

Norman Gate School

Vigo Road, Andover, Hampshire, SP10 1JZ

Inspection dates

19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make excellent progress and their achievement has continued to improve strongly since the school's previous inspection.
- Pupils' learning in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics, is often rapid. The development of pupils' personal and social skills is a strength of the school.
- Pupils' reading, language and literacy skills develop especially quickly because they have frequent opportunities to read, write, speak and listen in all lessons. Pupils' numeracy skills also improve well.
- The consistently high quality of the teaching leads to pupils making excellent progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers make clear and useful links between lessons to help pupils see how learning in different subjects is connected.
- Teachers' checks on pupils' learning and progress are accurate and regular. The school makes very good use of partnerships with other schools, both special and mainstream, to check the quality of their assessments.
- Teachers use assessment information very well to personalise lessons so that they are well matched to the abilities of individual pupils. Almost all pupils are consistently given appropriately challenging work. However, occasionally, the most able pupils are not challenged to achieve as much as possible.
- Staff use the school's chosen sign and symbol systems very well, both when teaching and when making resources for lessons. They target this support accurately so that pupils are given the right amount of help to understand the lesson well.
- Pupils respond well to the school's culture of promoting both rights and responsibilities. They feel safe at school and enjoy their lessons. Pupils almost always have very positive attitudes to learning. Those who experience social and behavioural difficulties make very significant improvements. Pupils' attendance has continued to improve well.
- Leaders and governors are extremely effective in making sure the school goes from strength to strength. The headteacher and deputy headteacher check the work of the school regularly and thoroughly. They use the detailed information they gather to make astute decisions about how to improve the school. Training for staff is highly focused and successful. Staff place a high priority on the well-being of pupils through rigorous safeguarding procedures and systems.
- The governing body checks school leaders' judgements and decisions rigorously and provides excellent support. Governors have a full understanding about the effectiveness of the school and do not shy from asking school leaders challenging questions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors, together with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons, taught by seven teachers.
- Pupils, teachers and school leaders met with the inspectors to discuss the school's work.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspectors looked carefully at a range of documents including the school's safeguarding procedures, its tracking of pupils' progress, the school's checks on how well it is doing and its development plan and minutes of meetings held by the governing body.
- The inspectors considered the views of 13 parents provided through the Parent View website and the responses to 26 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Jon Carter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All pupils have statements of special educational needs. The main needs of pupils are moderate learning difficulties and autism spectrum disorders. The school also has smaller proportions of pupils who have severe learning difficulties and speech, language and communication needs.
- Pupils are educated in classes which take account of their stage of development. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery class and a class which educates pupils in Reception and Year 1. There are a further three classes with mixed age groups, and a separate class for pupils in Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is above average.
- Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The school shares its site with a children's centre which is subject to separate inspection arrangements. The school does not make use of alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more able pupils always make rapid and sustained progress in lessons, by:
 - planning work which consistently takes full account of what they already know and can do
 - providing learning activities that challenge them throughout each lesson and extend their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils join the school with levels of development which are much lower than expected because of their special educational needs. Although pupils make significant gains in their learning, their attainment by the time they move to secondary school remains low compared to pupils of similar age for this reason.
- Children learn and develop quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their speaking and listening skills improve rapidly because teachers and other adults encourage them to talk about their environment and the tasks they have chosen. Early reading and writing skills develop very well because they make brisk progress learning the sounds letters make. Pupils' natural curiosity is fostered successfully through well-planned opportunities for them to experiment and investigate. For example, in a very effective lesson observed they learned about the properties of water and took turns pouring it into a chute and collecting it at the other end.
- The speed of pupils' improvement in reading, language and literacy is also rapid in the other classes. Pupils frequently use the school's library of regularly updated books, so that they read a wide variety of different texts. Their language skills develop rapidly because adults carefully construct high quality conversations about their learning during lessons.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) has accelerated recently. The proportion of pupils making better than expected progress is now approaching the same high levels as seen in reading, language and literacy.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity very effectively for pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. The additional emotional literacy support or music therapy that they receive is very effective in assisting their motivation and engagement as learners.
- Additional ICT equipment also provided with this funding has enabled pupils to improve their familiarity with computers which many do not have access to at home. As a result, the majority of this group of pupils make rapid progress in reading, mathematics and ICT, and all make at least the expected level of achievement.
- The school prepares pupils exceptionally well for the next stage of their education by helping them to make excellent progress in developing their self-confidence and personal and social skills, through independent and collaborative working.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching across the school has continued to improve since the previous inspection; the proportion of outstanding teaching has increased steadily over the last three years. The highest priority is given to each pupil's individual learning programme and targets and this assists their highly positive achievement.
- Teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' learning and progress. They use this information to plan and teach lessons which are very well matched to the individual needs of the pupils in each class. All lessons include relevant opportunities for pupils to read, write, speak and listen. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make excellent progress in communication, language and literacy. Teachers ensure that learning about the sounds letters make is fun and so children build good reading skills. Teachers work very effectively with colleagues at other special and mainstream schools to regularly check the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' learning.
- Teachers and other adults frequently check pupils' learning and understanding during lessons. Through talking with pupils and marking their work, they identify quickly where misconceptions may be developing. As a result, staff amend and modify their approaches to teaching so that pupils are well supported and make progress at a very good pace throughout lessons.
- Teachers make strong connections between lessons so that learning is meaningful for pupils. Teachers also use the school environment very well to engage pupils actively in their learning.

