

Devonshire Infant School

Francis Avenue, Southsea, PO4 OAG

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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. Select

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school because of the good quality of teaching they receive.
- Children make a good start in the Reception classes. By the end of Year 2, pupils are reaching standards that are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher and governing body give strong leadership and direction to the school's work. Robust systems for checking on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching help ensure that the diverse needs of all pupils are being met.
- Pupils behave well, are polite and respectful and demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning.
- The school provides good care and guidance for all pupils, including sensitive and effective support for those at risk of underachieving.
- Pupils enjoy the stimulating curriculum on offer. They apply basic skills well to their learning across the curriculum and develop good skills in wider subjects, including art and design, and music.
- Senior leaders, managers and staff work as a close team to bring about improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding. Opportunities are sometimes missed to help pupils communicate their understanding and check their own learning.
- The role of middle leaders in checking teaching and learning and giving guidance to staff is underdeveloped.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, of which two were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons. The headteacher joined inspectors to look at learning for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding.
- Inspectors met with pupils, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) when carrying out the inspection and also spoke to parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's data on pupils' progress; improvement plans and evaluations; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

David Townsend, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lily Evans

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized infant school serving pupils from the local community.
- An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding. This is additional funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children from service families.
- While the proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average, the proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A 12-place resource unit, called the Development Assessment Unit, caters for pupils aged four to seven who have complex special educational needs. They come from a wide area across the city.
- Just under four fifths of pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils represent several minority ethnic groups, particularly Bangladeshi, White and Black African and other White backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- Childcare provision, which is not managed by the governing body, is offered on site at the school. This is subject to a separate inspection.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual time is above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - teaching letters and the sounds they represent to less confident pupils with greater precision and through exciting reading and writing activities
 - finding creative ways to nurture pupils' confidence in expressing their own ideas, thoughts and opinions in lessons.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management in raising pupils' standards by increasing the opportunities for all leaders to check teaching and learning, identify improvement priorities and help staff to further develop their expertise and skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Many children enter the school with skills and understanding below the levels expected for their age, and especially low in terms of language and communication. They make good progress in the Reception classes in all areas of their learning.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has risen to levels above those seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics for both boys and girls. While more pupils reached the higher level in mathematics last year, fewer girls than boys did so.
- Pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics due to the effective teaching of basic skills and the regular opportunities they have to apply them to their learning in other subjects; for example, Year 2 pupils wrote detailed reports and diagrams showing how they designed models of emergency vehicles.
- The teaching of reading is well organised; less confident readers benefit from regularly being listened to by an adult. The books shared in class and taken home are appealing to young readers, including boys, and are carefully matched to pupils' reading levels. The teaching of letters and their sounds (phonics) is helping most pupils to tackle new words and understand them. In some sessions, opportunities are missed to help less confident pupils hear and say each sound accurately and to learn the most common words in more exciting ways.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding particularly benefit from the extra adult guidance. They make good progress to reach above average standards, achieving an above average point score in all subject areas.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. This is the case too for pupils within the Development Assessment Unit. For example, those with speech and communication needs have made rapid progress with their speaking and listening skills this year.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching in the majority of lessons is good, with a small minority that is outstanding. As a result, pupils display positive attitudes to learning and make good progress in lessons.
- Teachers know their subjects well and have high expectations of all pupils. This, and the regular checks they make on pupils' knowledge and understanding, lead to lesson introductions and group activities which are well matched to all pupils' needs.
- This begins in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In one lesson seen, less confident writers confidently wrote labels for their own pictures painted in the style of the artist Doug Hyde, while some, with the teacher's help, began forming sentences.
- Computer technology is used well to demonstrate new learning for pupils. Teachers are skilful at asking thought-provoking questions of the whole class and individual pupils. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher clearly demonstrated for more-able pupils how to group larger numbers such as 98 into sets of tens and units.
- The advice pupils receive in their books through teachers' marking is very clear and helps them move forward with their learning. Pupils are increasingly asked to check their own work during lessons, including with a partner, although this is not yet always the case.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and assist teachers effectively in leading small group teaching in class. Occasionally though, they are used less well, during the whole class sections of lessons, to involve all pupils in discussions.
- There is an effective balance of adult and child-led learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children have more opportunities to follow their own interests, become independent and use

their basic skills when playing; for example, writing lists of patients visiting their role-play hospital.

