

Siskin Infant and Nursery School

Nimrod Drive, Gosport, Hampshire, PO13 8AA

Inspection dates 6–7 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Pupils' achievement in writing in Years 1 and 2 is inadequate due to ineffective teaching. Their progress has been hampered because spelling, handwriting and punctuation skills have not been taught systematically.
- The achievement of children in the Nursery and Reception is inadequate. Children are not challenged or engaged enough and there is not enough emphasis on promoting language and number skills within the classroom.
- School leaders and governors have not worked effectively to address the decline in the school's effectiveness since the previous inspection.
- Teachers do not set work at the right level, questioning is not challenging enough and a good pace is not maintained in lessons.
- When these things happen some pupils lose concentration and fidget. Some occasionally disrupt learning.
- Targets and marking are not used well enough to improve pupils' performance.
- Governors have not made sure that they know how well pupils are doing and this limits their ability to hold the school to account.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher and senior leaders within the federation have quickly gained an accurate view of the school. They have done things that are already having positive results.
- All groups of pupils are now making faster progress.
- Pupils feel very safe and most behave well.
- The federation's special educational needs coordinator has brought about rapid improvements in the way the school identifies who needs help and in the support pupils are given.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons or part lessons, of which two were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, a local authority officer, the leadership team and other senior staff.
- There were no responses to the online Parent View survey. The inspector spoke to a few parents and carers when they brought their children to school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' current progress, planning and checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector listened to pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read.

Inspection team

Janet Sinclair, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with 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 it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- Siskin is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils in local authority care, from armed forces families, or those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above average.
- The school has a 26 place nursery and children attend on a morning only basis. A high proportion of the children who attend the nursery move into the Reception classes in the school.
- None of the school's pupils receives alternative provision off site.
- The school entered into a hard federation with the junior school in autumn 2010. The two schools have the same governing body. The headteacher of the junior school is executive headteacher of the federation, and since the retirement of the infant headteacher in July 2012, she has become headteacher of both schools.
- There have been significant staff changes in the recent past, and the school has several temporary teaching staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate inadequate teaching and improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good by:
 - making sure teachers make better use of what they know about what pupils can already do when planning work, so that it is at the right level for all pupils, especially the most able
 - making sure that all staff, including learning support assistants, use questions that challenge pupils and extend their understanding
 - improving the consistency and quality of marking and target setting so that pupils are clearer about the next steps in their learning and what they need to do to improve
 - making sure the pace of learning remains high throughout lessons.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that staff provide activities for children to choose that excite their curiosity, and interact with the children to help them learn effectively
 - providing a learning environment that is rich in language and number in order to capture children's interest and extend their knowledge and understanding.
- Improve pupils' achievement in writing by ensuring that the basic skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting are systematically taught.
- Ensure leaders and managers across the federation embed and extend new initiatives by ensuring that they are consistently applied, in order to continue to accelerate the pace of change.
- Make sure governors have a clear understanding of how well pupils in the infant school are doing to help them hold the school to account for pupils' achievement.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Due to ineffective teaching over time, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) make inadequate progress in all areas of learning.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils' progress is broadly average in reading and mathematics but is too slow in writing. The most able do not do as well as they should; very few pupils reach the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics and none do so in writing. The teaching of writing has been particularly weak over time.
- Children in Year 1 did not perform well in the phonics screening check in 2012. The school now teaches phonics (the sounds that letters make) systematically and this is having a positive effect on children's reading and writing skills.
- Since the executive headteacher took over, a range of initiatives has been put in place to raise standards and improve pupils' rates of progress. As a result, all groups of pupils are now doing better, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the pupil premium applies. This is helping to promote greater equality of opportunity and deal with any discrimination.
- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is improving. Much has been reorganised. Nursery children now have their own learning area and there is a dedicated outside area for children in Reception.
- The pupil premium funding has not always been well used. It is now being used appropriately to provide specific support for pupils' learning and emotional needs for eligible pupils. Their progress over time has not been good enough, as for most pupils in the school. Their average point score in national tests shows that their attainment is well below national averages for their group. Recent assessments show that their progress since September has accelerated at a similar rate to other pupils in the school due to better targeted provision.
- Pupils who have special educational needs have not always been identified or given targeted support, and this has slowed their progress. Clear procedures are now used to identify and support these pupils and this is ensuring they make better progress.
- Although pupils' learning has improved, and pupils are no longer falling further behind, the pace of learning is not fast enough to help them make up the ground they have lost. Their achievement over time remains inadequate.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching over time is inadequate, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It has also not been good enough at Key Stage 1. Too little teaching is of high quality and a small amount remains inadequate. As a result, too many children have not made enough progress and are not catching up quickly enough.
- The main weaknesses in teaching overall are a lack of challenging questioning, work not set at the right level for pupils, and pace in lessons not being maintained. When work is not set at the right level, and when questions do not make pupils think hard enough, they find the lesson too easy. Progress slows, particularly for those pupils capable of reaching higher levels.
- Additionally, staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not interact effectively with children in the activities children choose for themselves, nor do they ensure that the learning environment provides enough opportunities for children to develop their language and number skills. The activities put out for children to choose from are not always stimulating and interesting, so they do not encourage children to concentrate and persevere with them.
- Although teachers mark pupils' work well when they use 'two stars and a wish' (two good things and one to improve) and they set targets for pupils, they do not do this well enough to clearly set the next steps in pupils' learning or give them enough guidance on how to improve their

work. The impact of the marking system is limited.

