

Northern Junior Community School

Richmond Rise, Portchester, Fareham PO16 8DG

Inspection dates	10–11 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher and head of school drive improvements strongly and successfully. Expectations of everyone are high. Staff enjoy the challenge and support offered by leaders and morale is high.
- Weaknesses at the time of the last inspection, for example in mathematics teaching and learning, have been tackled successfully.
- Outcomes for all groups of pupils are good. Gaps between the achievements of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and others continue to close. This is because every pupil's learning needs are known and teachers respond to them quickly and effectively.
- Teaching is good because all staff benefit from good-quality training. Teachers enjoy working closely together on developing new and better ways of helping pupils to learn well.
- Pupils feel safe and are very well cared for. Staff are attentive to their social and welfare needs and respond rapidly and effectively to support anyone who needs support.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are keen learners and take real pleasure from being in school and working with their teachers and each other.
- Governors are well informed about the strengths and development needs of the school and play an active part in its development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The systems introduced to track pupils' progress in the new national curriculum do not yet highlight the progress of all groups of pupils.
- Some parents are not closely enough involved in the work of the school to be able to support their child's learning well.
- Some pupils' attention occasionally lapses. Chatting slows work output sometimes.
- Governors' oversight of how the four strands of fundamental British values are promoted in the curriculum is under-developed. They have not yet evaluated the impact of this work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Support all pupils to make outstanding progress in all aspects of their work, by:
 - making sure that systems to monitor outcomes emphasise the progress being made by all groups of pupils including those eligible for the pupil premium, pupils with special educational needs and disability and the most able
 - eliminating instances of pupils' inattention and lapses in concentration in lessons
 - enabling all parents to play a significant part in supporting their child's learning.

- Improve governors' oversight and evaluation of pupils' learning about fundamental British values.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The executive headteacher and the head of school provide strong leadership to the school. They have high expectations of staff and pupils and offer constructive challenge and good support for everyone to contribute successfully.
- Staff morale is very high. Teachers and support staff enjoy working at the school and show pride in the way in which it has improved since the previous inspection. One represented the views of many by saying, 'I love working here', and another added, 'This is a fantastic place for children to learn.'
- Leaders monitor the quality of work in classrooms frequently and usefully. They undertake formal lesson observations several times each year to manage the performance of teachers, and more frequent 'drop-ins' when checks are made on the implementation of new ways of teaching or learning.
- Because senior staff are in lessons often and track the development of teaching and learning closely, they are able to provide well-timed and very relevant training. Teachers and learning support assistants enjoy developing new approaches and use a number of ways, including making short video clips of teaching and learning, to share good and outstanding practice.
- All staff have a responsibility for a specific subject. They contribute very well to the monitoring of standards and help to provide training and develop subject expertise.
- The school has introduced a new system this year to record pupils' achievements in line with the demands of the new national curriculum. Assessments of how well pupils are doing are made several times in the year. The information obtained is collated and used to keep a close eye on the extent to which individuals, classes and groups of pupils are reaching the expected standards. This system does not readily offer the deep insights into the progress being made by key groups from their various starting points required by teachers, school leaders and governors. Nevertheless, teachers know their pupils very well and keep a close eye on ensuring that individuals are challenged appropriately and are learning well.
- Leaders are well aware of the need to ensure that assessments of pupils' standards are reliable. They regularly test the quality of their judgements of pupils' work against those of colleagues in a number of local schools to ensure that they are accurate. Good work undertaken as part of a Challenge Project with several other schools, and the local authority also maintains the quality of assessment practice in the school.
- The strong culture of checking and evaluating the quality of the school's work enables leaders to make accurate judgements of its effectiveness in all key aspects. The self-evaluation documentation provided to governors and the local authority is useful though it lacks some detail about pupils' current achievements.
- Because they know and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses clearly, leaders produce useful plans for improvement. Key priorities are identified clearly and there are regular evaluations of the impact of actions taken. However, these evaluations are not yet brought together so that everyone can have an up-to-date overview of the extent of the progress being made.
- Pupils experience learning in a broad range of subjects and topics each term, such as design and technology, art, music and science, and are currently taking part in a national project growing space seeds. Attractive displays in the corridors capture the excitement of their experiences. There is an appropriate concentration on mathematics, reading and writing; special attention has been given to the needs of older pupils to catch up on previously slower learning in these subjects.
- The school promotes all aspects of fundamental British values throughout all year groups. The strong emphasis on equality of opportunity is apparent in the way in which pupils learn about other cultures and religions in assemblies and in lessons. They are taught about how people from different backgrounds can be different and how to respect and celebrate these differences. Discrimination is not tolerated. Older pupils have a well-developed grasp of the principles of democracy and the process of voting.
- Leaders have made excellent use of the opportunities of being federated with Northern Infant School. Many policies and practices have been aligned across the schools and there is now a significant and useful exchange of ideas and information between staff to support the continuity of learning from Reception Year to Year 6. Several parents made a point of telling inspectors how good transition arrangements are now between Years 2 and 3. Learning throughout Year 3 is faster because of this.
- The school makes good use of the physical education (PE) and sport premium. It is spent to good effect on resources for the teaching of athletics, dance and games activities, training for staff and to fund after-school sports clubs. This funding is driving increased participation in sporting activities and the broadening of the range of opportunities. For example, pupils can now take part in tri-golf competitions, girls' football and netball.