- Children in the Development Assessment Unit benefit from short well planned activities, including songs and games, through which they practise specific social and language skills. There are regular opportunities for them to learn alongside all children in and beyond lessons.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because opportunities are sometimes missed in lessons to help all pupils express their ideas, reflect together on their learning and explain their thinking.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are well mannered and behave well, treating each other and adults with respect. They have positive attitudes to school and enjoy lessons. Parents and staff are unanimous in believing that behaviour is good and well managed.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare and that they know to whom they would turn with a problem. Pupils are fully aware of the steps they need to take to keep safe, including the importance of road safety and the careful use of computers.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because, upon occasion, a small minority of pupils does not always comply with the school's clear rules of acceptable conduct. Pupils agree that the school responds decisively if this occurs. Staff make clear how they expect pupils to act and are quick to praise and celebrate pupils' efforts in improving and sustaining good behaviour.
- Very good care and guidance are on offer to all pupils, especially those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The school has good partnerships with external professionals, such as speech and language therapists and close links with each family. For example, pupils who speak English as an additional language have their needs quickly identified and skilled bilingual teaching assistants help support their language development in class.
- Attendance is average and has improved in the last 18 months from below average. This is the result of the school's work to promote and celebrate good attendance, challenge absence and support families to improve punctuality.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has united leaders, governors and staff, who are ambitious for the school's improvement. This is seen in the challenging targets set for the school's future performance which are based on an accurate self-evaluation. There is a carefully planned programme for development in place.
- Since the last inspection, systems for monitoring the progress of groups of pupils and individuals have improved. Appropriate action is taken to ensure those in need of additional help receive timely and effective support. This is seen in the improvement in boys' attainment and that of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The headteacher has successfully used a range of methods to check on the quality of teaching, set targets for teachers and determine the training needs of all staff. Salary progression is closely linked to outcomes through the performance management process. Teachers are involved in effective joint training with staff in partner schools.
- The local authority provides good support and challenge. The education officer carries out in-depth checks on the achievement of pupils and provides effective guidance on this to senior leaders and governors. This knowledge of the school has been used to good effect to signpost leaders to schools where outstanding practice is evident. Local authority consultants have provided effective advice to the school in its work to secure the improvements in teaching seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the Development Assessment Unit. Governors have also benefited from a range of training programmes that have helped them to develop their skills and expertise.
- While middle leaders are fully involved in monitoring pupils' progress, they are less experienced

in checking the quality of teaching. This limits the extent to which they can contribute to the school's planning for improvement and support staff development.

- Pupil premium funding is carefully monitored and clearly explained to parents on the school's website. Funding is allocated to provide targeted small group and one-to-one teaching for pupils at risk of underachievement and to enable the inclusion manager to train staff in the delivery of this work. These initiatives are helping all the pupils eligible for funding make good progress.
- The rich and stimulating curriculum on offer to pupils promotes their good achievement. They attain well in a range of subjects, including art and design, physical education and music. For example, Year 1 pupils produced particularly striking paintings of street life in the style of the artist LS Lowry. A range of clubs, visits and visitors, as well as special events, contributes in ensuring pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they make regular visits to school to check on how new initiatives are working. They receive regular reports from school leaders about the attainment and progress of pupils. Governors have attended the local authority's training on a number of themes, including safeguarding, financial planning and how to review performance data on pupils' progress. They are fully aware of trends in the school's results and hold leaders to account for reaching the challenging targets set. Governors have overseen the use of pupil premium funding effectively to help improve outcomes for those eligible for free school meals. They discuss and know about the quality of teaching across the school. This knowledge is used to check that salary progression for staff is justified and to support leaders as they make decisions on the allocation of staff responsibilities. Governors fulfil their statutory duties; safeguarding requirements and health and safety responsibilities are met in full.

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	116187
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	401573

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	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Leonie Banham
Headteacher	Jackie Collins
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 September 2009
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