

Niton Primary School

School Lane, Niton, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 2BP

Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders demonstrate an absolute belief that all pupils deserve the very best. This relentless drive for improvement is shared by all.
- Leaders have a realistic picture of the school's strengths. They use staff training effectively to address weaknesses. Teaching has improved.
- Middle leaders have strong subject knowledge and a clear understanding of how to support colleagues to improve.
- Teachers guide pupils well so they learn new skills and can present their work well. Teachers' effective questioning helps pupils to reflect and deepen their understanding.
- Outcomes are improving in most year groups. Nevertheless, some middle-attaining pupils could achieve even more if teachers used assessment precisely to adapt pupils' work.
- Children make a super start to their education in the early years. The safe, bright environment engages children's interests well.
- There are missed opportunities beyond the development of basic skills to improve outcomes for the most able children in the early years.
- Staff are acutely aware of the difficulties faced by some pupils and their families and are proactive in addressing these needs.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They take their lead from the adults in school, who are very good role models.
- The curriculum is varied and offers pupils exciting opportunities to learn, especially in science. However, a few teachers lack confidence in computing.
- Governors work effectively across the federation. They regularly monitor the school's performance so that they are well informed and spend funding wisely.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to implement effective school plans to improve teaching at key stage 1 in mathematics so that middle-attaining pupils can reach even higher standards, by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan challenges which help these pupils to grapple with problems to deepen their understanding
 - check on how well these pupils are learning so that they can move their work on faster
 - assess the changing needs of these pupils swiftly and adapt the guidance they give them.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:
 - pinpoint and assess the achievement of the most able pupils in the early years, across all the areas of learning, to inform incisive improvement plans
 - strengthen teachers' subject knowledge of computing so that adults can help pupils apply skills confidently across subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have put effective training and support in place which has significantly improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Parents overwhelmingly value this drive and commitment to improvement. This view is summed up by the comment: 'The staff are dedicated and this shines through in every aspect of school life.'
- Senior leaders have an accurate picture of the school's performance. They use their strong links with schools beyond the federation as the basis for their judgements. Their plans for further improvement of the school are closely linked to this evaluation. Leaders have strengthened systems for monitoring pupils' progress such as through their 'golden ticket' pupil sampling strategy, which provides them with incisive information about pupils' achievement. This is ensuring that teachers are held closely to account not only for pupils' outcomes, but also for their subject leadership and their role in raising standards across the school.
- The management of teachers' performance is rigorous, but highly supportive. This has a direct impact on the improvements in the quality of teaching and the faster progress pupils are making. Staff appreciate this guidance and most are eager to learn more.
- Middle leaders are passionate about pupils' academic progress as well as ensuring that the school does everything in its power to broaden pupils' experiences of the wider world. They make an effective contribution to school improvement. All subject leaders are sharpening their action plans so that pupils are expected to apply skills across subjects, such as the use of technology in science.
- Staff's determination to ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of basic literacy and numeracy skills has been fundamental in raising attainment. Pupils have well-established opportunities to apply these skills through most other subjects, such as art. For example, the atmospheric pencil sketches by Year 5 pupils skilfully encouraged pupils to reflect on the poem 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes. The class considered how effectively the poet engaged their emotions, while developing their pencil use to add depth to their pictures. However, other areas of the curriculum are not yet as strong. Despite recent training in computing skills, leaders identify that further work is required so that pupils apply taught skills well in other subjects.
- Leaders' design of the curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, and a strong moral code underpins the school's values. Displays celebrate pupils' achievements, such as when they attended a local parish council meeting where they presented their work on the United Nations convention. Senior leaders have created a culture in which pupils show tolerance and respect in their day-to-day work and, as a result, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The use of the additional funds provided through the physical education (PE) and sport premium is effective. Pupils have numerous opportunities to broaden their talents, participating in clubs such as Taekwondo. In an assembly, a parent inspired younger pupils' interest in cricket. Staff and pupils competed together rehearsing basic skills while the audience passionately called out 'Howzat!' Participation rates in sport are high across the school and everyone is rightly proud of the school's awards and successes in

regular competitions such as cross-country running, tag rugby and indoor athletics. During the inspection Year 6 pupils practised their batting and fielding skills under the direction of a coach, while others jogged at lunchtime, demonstrating self-motivation to undertake the Golden Mile Island Challenge.