For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson about graphs, pupils chalked lines on the playground and used a variety of objects to make pictograms from data they had collected during a physical education lesson.

- Occasionally, however, teaching is good rather than outstanding because the planned task for more able pupils does not challenge them or extend their learning enough. As a result, they do not consistently make rapid and sustained progress in all lessons.
- Teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils' learning, progress and behaviour. They place great importance on the development of personal and learning skills. For example, the school teaches pupils the meaning of the words 'resourceful' and 'resilient'. Pupils who show resourceful behaviour and resilient attitudes are praised and rewarded, which motivates them to become more independent learners.
- Staff make very effective use of the school's chosen sign and symbol communication systems to support pupils who need extra help with reading.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- A culture of promoting rights, responsibilities and respect forms the basis of everything the school does. Bullying is rare and dealt with highly effectively by staff. Pupils show that they have, for their age and level of development, a comprehensive understanding about what these words mean.
- The school's target and reward system is very well understood by pupils. Individualised targets, using the language of rights, responsibilities and respect, are reviewed with staff at the end of each day. Pupils reflect honestly on their achievements and accept both the rewards and the consequences of their behaviour with equally good grace.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and enjoy their lessons. Their parents are mostly in strong agreement. Pupils almost always have very positive attitudes to learning and conduct themselves very well around the school.
- Staff understand pupils' special educational needs comprehensively and are skilled in managing their behaviour. They work in a planned way to ensure that, when a pupil occasionally shows behavioural difficulties, they respond consistently and ensure the learning of other pupils is not disrupted. The school's monitoring of individual pupils with specific social, emotional and behavioural needs clearly demonstrates that there is significant improvement over time.
- Pupils' attendance to school has continued to improve well and is now better than the national average for primary schools. This is because the school has very effective systems for supporting parents. For example, the school's family worker provides advice about pupils' bedtime routines which helps them be ready for school in the morning. Pupils are usually punctual to school and lessons.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher set very high expectations for the quality of teaching and support in lessons. Together with the governing body, they make frequent and regular checks on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and development. The school's systems for monitoring teachers' planning, the delivery of lessons and pupils' progress over time are highly effective.
- School leaders use monitoring information extremely well to devise insightful plans for improvement. Their accurate judgements mean that areas for development are identified in detail. Action is taken swiftly to provide highly relevant training and support for teachers.
- All staff are exceptionally clear about the part they play in continuing to make the school an excellent one. They respond very positively to the training and support they are given. For example, recent training to improve the effectiveness of mathematics teaching has already been implemented by staff, who were keen to use the different strategies that they had learned to

help pupils understand better how to use and apply their basic number skills.

- Responsibility for school leadership is shared very well between members of the small staff team. Teachers work in curriculum teams to plan learning which gives pupils a broad and balanced experience and provides excellent opportunities for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers remain individually responsible and accountable for the progress made by pupils in their classes.
- Parents receive very good support from the school. They receive guidance on how to extend their children's learning at home. Where necessary, parents are given extremely effective advice and support to help improve their children's attendance.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this outstanding school.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils' well-being are comprehensive and meet current requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body provides school leaders with strong support and rigorous challenge. Governors' work is highly focused on pupils' progress. They make a significant contribution to the school's checks on how well it is doing and the improvement plans that are proposed by school leaders. Senior leaders and teachers with key responsibilities are regularly held to account at meetings of the governing body. Members of the governing body satisfy themselves, by asking detailed and probing questions and looking carefully at the school's documentation, that the actions taken by school staff are well reasoned and are having a very positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. They have, for example, a comprehensive knowledge of how pupil premium funding has been spent and how this has supported the group of pupils who are entitled to it. They also ensure that there is a strong relationship between teachers' pay and their performance.

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	116604
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	403791

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Louise Waldron
Headteacher	Christine Gayler
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 June 2010
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