- The pupil premium is used well by the school. Expenditure includes provision for individual and small-group intervention work in mathematics, reading and writing, additional staff for in-class support and online home learning resources and to subsidise trips and visits for those eligible. Leaders and governors monitor the impact of this expenditure well and quite rightly associate it with the steady closing of gaps in achievement between this group of pupils and others.
- The school is a welcoming and friendly place for parents. Many commented directly to inspectors and through Parent View that communications are good and that they value being able to have formal or brief informal meetings with their child's class teacher or senior leaders when necessary. Several attend workshops the school runs to inform them about aspects of its work and some play a significant part in the 'Reading Heroes' scheme. Levels of parental satisfaction with the school's work, including homework and the management of concerns, are justifiably high. Leaders are aware that there are a small number of parents, however, who are not as happy with their dealings with the school. Some are not confident in supporting their child to read or practise number work at home. Leaders acknowledge that they could do more to reach out to these parents and involve them more closely in the school's work.
- The local authority provides very good support for the school. A designated officer keeps in regular contact and closely monitors the effectiveness of leaders' responses to the issues raised at the previous inspection and how well pupils are learning currently. Checks undertaken on these visits are rigorous and useful to the school. The local authority has provided significant and high-quality additional support for the development of mathematics. The school has used all of this valuable support very well. Its frequency has diminished recently because the local authority agrees with leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and has understandably deemed it a low priority for support and intervention.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's work. They visit regularly and often check the progress being made against the school improvement plan and the subject action plans. Governors take special interest in how good teaching is and oversee the quality of performance management processes closely, testing the rigour of leaders' judgements appropriately thoroughly when it comes to awarding pay rises.
 - Most governors have specific responsibilities and support the school by checking the quality of policies and practices in aspects of the school's work such as health and safety, safeguarding and the management of the school's finances. Governors oversee how well pupils are learning by using the information in the new achievement monitoring system. They monitor the standards pupils are reaching in all classes in mathematics, reading and writing and especially how well pupils eligible for the pupil premium and those with special educational needs or disability are doing. A lack of headline information about the amount of progress made by key groups from the start of the year or the start of the key stage compromises their capacity to offer very high levels of challenge. Governors have not yet evaluated how well pupils are taught about fundamental British values.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks on the suitability of all adults who work with pupils are rigorous and good records are kept of these checking procedures. Child protection training for all staff is regular and of good quality. Some leaders and governors have had training in the prevention of extremism and radicalisation. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are confident about their responsibilities and their duty of care. They exchange relevant information and any concerns quickly and in appropriate ways between themselves and with all appropriate external agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is consistently good. It drives the securely good learning of all groups of pupils.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good as a result of well-planned and organised training over recent years. Teachers undertake joint lesson planning activities in which lesson plans are established, delivered, evaluated and then passed on to a colleague for the same process to happen. This encourages collaborative work and a spirit of critical appraisal of the impact of teaching on learning. The new national curriculum was used very well as the stimulus to strengthen teachers' in-depth knowledge of all topics so they could raise expectations of pupils' achievements and develop new ways of supporting learning.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate and reliable because of careful checks between different teachers' interpretations of standards and due to the school's good work with others locally to compare assessment judgements.
- Teachers comment usefully on pupils' work. They give praise when it is due and also provide pointers for how it could be improved. The guidance given to the development of writing skills is particularly effective