- An improved focus on the teaching of the sounds that letters make is helping to improve pupils' spelling and reading. It is also having a positive impact on pupils' writing. Additionally, resources such as 'talk boxes' in Year 2 help pupils to rehearse their sentences before they write them down. However, basic skills such as spelling, punctuation and handwriting are not yet systematically taught and this inhibits progress.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the pupil premium applies get one-to-one and small-group support from learning support assistants and teachers and this is helping to meet their needs better.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities that staff give them to work together. For example, pupils in Year 1 enjoyed discussing the properties of shapes with each other. Unfortunately the activity went on for too long and they began to lose interest.
- Teachers now ensure that regular guided reading sessions take place and this helps to improve pupils' skills and enjoyment. A lovely example of this was seen when pupils in Year 2 were reading 'Windhover' fluently. However, some lower attaining pupils in Year 1 still struggle with simple words because of previous weaknesses in the teaching of the sounds that letters make.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- In some lessons where the work does not engage pupils, they become fidgety and lose interest and this affects their learning. Nevertheless, most pupils behave well in lessons and are keen to do their best.
- While most pupils behave well around the school, some find it difficult to behave at playtimes and lunchtimes so there are occasional minor disagreements that staff have to sort out. Pupils say that when they misbehave they have to walk round the playground with an adult.
- There are pupils with identified behavioural issues that the school works hard to manage, with some success, so that they do not disrupt the learning of others. However, they occasionally cause problems for themselves and others.
- The school has clear policies and procedures for managing behaviour, which are consistently applied and understood by pupils. Parents and carers spoken to and staff of the school did not consider that bad behaviour was a major concern.
- The school works hard to encourage good attendance and has engaged a home–school link worker to help with the small number of families who do not ensure their children attend regularly.
- There is a clear anti-bullying policy. There have been no recorded incidents of bullying or racism in the school. Pupils spoken to said that there was no bullying but some rough play when they fall out. They know to go to an adult if they have any concerns about the behaviour of others.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and good relationships and a caring community ensure that pupils are confident of any help should they need it. They learn about how to stay safe through visits from the police community support worker, fire services and a dedicated 'Keep Safe' week for pupils in Year 2.
- Pupils say that they are happy at school, find lessons fun and enjoy each other's company.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Since the previous inspection there has been a decline in the quality of teaching and provision that led to underachievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in writing for pupils at Key Stage 1. Leaders did not address the issues from the previous inspection sufficiently well.
- Through accurate self-evaluation and a clear school improvement plan, the executive headteacher, supported by senior staff and governors, has identified the key areas of weakness in the school and taken immediate and effective action to address them.
- A strong drive to improve teaching is evident in the targets set for staff and in the thorough

monitoring of teaching and learning that has taken place. However, too much teaching is still not good enough. Senior staff from both schools are fully involved in bringing about rapid improvement. This work has resulted in accelerated progress for all pupils over the last two terms. These identified improvements confirm that the federation leaders have the capacity to improve the school further.

- Leaders have put much in place to improve performance. However, systems are not yet sufficiently embedded to ensure consistency in practice and this is detracting from the overall impact of the many effective initiatives.
- Historically, the identification of pupils who need extra help with their learning, the provision of support for them and monitoring of its impact have not been strong. The special educational needs coordinator for the federation has been instrumental in ensuring hugely improved provision for these pupils and this is already having a positive effect on their learning and personal development.
- The local authority has given the school adequate ongoing support, including support for developing mathematics and helping the executive headteacher in her drive to bring about rapid improvement.
- The school ensures parents and carers are well informed through regular newsletters, the school's website and annual reports on their children's progress. The small number of parents and carers spoken to were happy with the school's provision.
- The new curriculum ensures that all subjects are covered in a way that builds on previous learning. Interesting topics engage pupils' interest and enjoyment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted adequately. Pupils mainly work well together and are kind and helpful to each other. Their social skills are developed adequately through, for example, regular school performances.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors fulfil their statutory duties and make sure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place in order to keep pupils and staff safe. They have a reasonable knowledge of the quality of teaching and supported the executive headteacher well when difficult teaching issues had to be addressed. They monitor the school's finances carefully, including the use of pupil premium funding. However, they do not have a good enough knowledge of pupils' rates of progress or how these compare to national expectations, including for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, and so cannot accurately monitor this aspect of the school's effectiveness. Governors undertake appropriate training to develop their knowledge and skills and keep them informed of local and national initiatives. They are involved in setting targets for the headteacher and are aware of a similar process for staff. As a result, they have a secure knowledge of how the performance of staff links to increases in salary.

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

Unique reference number	116174
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	405624

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue MacDonald
Headteacher	Siân Thornton
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 January 2011
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