- Pupils' learning and life experiences are enriched by numerous visits, visitors, after-school clubs and special events. For example, pupils show resilience when mastering the dexterity needed to crochet or play the trombone. Other pupils enthusiastically recalled their visits to the Niton lighthouse and the rock pools at Castlehaven, which have enriched their scientific study.
- Leaders track the emotional and academic progress of particularly vulnerable pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged or looked after, in considerable detail. They act quickly to minimise disruptions to their learning, or underachievement. Funding is used wisely, and as a result, the majority of these pupils achieve well from their starting points. Pastoral care is evident in leaders' determination to source wider services recommended to them, such as the use of specialist play and equine therapy, to secure pupils' well-being.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the survey are supportive of the school. They recognise the effective work being done by leaders and governors and are rightly proud of the clear improvement in the school. This widely shared view is expressed in one parent's comment: 'My child is happy and well balanced. It is a supportive and caring environment which is a great asset to the local community.' Leaders value the committed work of the school's parent association, which secures a shared and productive partnership within the school's culture.
- Staff appreciate the guidance provided by the local authority's consultants for English and mathematics. This effective partnership has helped to build staff's knowledge and focus their attention on the areas of weakness. This concerted effort has led to successful improvements. Leaders are rightly confident that they have built a secure set of skills across the wider staff team, who are now able to apply this learning and sustain improvement.
- Leaders monitor the school's performance regularly and in depth. However, their evaluations of what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve further in the early years are not as sharp as they are in other areas.

Governance of the school

- Governors demonstrate an aspirational vision for the school and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and its areas for development. They receive detailed information about the progress pupils are making, which senior leaders present in an honest and straightforward way. Governors regularly test out the accuracy of this information and monitor progress towards the school priorities. For example, they evaluated the impact of recent training in mathematics. They are strengthening clerking of their meetings to ensure that the recording of their discussions and decisions is precise. Governors' minutes need to reflect the levels of strategic work they undertake so that parents are better informed.
- Governors are proactive in ensuring they have a suitable spread of knowledge and skills, and have recruited new governors wisely. This enables them to challenge leaders

and hold them to account with confidence. Their work across the federation is improving staff development opportunities and training, so that best practice can be shared to improve teaching and quickly raise standards.

- Governors carefully check to ensure that the primary PE and sport premium, and pupil premium funding, are spent effectively to improve provision and outcomes for pupils. Their understanding of safeguarding is secure and they are robust in their monitoring duties.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff have a detailed understanding of how pupils may be vulnerable and know what to do if they have a concern about pupils' safety or welfare. Such reported incidents are rare. However, leaders are not complacent and present case scenarios for them to consider, and debate national concerns to ensure that staff's vigilance remains high. However, the culture of care and protection extends beyond that of fulfilling statutory requirements, with pupils and adults showing a high level of respect and thoughtfulness towards each other. Warm relationships, and a sense that everyone knows everyone and plays an active part in each other's welfare, are tangible.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and have a secure understanding of the dangers associated with social media and the internet. An adult recalled the recent warning she had received from a pupil, when a pop-up appeared on her work screen. This illustrates the growing confidence of pupils to identify risks as a result of recent training.
- Pupils are supported well to understand, and contribute to, campaigns in the locality to improve road safety. Older pupils appreciate their opportunities to learn about road safety and develop skills during the Bikeability lessons. They applied these during the 'Big Pedal' community effort last term.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The majority of teachers' subject knowledge is strong in English and mathematics as a result of effective training. They teach new concepts in logical, carefully planned sequences and their clear explanations expertly reflect their sound knowledge. Adults instruct pupils well and use questioning effectively, notably to support those needing to catch up or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Adults across the school manage the behaviour of pupils very well and this helps to create the positive climate for learning that is seen in all classes. Pupils are eager and enthusiastic participants in lessons, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds. Pupils' attitudes to their learning rarely slip, even when the work set for them, in a few lessons, is not as challenging as it could be.
- In Reception and Years 1 and 2 the teaching of phonics is matched closely to pupils' abilities. This enables pupils to build on their prior knowledge and, consequently, a number of pupils are working at levels above those expected for their age. Pupils understand the correct terminology because of teachers' and teaching assistants' own secure subject knowledge. In key stage 2 adults are strengthening pupils'

comprehension skills effectively. Teachers have expertly analysed pupils' errors so that they know how to help their pupils infer. Pupils can now apply their new skills more consistently across the curriculum to help them enquire.