because teachers require pupils to edit their own work often and thoroughly and then contribute to this process at key points. Writing skills are therefore learned through a process of thoughtful and steady reflection. The use of a range of books by different authors is also a good stimulus to developing pupils' writing.

- Reading is encouraged as a fun, social and regular activity. The rewards system for reading regularly is liked by pupils; they feel that it motivates them. Pupils are using phonics (letters and sounds that they make) techniques more successfully because of an emphasis on these skills, which had previously been under-developed.
- The nature and the quality of mathematics teaching have changed significantly since the previous inspection. Teachers now emphasise mathematical thinking and reasoning and require pupils to puzzle through mathematics problems for themselves and develop more fluency in their basic skills in the process. Gaps in the knowledge of Year 6 pupils are still apparent but they are becoming more confident mathematicians because of their teachers' whole-hearted adoption of the new national curriculum.
- Work is adapted well to suit the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers often check on pupils' progress in lessons and offer challenge and support when it is needed. Switching between work with different levels of challenge is encouraged when it is appropriate.
- Learning support assistants offer good support to pupils. Several encourage the development of thinking skills, check understanding and model good approaches to learning by asking probing questions.
- Teachers maintain high standards and expect as many pupils as possible to reach the expected standard by the end of each school year. The school is currently prioritising working with several other local schools to establish clarity around what represents very high levels of achievement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school serves a catchment area which is very diverse in terms of pupils' backgrounds and social and emotional needs. All staff maintain high levels of vigilance around the welfare of pupils. Concerns are shared appropriately and acted upon promptly. Training in all aspects of safeguarding is of high quality and is updated regularly.
- The needs of a small number of pupils with complex or significant needs are met through high levels of care, thought and sensitivity. Some pupils benefit from support from the local authority outreach centre and from adoption counselling. Several parents commented directly to inspectors and through Parent View how grateful they were to staff for specific and highly effective support and understanding from the school.
- Pupils are well aware of how to keep themselves safe online. They confidently and proudly told inspectors the rules and guidelines the school had taught them.
- Links with outside agencies are good. Joint responses and referrals are managed with appropriate regard to the urgency of specific situations. There is good follow-up by the school to all inter-agency work.
- Some of the pupil premium grant is used to fund a family support worker who works across the junior and infant schools. Their work helps to develop good links between home and school and can provide rapid and effective support for individual pupils and their families when it is needed. There is very good-quality support for the development of emotional literacy in the school through well-trained staff and a dedicated room.
- The school is very aware of the particular needs sometimes associated with pupils who come from service families. Teachers work with these families closely to ensure that pupils are happy and able to continue to learn well while a parent is away from home for an extended time. Special recent provision includes the organisation of online communications with parents who are working away from home, funded through a charity grant organised by the school.
- Systems to monitor attendance and punctuality are very effective. This results in attendance that is above the national average. The vast majority of pupils are punctual for school in the morning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and the vast majority want to help to maintain it as a happy and fun place to learn. There are many opportunities for them to play a part in its work, including as members of the school council, being appointed as ambassadors to greet visitors, 'IT angels', sports leaders at lunchtimes, playground buddies and librarians. Pupils enjoy sharing some responsibilities, for example ringing the bell at the start of playtime.

