

# Cumberland Infant School

Methuen Road, Southsea, PO4 9HJ

**Inspection dates** 15–16 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress from below, and in some cases well below, expected starting points. Attainment in reading is above average at the end of Year 2 and there is a rising trend in writing and mathematics because teaching is good.
- Behaviour is good throughout the school and often outstanding. Pupils feel safe because they are very well cared for.
- Children get off to a strong start in Reception. They make good progress overall in beginning to learn to read and write and outstanding progress in personal, social and emotional development.
- The school is well run. Senior leaders and governors share the headteacher's determination to ensure that pupils make equally good progress in academic as well as personal, social and emotional development.
- Links with parents are outstanding and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils, parents, staff and governors are proud of their school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding, although typically it successfully supports good learning. The lack of pace, challenge and clear explanations which show pupils how they can do their best, in a small minority of lessons, restrict progress.
- Over a period of years, pupils have not done so well in mathematics as they did in reading and writing. Although gaps are fast being closed, the action plan which shows how improvements will be made has not been shared widely enough.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons featuring six teachers. Two of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- They met with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work, including books from all year groups and heard pupils from Years 1 and 2 read.
- Inspectors took account of the 40 responses to the on-line Parent View survey and held informal discussions with parents at the start of school.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and amongst other evidence looked at school documentation, including safeguarding records, data on pupils' progress, evidence of self-evaluation and monitoring records.
- Inspectors analysed questionnaire responses from 10 staff.

## Inspection team

Michael Burghart, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Westhall

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This is an above-average-sized infant school serving a suburban area.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for extra support, which is the result of extra government funding known as the pupil premium, is well above average.
- The proportions of pupils who are supported by school action and school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are broadly average.
- The school shares its site with a private nursery. This facility did not form part of this inspection.
- The governing body provides childcare in the form of breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The deputy headteacher retired at the end of the autumn term 2012. Her senior leadership role has been temporarily filled by a teacher already on the staff and her class teaching responsibility has been taken by a teacher on a fixed-term contract.
- Numbers on roll have increased by 14% since the last inspection and this has resulted in there now being six single-age classes, two per year group.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding, building on the high-quality examples that there in some lessons by:
  - making sure that pupils do not wait too long on the carpet before being actively involved
  - always providing work which is not too easy, especially for those who are more able
  - providing more specific training for the very small minority of staff whose understanding of how pupils learn is not sufficiently well developed.
- Ensure that pupils do as well in mathematics as they do in reading and writing by:
  - sharing the action plan for the development of mathematics more widely to highlight strengths and weaknesses, more obviously focusing on how improvements will be made.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start school with skills and attainment which are typically below, and in a significant minority of cases well below, what is usually expected. They make outstanding progress in personal, social and emotional development in Reception because teaching and support are of high quality. Children readily share, take turns and show consideration for others. They make good progress in all other areas of learning as well as having lots of fun. (Who does not want to be a Superhero?) Overall, although standards are still generally below average when children move on to Year 1, a good basis has been laid for learning to read, write and count.
- All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2. Those eligible for free school meals make equally good progress. Their average point scores in national assessments are at least as good as, and in some cases better than, others in the school because of the effective extra support.
- Pupils achieve well. In reading, a significant proportion of pupils reached above average levels by the end of Year 2. Last year, it appeared that girls did not do as well as boys but this was the result of higher profiles among girls of English as an additional language and of special educational needs. The school's strategy for teaching phonics (letters and sounds) very effectively helps pupils to read unfamiliar words. There is now no difference in the performance of boys and girls, but it is noteworthy that due to the school's high focus on boys' involvement in reading, boys do better than boys nationally in this age group.
- The school's determination to improve writing is paying dividends. Progress for example in sentence construction, spelling and punctuation has been sustained since the last inspection. There are very positive signs, well founded in detailed checking of pupils' work term by term, that this year attainment is above average. Very successful examples include Year 1 writing of instructions for how the *Jolly Postman* should prepare for his round. Year 2 attempts at alternative openings for the *Iron Man* story are well above what is expected of seven year olds.
- Although broadly average over a period of years, pupils did not do as well in mathematics as they did in reading or writing. This gap is being rapidly reduced because of ongoing improvements to teaching and higher expectations. Although there is still room for development, standards are now above average as a result of a marked improvement in the performance of the least and most able pupils.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Some aspects of teaching are outstanding, which is why children get off to a successful start in Reception and why progress is good across the school. The overall profile of teaching, not only as seen during the inspection, but over time, is good and this is reflected in pupils' good achievement year on year.
- The way work is designed to interest pupils and to provide opportunities to link subjects together is a strength of teaching. Working well together, teachers plan topics that make use of and extend basic literacy and numeracy skills as well as covering other curriculum areas like geography.
- Relationships are outstanding and teachers and their very supportive assistants capitalise on the high level of trust pupils have in them to inspire everyone to do their best. This encourages pupils to be confident, show independence and not to be afraid of making mistakes. Teachers use praise effectively and manage behaviour well.
- The way staff use questioning to get pupils to explain their preferences and opinions is very good. This has an excellent impact on pupils' communication skills and has introduced even young children to some difficult concepts, for example bravery, curiosity, perseverance and collaboration.
- Teaching and support for those who may be disabled or have special educational needs are

good and help such pupils to be fully involved in all activities and make the same good progress as their classmates.