- Leaders' sharp focus on developing pupils' basic literacy skills has clearly helped pupils of all abilities to improve their writing. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are taught effectively and pupils apply these skills well in their writing. A focus on developing and enriching pupils' vocabulary is improving pupils' writing. For example, a Year 6 pupil wrote, 'the tears of pain cascaded down my papery-thin cheeks'. Teachers demand high standards of presentation for all written work in pupils' books across the school. Most pupils have improved their handwriting as a result of these high expectations.
- The adaptations that leaders have made to the writing curriculum, in an attempt to engage boys more effectively, are beginning to have a positive effect. Boys are now more willing writers, better equipped to write accurately and for longer periods, when the opportunities arise. Teachers pay close attention to boys' spelling and grammatical skills since, in a few classes, achievement for a minority of boys is not as strong as that of girls. This monitoring and precise intervention is helping them to catch up.
- In a Year 5 lesson, systematic modelling by adults inspired pupils to formulate a balanced argument in response to the enquiry, 'Do aliens make crop circles?' Pupils confidently organised their writing, sifting through 'for' and 'against' points to add to the debate. Pupils who needed more help were guided well by the presentation of the task, as it helped them to organise their thinking and summarise for a conclusion. Adults skilfully refined these pupils' ideas. Others, capable of working independently, word processed their writing, capturing the interest of the reader well. The teacher set high expectations and demanded the application of technical features, and the work was displayed on walls. Teachers checked regularly that pupils' efforts were productive.
- Pupils are keen mathematicians. Pupils' outcomes in mathematics have improved substantially this year, in particular at key stage 2, as a result of improved teaching and learning. Teachers now plan lessons that are well structured. Pupils regularly practise and apply their learning, and have increased opportunities to use reasoning to explain what they have done and why. This is more evident in the books of older pupils. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils displayed a systematic approach in their reasoning, and confidently explained their methods to solve two-step problems. They reflected that they had many useful strategies to help them, including well-presented and helpful guidance around the room, and past work to refer back to in their books.
- Teachers provide pupils with numerous opportunities to carry out scientific enquiries and investigations. Displays celebrate regular opportunities to conduct practical experiments and refine observation skills, for example when studying the capillary action in flowers. Older pupils apply their writing skills well to record their scientific skills systematically. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils puzzled over scientific evidence of the past that shaped people's views of whether the earth was spherical or flat. Adults' questioning developed the precision of pupils' inferences, and encouraged them to reflect on the different types of evidence. Pupils listened attentively to their classmates, demonstrating their respect for each other's contributions. They were able to negotiate and agree an emerging, collective view.
- Homework is regular and supports the learning which takes place in the classroom. Older pupils are clear about the purpose of homework and the basic skills it encourages

them to practise. Younger pupils read regularly and enthuse about their books. Exciting opportunities at school motivate them to undertake their own research, for example when pupils created fairground rides or vehicles in design technology lessons.