- The vast majority of pupils spoken with, including those who returned questionnaires, said that bullying is very rare. Pupils feel that staff always help and make sure that situations do not get out of hand. They are confident that they can report any worries or concerns to their teachers and that they will make things better.
- The use of the PE and sport premium to fund lunchtime sports coaches has contributed to the virtual elimination of minor disciplinary problems at this time. There are now significantly fewer 'red points' awarded at such times because pupils benefit from taking part and staying busy and from the social skills they learn by having to live up to the high standards of sporting behaviour expected.
- The use of fixed-term exclusions was above average some years ago but the use of this sanction has declined and exclusions are now a rare event. A very small number of pupils have been excluded over the last year and the school considered the use of this sanction very carefully each time before using it.
- Occasionally, a few pupils lose interest or cannot maintain their concentration in lessons. At such times their work output slows and they can lose the thread of the learning. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour is generally good in lessons and that teachers respond well to any minor problems or silliness. However these minor incidents can happen in lessons throughout the day and they distract pupils from their work.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils are making good progress in all aspects of their work. As a result standards are now high and learning is enjoyed and valued. One pupil said to inspectors, 'Teachers make learning fun and make it so we want to learn.'
- The average progress made by pupils has been lower than national averages in some subjects over recent years. The achievements of pupils in Year 6 in mathematics were particularly disappointing in 2015. This was despite these pupils having made a lot of progress over their last two years, catching up quickly on previously very poor learning.
- Standards in mathematics are now securely good with pupils showing confidence in their abilities and resilience in their learning. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were observed scaling up and down the ingredients of a recipe to make different numbers of cakes. They did this thoughtfully and, for the most part, successfully because their confidence with basic number work is good enough to avoid them becoming distracted by getting lost in calculations. Younger pupils successfully use practical ways of helping them to solve problems, such as using fraction trees on the working wall. Many have developed the capacity to use useful mental images to help them solve problems.
- Many pupils' writing is rich and interesting. Good written work is produced which demonstrates pupils' good technical understanding of grammar, punctuation and sentence structure. This technical expertise is brought to life through the close association of writing and reading. Pupils enjoy the stimulus of writing for a particular audience or for a specific purpose. Reading skills have improved significantly since the previous inspection and the enjoyment of books and reading across several subjects and topics, as well as fiction books, is now an important part of many pupils' lives.
- There are no appreciable differences between the progress made by key groups, including pupils from forces families, and others in the school. Gaps in the standards reached by pupils eligible for the pupil premium and others were low in reading and writing by the end of key stage 2 in 2015 and remain small in most year groups currently. These gaps in mathematics had been large in 2015 and before but are much smaller in the current Year 6 and in other year groups. This is due to a significant concentration on the needs of individuals, frequent monitoring of their achievements and teaching that is now skilled in responding to pupils' learning needs.
- Pupils who achieved high standards at the end of key stage 1 are monitored closely to ensure that they are making at least good progress. The quality of provision for them is sufficient to ensure they make good progress in their learning, but an occasional lack of sufficiently adapted work sometimes means that they do not make excellent progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs and disability make good progress. This is because the special educational needs coordinator has a keen sense of what good progress means for each of the pupils she oversees. She works closely with classroom teachers to ensure that they are receiving the right kind of challenges and holds learning support assistants closely to account for the quality of their work with these pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	115935
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10012262

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Rayson
Headteacher	Carol Walters
Telephone number	02392 370 613
Website	http://www.northern-jun.hants.sch.uk/
Email address	adminoffice@northern-jun.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 March 2014

Information about this school

- Northern Junior Community School is smaller than the average-size primary school.
- The school is part of a federation with Northern Infant School. The two schools have the same governing body.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and disability is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is average.
- Some pupils come from service family backgrounds.
- The school works closely with Pioneer Teaching Alliance, run by a local teaching school, Harrison Primary School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook nine lesson observations involving visits to every class and the work of all teachers and all year groups. Some of these observations were undertaken jointly with senior staff. Year 6 pupils were involved in national curriculum tests at the time of the inspection and inspectors respected their and their teachers' need to focus on them. Some detailed scrutinies of pupils' work were undertaken.
- Inspectors met with senior staff, governors, other staff and groups of pupils and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The school's development planning and self-evaluation documents, policies and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.
- The 32 responses to Parent View were taken into account along with 20 written comments. Inspectors spoke with several parents at the gate at the start of morning school.
- Inspectors also took into account the views of the 26 staff and 20 pupils who returned questionnaires. They scrutinised the school's own surveys of parents' views.

Inspection team

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