 'It's always easy to get help• our teachers and teaching assistants are really nice• they make the work fun in lessons.' Staff are good at encouraging good behaviour. As a result, pupils behave well and show a good level of moral and social awareness. The strong support provided for pupils with social and emotional difficulties ensures the individuals concerned progress well.

The headteacher, very well supported by her leadership team, does an excellent job of leading the school, setting high expectations and establishing a strong vision and purpose for the future. Despite significant turbulence in staffing in recent years, she has ensured that the school continues to make year-on-year improvements to provision and pupils' achievement. Very good communication ensures that parents and carers are fully involved in supporting their children's learning. The excellent links with partner organisations such as local universities, other schools, the nearby children's centre and the Royal Navy are used very effectively to help boost pupils' learning. The close working federation partnership with the junior school is especially beneficial in ensuring that pupils make a smooth transition to their next phase of education, and helps to advance the quality of

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provision and thereby improve pupils' achievement. Through robust monitoring the governing body has a clear overview of the effectiveness of all school provision. It does a good job of supporting the headteacher and staff as well as holding them to account. The school's accurate self-evaluation and success in maintaining and pursuing good performance, along with the energetic and proactive approach of the staff and the governing body, underpin good capacity to maintain the current good pace of improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012, ensure that in all lessons, activities always fully extend the more-able pupils.
- By July 2012, raise pupils' attainment in writing through improving their grammatical skills and expanding the breadth of vocabulary pupils use in written tasks.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

When they start school, children mainly attain levels that are below those expected for their age. All groups of pupils typically made good progress in the lessons observed although, occasionally, more-able pupils made slower progress when they were not sufficiently challenged by the activities set for them. Pupils show a good ability to use and apply their mathematical skills in problem solving activities. For example, in some Year 2 lessons seen, pupils confidently tackled word problems that required them to calculate the answer in two steps. Pupils develop very good reading skills. By the end of Year 2, they read texts presented to them fluently and with good understanding. This confidence is based on a very firm grasp of letter sounds that they acquire as they progress through the school. While pupils complete much good quality written work, attainment in this area is not as good as in reading and mathematics. This is because the grammatical skills of some pupils are not as good as they should be, and they sometimes lack the breadth of vocabulary to make their writing lively and interesting. Pupils show much confidence in tackling work independently. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson pupils wasted no time in getting on with writing poetry and then moved efficiently to assessing the quality of each other's work.

Pupils are very friendly and support each other well. They carry out a wide range of jobs, such as being playground buddies, in a sensible and responsible way. They have an excellent understanding about how to stay safe and are very knowledgeable, for example about areas such internet safety, road safety and 'stranger danger'. Pupils from different nationality backgrounds proudly carry out their roles as 'language experts'. Through this means, links with countries such as New Zealand and work they do in music, sports and art, pupils gain a good general cultural awareness and a good understanding of how people from other cultures live their lives. In lessons and assemblies pupils have good opportunities to reflect, and they gain a sensitive awareness about issues in the world around them. Pupils' attendance at school is average, but due to much good work by the school there has been a continuing trend of significant improvement over the last year.

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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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	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?

Teachers use a good range of strategies to accelerate pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson, the teacher made good use of interactive whiteboard prompts, class and group discussions and attractive resources to ensure all pupils were interested and actively involved. In the good and occasionally outstanding lessons seen, activities ran at a good pace and all pupils were well motivated by the work. For example, in one excellent Year 1 literacy lesson, very good use of photographs to inspire pupils' writing, very precise setting of tasks to challenge pupils of different ability levels along with excellent use of success criteria resulted in pupils working at a rapid pace and producing good quality writing. In the main, teachers use assessment information well to ensure that activities in lessons match well to the abilities of different groups of pupils. However, occasionally, in the whole-class teaching sections of lessons, the work set for more-able pupils is too easy.

Staff work very closely with teaching assistants, who provide good support for groups of pupils and individuals. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support so that they cope with all tasks and make good progress. Teachers set clear targets, which pupils work hard to achieve.

The curriculum is substantially enriched through a wide range of trips, visitors, extra-curricular activities and a strong focus on creativity in subjects such as music. Good use is made of shared expertise through the federation, for example to recently improve the information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum as part of the drive to gain

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the ICT Mark. However, staff have rightly identified that not enough is done to ensure that all pupils gain a full range of grammatical skills and fully expand their use of vocabulary in writing tasks. Through extra activities provided beyond classroom time, the school provides good quality opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to extend their skills.

Staff have a good understanding of pupils' pastoral needs and cater for these sensitively. They are vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety. Where needed, full use is made of external agencies to support pupils' needs. Through rigorous monitoring and follow-up on absences and good systems to encourage the pupils and the parents and carers, the school has been successful in improving pupils' attendance, but recognises there is still more work to do in this area.

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?