- Some teachers skilfully use assessment to pinpoint, assess and prioritise their work with pupils, so that the productivity and engagement of all pupils remains high. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to move flexibly between adult-led and independent working groups, as their needs change. Year 6 pupils value the use of an 'honesty card' so that they can check their work and make changes if necessary, for example when checking their mathematical calculations. Younger pupils are responding to new methods such as 'carpet club', where they know they can return to work with a teacher if they need more guidance.
- However, a few teachers do not always assess the changing needs of some pupils quickly enough, or adapt their work. As a result, feedback is sometimes too slow to clarify or extend pupils' thinking and the progress of these pupils slows. This is most evident in the current teaching of mathematics at key stage 1. Leaders' analysis has identified this as a weaker feature and so they have shaped their training plans to begin to address this.
- Teachers have high aspirations for most pupils, although a few teachers' expectations of what some pupils can achieve could be even higher. For these pupils, teachers are not sufficiently adept at identifying pupils' next steps to ensure that they are fully challenged and to deepen their understanding. At times, these pupils listen to guidance they do not need, or review their own work imprecisely. On other occasions, they do not always grapple with tasks which challenge them so that they can sharpen their reasoning. Leaders' monitoring confirms this weakness.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good
- Pupils feel very safe and cared for and those spoken to were unanimous in their views that they are proud of their school and enjoy attending. Parents appreciate this and rightly reflect this in their commentary to inspectors. One quote captures this sentiment well: 'I think Niton Primary stands out for the way the children look out for each other and work together. The school has a real sense of community.'
- Pupils are encouraged to take decisions and play an active part in school life. For instance, during the inspection the Spencer Bear representatives debated ways to publish the school's five values. They compared the merits of different poster designs, updating banners and writing acrostic poems. They were skilfully guided by adults, to reflect and shape their collective ideas and build on each other's contributions sensitively.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying, including online bullying, and understand the need to treat everyone with respect and tolerance. Pupils report that incidents of bullying almost never happen, but if issues do arise, they trust that staff will sort them out very quickly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good
- Around the school and in class, pupils consistently conduct themselves well. The school is a harmonious community where everyone is respected and made to feel welcome. Adults supervise pupils sensitively and are on hand if required. However, pupils develop independence well and are encouraged to solve their own disputes and help each other.
- Pupils nominate each other and staff for acts of kindness, which are plentiful. As a group of Year 6 pupils unanimously agreed, 'everyone is kind and friendly', before adding 'and we all know everyone'. They appreciate being presented with merit awards.
- Play areas, including the school field, are a haven of fun and the buzz of activity is audible. Pupils select from a wide range of equipment to practise sports skills and burn off energy. They value these opportunities to keep fit and healthy. Groups of pupils develop balance and coordination skills using the agility trail, while others compete with evident determination but good sportsmanship in football, or gambol down grassy slopes squealing with fun!
- Pupils are inspired by regular visits from parents who share their professions, such as fire officers and dentists, to inspire pupils' career aspirations. These encourage them to develop courage, one of the school's values, and to make a positive contribution to the island's community. The 'This girl can' display encourages girls' determination to succeed in sport and typifies the school's culture, which inspires and celebrates all forms of achievement.
- Most pupils attend school regularly so that they can benefit from the good education on offer. Senior leaders work closely with families who need more support, and if required will quickly seek advice from other services. They challenge those parents whose children's attendance is too low. A few families resist this well-targeted and appropriate support.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The proportion of children leaving Reception with a good level of development is rising and remains above the national average. The most able children attained well in some areas of learning, in particular in the basic skills and most notably in reading, in 2016. Assessments and observations of children in class indicate that more of these children will attain well in mathematics this year than in the past.
- Key stage 1 pupils currently in the school are making good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics and build well on their previous learning. Consequently, attainment remains above the national average throughout key stage 1. The most recently published national results, in 2016, identified that some pupils did not attain as well as they should in reading; however, this does not reflect the standards that current pupils are achieving.

- The teaching of phonics is effective and this has had a positive impact on pupils' past achievement as well as on pupils' current outcomes. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of Year 1 continues to be above the national average.
- In 2016, the published outcomes for pupils in key stage 2 in the combined subjects of reading, writing and mathematics were above the national average. However, attainment was weaker in mathematics, which was attributable to the slower progress made by some middle-attaining pupils. Leaders have addressed this weakness in Year 6. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils of middle ability are making better progress because teachers set work that is now better suited to their needs. Most of the current pupils, across the school, are on track to achieve well, including the most able pupils.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. This reflects leaders' close scrutiny of disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and the levels of accountability leaders place on class teachers. In 2016, these pupils attained well across the school. Current pupils in the school are achieving well relative to their starting points, in spite of a few having complex barriers to learning to overcome.
- Most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. In many lessons, inspectors observed effective and well-planned support and intervention to support pupils who found learning difficult. Individual plans for these pupils show that leaders and external specialists undertake regular reviews to ensure that any barriers to learning are addressed quickly and effectively.
- Pupils across the school attain well in science and make good progress. They are supported well to develop scientific skills and also apply their writing skills well to organise and present their work, particularly in key stage 2.
- Currently middle-attaining pupils across the school are on track to reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, assessment is sometimes not used well enough by some teachers. As a result, not enough middle-attaining pupils are on track to accelerate their progress to reach the higher standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 1.

