

Newtown Soberton Infant School

Church Road, Newtown, Fareham, Hampshire PO17 6LJ

Inspection dates

22–23 May 2018

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	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a good school. Recently, changes in staffing at this very small school have caused instability. Leaders' actions to recruit capable and ambitious staff have halted a decline in standards. The school is now going from strength to strength.
- Leaders recognise the potential of the staff and provide excellent support for staff at all levels. Middle leaders are given significant opportunities to extend their experience and skills.
- Pupils are taught to be kind, resilient and independent. They behave well in lessons and on the playground, thinking carefully about the impact of their actions on others.
- Teachers use detailed assessment systems and subject knowledge to set work at just the right level for pupils. When progress dips, teachers and teaching assistants notice quickly, offering useful support so that children catch up.
- A high proportion of pupils make strong progress and attain the expected standards by the end of key stage 1. Nevertheless, weak teaching in the past has hindered the progress of the most able pupils.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works closely with teachers to identify, plan for and support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. These pupils make strong progress.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of experiences and opportunities that the school offers them. They use their well-developed English and mathematics skills in a range of subjects to solve problems, record ideas and convey messages.
- High-quality teaching combined with sharp routines have revitalised learning in Reception. Pupils are highly committed to their learning and make great progress. The early years provision is outstanding.
- Governors are skilled and committed to the school. They visit the school and keep a close eye on safeguarding and pupils' attendance. Nevertheless, governors do not have a sharp understanding of how the school uses additional funding such as the pupil premium and sports premium.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of the most able pupils in reading so that greater proportions attain at a high standard.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that governors maintain a sharp focus on the use of additional funding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since taking charge of the school in 2012, the headteacher has managed significant changes in staffing. Despite challenges in recruitment at this very small school, she has developed a strong and capable team that is motivated to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders have high expectations of themselves and others. Staff share their ambition and appreciate the opportunities that they receive to improve further. The work to develop new leaders has been particularly impressive. Mentoring from senior leaders and appropriate support from local authority officers have given the phonics leader the confidence to address and reverse weaknesses in phonics teaching across the school. Consequently, the progress of previously low-attaining pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities has accelerated.
- Leaders use performance management systems effectively to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils. In recent years, the quality of teaching declined, partly due to challenges faced when recruiting teachers. Staff are now offered high-quality support from leaders, colleagues and local authority officers to improve their practice. As a result, weak teaching has been eradicated.
- Teachers analyse performance information to quickly identify pupils who fall behind. They use this information to deploy staff and resources to correct any misunderstandings or misconceptions pupils may have. Pupils are well supported and quickly catch up with their peers.
- The curriculum is well judged and interesting. Pupils undertake a wide range of trips, visits and experiences, which broaden their understanding in a range of subjects. Each curriculum topic is linked to a book or story. For example, pupils in Reception studied tempo in music, considering how they might represent the tortoise and the hare by varying the speed of their beats. A wide range of clubs encourages pupils to pursue their own interests in activities such as art, football, country dancing and cheerleading. Strong moral and ethical themes are woven into each topic, which prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- In recent years, the proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has increased in every year group. Many parents and carers choose the school for their children because of its small size and nurturing ethos. The SENCo has a detailed understanding of the needs of these pupils and works with parents and external agencies to get them the help they need. As a result, these pupils make strong progress.
- Sports premium funding has been used well to promote participation, train staff and provide additional activities for pupils to enjoy. The recent addition of the climbing apparatus has been highly effective and is used by pupils at every given opportunity, increasing their agility, strength and balance. Staff training has improved the quality of physical education teaching across the school. Consequently, all pupils receive high-quality instruction and participate in regular physical activity.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is appropriately skilled and ambitious for pupils. Governors use visits to the school to gather first-hand information on areas such as health and safety and safeguarding. When they identify weaknesses, governors evaluate the evidence well, for instance, when investigating the levels of pupils' attendance.
- The governing body does not focus sufficiently on the use of additional funding for sports or disadvantaged pupils. As a result, leaders do not receive the robust challenge and oversight they require in order to drive further improvement in the school. Governors are aware of this and are working with local authority officers to review their systems and procedures.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff receive regular training to keep them up to date with national and local safeguarding issues. They are skilled at identifying and reporting concerns. When received by leaders, referrals are dealt with quickly, and the appropriate support is put in place to help keep pupils safe from harm.
- Thorough recruitment and background checks are carried out on all staff, volunteers and regular visitors before they can work in school. All safeguarding procedures and recording systems are closely monitored by the governing body.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. In Reception, pupils learn how to evaluate risk and are rewarded for making decisions that keep them safe. Pupils know how to stay safe online and understand their responsibilities when using the internet. Pupils take their safety seriously and receive strong guidance from staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled and knowledgeable. They question pupils well to test their understanding and offer appropriate challenge or support when it is required. As a result, pupils make strong progress in lessons.
- Assessment systems allow teachers and leaders to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses quickly and efficiently. They use this information to set work at the right level for pupils. Typically, pupils settle to task quickly in lessons because they understand exactly what they need to do.
- Pupils receive useful feedback from teachers, which encourages them to proofread their work and identify improvements that they can make. This was typified in Year 2, when the teacher demonstrated how she checks her own writing, giving pupils a very good example to work from. Pupils then edited their own writing, carefully improving key aspects of their work and sensibly selecting resources from the 'help desk' and 'punctuation station' to help overcome any problems. Teachers' careful guidance, combined with pupils' independence and determination, helps pupils to make strong