- Those entitled to pupil premium support are well catered for. Teachers make regular and accurate checks on improvements in what pupils know, understand and can do to evaluate benefits in terms of progress.
- Reading is well taught which is why pupils make good progress and results in the national reading survey are rising.
- For the most part, work is successfully planned for different ability levels and this enables pupils to work at personal targets. This works well in Reception and Year 1. It is very effective in some Year 2 lessons. However, this is also the year group where it occasionally is not so successful and this is the result of a lack of staff understanding of some aspects of learning and the theory behind action plans (for example in mathematics).
- The school is committed to giving pupils feedback on their work. Most of this is done face to face and does have positive effects. However, the lack of written prompts for those in Years 1 and 2, that show how work can be made even better, means there is sometimes too little to look back on and measure improvement. Addressing this already forms part of the school's forward planning.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- There is overwhelming evidence from parents, staff, governors and pupils that pupils behave very well and that this has long been the case. Inspectors were able to see this for themselves.
- Reception children settle in extremely well, appreciating the school's caring and purposeful ethos. Years 1 and 2 pupils set a fine example of courtesy and sensible behaviour. Everyone clearly feels safe and valued in school whether in breakfast or after-school clubs, in lessons or at play.
- Pupils and parents are convinced that there is rarely anything which might be considered as bullying and that anyway it would be swiftly and effectively dealt with. Parents spoken to reported that the school always listens and acts sensitively.
- The reasons that this inspection judges behaviour to be good rather than outstanding focus on a few incidences where it was not of the same high standard as generally found across the school. In a very small minority of lessons pupils did not show as positive attitudes to learning as in the clear majority of cases. This is well understood by senior leaders and work is in hand to address the situation through more specific staff training.
- Inspectors found pupils enjoy learning and, for most of the time, are fully engrossed in what they have to do. However, when activities are allowed to go on too long, and pupils have to sit for extended periods on the carpet or are not challenged enough, they are prone to lose interest and become fidgety. This does not result in disruptive behaviour and all pupils respond well to reminders from staff, but these incidences show behaviour is not outstanding. For example, in a Year 2 session on multiplication some more-able pupils finished the task set very quickly and became restless.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- There is universal agreement amongst staff, parents, governors and the local authority that the school is moving from strength to strength. Inspectors find that this continued improvement is very effectively led by the headteacher whose drive and ambition to raise standards, without losing sight of pupils as young people, are infectious.
- The school very successfully supports spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Trips, visitors and opportunities to act as monitors and members of the school council complement the well-constructed curriculum and help prepare pupils for the future.

- From the start of breakfast club to the end of after-school activities, the school is well run and pupils' well-being has a high priority.
  - The leadership and management structure has been much improved since the last inspection to include teachers as managers of subjects and year groups. With some staff new to their roles, the impact of this varies. However, this has successfully improved the opportunities staff have to contribute. Clear job descriptions and rigorous performance management provide ways to measure success and hold people accountable.
  - Teaching is well monitored by the headteacher who is consequently aware of strengths and areas requiring improvement. Senior leaders are beginning to be drawn into the process and some staff have observed and modelled lessons for colleagues. The outcomes of such activities are not always formally agreed and recorded which limit their use in tracking improvement.
  - A major factor in the improvement in progress rates is how well checks on pupils' performance are made, recorded and evaluated. This has resulted in pupils' achievement rising. An excellent example is in the way teachers maintain records as class inclusion files that track pupils' development and learning. Information is used very effectively to set targets for individual pupils and identify where curriculum planning needs to be modified. This particularly benefits pupils with additional needs and those from groups receiving extra pupil premium support and ensures fair treatment.
  - The school's track record of improvement, for example in much better achievement, raised attendance, good teaching and emerging corporate leadership and management, is a good indicator of a strong capacity for further improvement.
  - Despite the school constantly seeking even more ways of involving parents in their children's learning, the links created with parents are outstanding. Parents are welcomed into school and staff go out of their way to be available for discussion and support. That parents appreciate this partnership is reflected in 100% of those who responded to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire saying they would recommend this school to other people.
  - The local authority provides the school with good advice and support, for example in training and in moderation of attainment levels and reviews of teaching.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body has recently recruited new members who are currently being trained and inducted. Key governors, however, are well established. Discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body and reference to records indicate a clear knowledge and understanding of the impact of teaching on achievement and of how this compares with the national picture. Decisions are made and evaluated to confirm that money is well spent and that staff fulfil their responsibilities. The governing body has a good awareness of teachers' strengths and relative weaknesses through their appreciation of performance management and how this can be influenced by salary progression. Close checks are made on the extra learning support hours and resources that are funded through the pupil premium. These are used as a basis for governors to challenge the headteacher and staff in terms of cost effectiveness and pupils' progress. All governors are involved in regular training and make full use of the services of the local authority to improve their expertise and understanding. Most recently this has considerably enhanced the governing body's understanding of data as presented in government reports. Governors take their statutory duties very seriously and this is particularly effective in making sure pupils are kept safe.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116192
<b>Local authority</b>	Portsmouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	405627

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	159
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Simon Lindsey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Beverley Naylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	023 92733161
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