A strength of this school is the way in which the headteacher fully enables all staff to work together as a strong team who keep the spotlight on ratcheting up targets for pupils' achievement. All staff play a full part in evaluating the school's performance and creating clear plans to improve the quality of provision. The headteacher and leadership team have worked very effectively to ensure that assessment procedures are rigorously applied. As a consequence, staff have a very clear understanding about the progress of pupils and are alert to spotting any individual who may be slipping behind and implementing support where necessary. This approach has enabled teaching to be strengthened and helped the staff to raise the bar for what each individual can achieve, so that wherever possible pupils are helped to be successful and no discrimination occurs. Staff and the governing body work closely together, and this is particularly apparent in the good working relationships established between this school and the junior school during the relatively short period of time since the federation was created. Senior leaders work well to guide staff in implementing action plans for improvement. The school has rightly identified that middle managers do not always have enough opportunities to work with colleagues in sharing good practice and helping improve the quality of teaching.

All staff work hard to maintain the excellent relationships with parents and carers. For example, regular newsletters, the active parents' council, and the 'end of topic' presentations by pupils that draw a full attendance of parents and carers keep them fully informed about, and involved in, their children's learning.

The governing body is well organised and fully involved in all self-evaluation and strategic planning. It regularly surveys and, where appropriate, acts on the views of parents and carers. The governing body ensures that the good provision for safeguarding is

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underpinned by very clear risk assessments, good quality site security and appropriate training for staff and its own members. The school has good quality plans to promote community cohesion and carefully evaluates the impact of its work in this area. While strong links have been established with local partner organisations, the school is at the early stages of developing links with organisations further afield.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Well-organised induction processes and good links with pre-school organisations ensure that children make a good start when they begin school. The Reception classrooms are lively and interesting areas and the children are provided with a rich range of interesting activities that engage them well and inspire an enthusiastic approach to learning. The classrooms have good access to outdoor areas, where the children work and play happily and safely. Staff provide good care, guidance and support for all individuals and are vigilant about all areas concerning the safeguarding of children. Teachers are especially good at helping all individuals acquire a positive and reflective attitude to their own learning. For example, in one excellent writing lesson observed, children were given frequent chances to stop and consider if the task they had selected, from those on offer, was sufficiently challenging. This resulted in all individuals working hard to do their best.

Children are happy and confident learners who fully enjoy all activities. For instance, children engaged quickly and happily at the start of a very good music lesson where they were asked to do simple 'tongue and face' exercises to get them alert for the activities. Good teaching enables children to make good progress in all areas of learning. They gain secure basic reading, and mathematical skills. While they reach average levels in writing by the start of Year 1, attainment in this area is not quite as strong as in other areas of learning. Children do particularly well in advancing their personal, social and emotional

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development and this can be seen in the sensible and confident way in which they go about their work and the confidence with which they express themselves in group or class discussions. Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. As a result, behaviour is good and often excellent. Children usually show full concentration with all tasks.

Teachers use assessment information well to inform their planning so that tasks match children's needs precisely. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well so that self-evaluation is accurate and clear action plans are established to keep provision improving at a good pace. Staff work together as a very strong and efficient team.

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

Virtually all of the parents and carers who completed questionnaires indicated that they are happy overall with their children's experience at school. They were positive in almost all respects, and the level of negative responses was very low. A few parents did not agree that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that there are good systems to regularly survey the views of parents and carers, and evidence that actions had been taken by the school to follow up the views expressed where appropriate.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Northern Parade 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 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 256 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	77	20	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	63	34	37	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	42	45	46	49	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	60	35	38	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	53	43	46	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	48	47	51	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	52	42	45	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)	56	60	32	34	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	53	40	43	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	37	53	57	4	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	37	47	51	8	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	40	43	47	51	4	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	58	38	41	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



18 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northern Parade Infant School, Portsmouth PO2 9NJ

Thank you for making us feel so welcome at your school. We have judged that yours is a good school. Through talking to you we know that there are many things that you like about your school.

Here are some of the good things that we found.

- You make a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- We can see that you enjoy school a lot and the well-planned curriculum makes sure you get lots of interesting activities to take part in.
- You are very fit and healthy and know a lot about how to stay this way.
- Good teaching helps you to do well and your teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting and fun.
- Your behaviour is good and you have positive attitudes towards learning.
- You all have an excellent understanding about how to stay safe. The adults in the school do a good job of taking care of you.
- The headteacher, staff and governing body have worked well to improve your school and they work hard to make sure it keeps improving.

This is what we have asked the school to do now.

- Ensure that those of you who can learn quickly are always given activities that are sufficiently challenging to help you to progress rapidly.
- Improve the quality of your writing by ensuring that all of you become fully confident in applying your grammatical skills in all written work, and by expanding the range of interesting 'wow' words you use in your writing.

All of you can play an important part in helping the school to improve by continuing to work hard in all lessons.

Yours sincerely

Laurie Lewin

Lead inspector

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