Early years provision

Good

- Strong teaching over time ensures that all children in Reception get a good start to their education, including those entitled to additional pupil premium funding. The majority of children are well prepared for Year 1. Some pupils achieve beyond the expected standard, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children feel safe because warm relationships are an overwhelmingly positive experience in Reception. Standards of behaviour are very good. Children play together confidently, show concern for each other, take turns and share the rich learning resources available to them. They make choices about what to do and have freedom to collect, move, combine or change equipment as their play develops. They keep themselves safe by considering possible risks.
- Phonics is taught well. Adults explain things carefully and promote clear speech so that children can hear and build up their knowledge of letters and the sounds they

represent, to read and write quickly such as when labelling pea plants together. Children use their knowledge of letters and sounds to write words and simple sentences. Displays celebrate purposeful opportunities to write instructions, for example for making lava lamps. One child applied their knowledge of letters and sounds to instruct others to 'por wort in the botl'.

- Children are keen to explore early mathematical concepts. They have plentiful opportunities to do this and adults guide them well by setting up carefully planned tasks. For example, when counting pumpkin seeds an adult enquired 'what would happen if I added three more?' Mathematical vocabulary promoted through sensitive play sustained this child's interest. Other children worked independently. They recorded their calculations accurately, subtracting numbers and confidently checking their work by accurately counting out runner bean seeds.
- Adults question most children well in order to encourage them to think deeply and explore their interests. An adult prompted a child to consider, 'What could it be?' when making recipes together in the mud kitchen and introduced new vocabulary to broaden the child's understanding. At times, when children are not benefiting from the guidance of adults, their achievement slows and their work is not as purposeful. This is because the prompts in the environment are not always as strong as they need to be, to guide children to progress rapidly.
- Displays capture tasks which promote enquiry and encourage children to observe carefully. Children are encouraged to talk about what happens so that they build an understanding of cause and effect, for example when investigating 'walking water' across jam jars to explore the absorption properties of materials. At other times children develop the resilience to persevere with tasks, for example building their manual dexterity to improve their handwriting skills. By threading tiny beads on to dried spaghetti and making a beanstalk tower, a child persevered well and was rightly proud of his success.
- Activities help guide parents to know what is expected of their children. The teachers view parents as an essential part of their children's development and parents feel their views and input are valued. Some parents make a good contribution to their children's learning by using the exciting news sheets for children, prompting them to learn to tie knots at home. Children proudly share with their parents what they have been learning in class.
- Transition arrangements are effective and good relationships have been established with local providers, including the pre-school that operates nearby. Leaders encourage other professionals and parents to contribute to the moderation of children's assessments from the moment children start school. This ensures that everyone knows the children's welfare needs well so they settle quickly into school life.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. At the time of the inspection, there were no breaches to statutory welfare requirements.
- The early years curriculum captures children's interests well. There is a variety of activities on offer as a result of leaders' recent investment in the outdoor provision and shelter. Teachers plan topics and lessons that inspire and engage most children. On a few occasions, adults do not adapt activities in some areas of learning to ensure that the most able children can extend their learning without direct adult intervention.

- Leaders' effective actions have ensured that children's attainment in technology is improving this year. However, adults' assessments confirm that children's achievement in some areas, such as being imaginative and exploring media and materials, is weaker than that of others nationally. Leaders do not analyse all their assessment information well enough to shape their plans so that they can take decisive action to address any underachievement.

School details

Unique reference number	118165
Local authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	10032850

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Lovell
Headteacher	Duncan Mills
Telephone number	01983 730209
Website	www.nitonprimary.org/
Email address	mailto:head@niton@iow.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school joined a federation with The Bay Church of England Primary School in June 2016. The executive headteacher works across both schools.
- Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are taught in single-age classes. Reception-age children attend full time.
- The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- In 2016 the school met the national floor standards, which are the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics

by the end of Year 6.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups; some of these visits were made jointly with the executive headteacher or the assistant headteacher. Pupils' learning was observed in all year groups and an inspector also attended an assembly presented by a parent.
- Inspectors observed the teaching of early reading skills and listened to pupils reading in Years 1, 2 and 6. Inspectors talked to pupils about their school, the clubs they attended and visits they had taken part in. They also considered the views of 37 pupils who completed the survey. They looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, subject leaders, the special needs coordinator, representatives of the governing body and the local authority. They considered the views of the 11 staff who completed the online survey and a further 13 views submitted by hand to the inspectors.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start and end of the school day. They took account of the 72 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and one letter received during the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including: the school's own self-evaluation of current performance and plans for improvement; the school's most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils; information relating to the safeguarding of pupils; the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils; and minutes from meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

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