progress.

- In mathematics lessons, pupils complete work that challenges them to solve problems, using their well-developed calculation skills. For example, in Year 1, pupils measured the capacity of different cups, selecting the right cup for the class bear to take on a trip and writing an explanation of their findings. Pupils enjoy and achieve well in mathematics because the work they do is interesting and challenging.
- Pupils write often and for a range of purposes. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to help pupils weave their learning in grammar, punctuation and spelling into meaningful and interesting texts. Pupils take pride in their writing and, as a result, writing is a strength across the school.
- Pupils learn to write simple code, appropriately testing and debugging their programmes to create an effective set of instructions for a computer to follow. This was exemplified in Year 1, when pupils tested instructions on their friends. One pupil noted, 'If I receive clear instructions, I can make a model. It's the same with a computer.' Pupils are well prepared for the challenges they will face in the future.
- Until recently, the quality of teaching of phonics has been inconsistent, meaning that pupils did not make strong progress in reading. Recent changes to phonics teaching have helped pupils, particularly lower-attaining pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, to catch up. Nevertheless, too few of the most able pupils read at a high standard.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are encouraged to be kind, resilient and independent. Staff teach them to consider and reflect on their decisions and, as a result, pupils are keen to impress and do the right thing.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Lessons and assemblies reflect the needs of the community by teaching children how to be seen on busy rural roads and to consider wider issues such as sun protection and water safety. Pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe online and are responsible when using electronic devices.
- Positive behaviour is rewarded and shared. Pupils earn stickers for being safe, reflecting, challenging themselves and trying their best. They share their learning in assemblies so that others can grow from their accomplishments.
- Pupils consider the moral implications of their actions. For example, they visited local woodlands, considering what they would miss if they lost this natural environment, and wrote sensitive and persuasive letters to the Forestry Commission to protest about proposed developments. Pupils possess a strong moral compass and understand that their actions impact on others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In class, pupils are well behaved and listen to their teachers. Staff and pupils share positive and respectful relationships, and this is evident in their interactions. As a result, most lessons are calm and purposeful, providing an excellent environment for learning.
- Leaders' efforts to improve attendance have been significant and effective. Systems to identify pupils whose attendance is declining are well established and used to inform bespoke plans which support families to get their children into school more regularly. This has led to a reduction in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. As a result, levels of attendance are now above the national average.
- Pupils play together well, utilising the small but exciting playground. They enjoy the opportunities to climb, play sports and build structures. Pupils feel safe and cared for and know where to go for help if they need it.
- Pupils reported that bullying is extremely rare and, when they do fall out, they are well supported to resolve their differences by the skilled and supportive staff team.
- In 2016, leaders reviewed the behaviour systems in the school having noticed an increase in low-level misbehaviour. They worked with staff to rewrite the school policy and create consistent systems between classes. Consequently, there has been an improvement in behaviour across the school.
- In a minority of classes, pupils' concentration slips when work is not closely matched to their needs. As a result, pupils lose focus and do not achieve as well as they should.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over the past three years, there has been a steady decline in the proportion of pupils who attain the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. In 2017, leaders revitalised the systems for phonics teaching, planning new, more interesting activities, training staff and developing additional resources to help pupils learn. As a result, the decline in phonics has been reversed, and the vast majority of pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard. Leaders recognise that more needs to be done to challenge the most able pupils to read at a high standard.
- Pupils' writing is lively and interesting. Across the school, they apply their well-developed grammar and punctuation skills to write interesting and meaningful texts. Most pupils write at the expected standard, and increasing proportions now write at a high standard.
- Pupils enjoy rich opportunities to count, calculate and solve problems. They discuss their ideas and predictions in mathematics and reason well. As a result, pupils of all abilities make strong progress in mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in the wider curriculum, using their strong mathematical and English skills well. For example, pupils studied Chembakolli in India, comparing the farming practices to those of the United Kingdom. In history, pupils researched the equipment and uniforms used by firefighters in the Great Fire of London. Pupils

consider and explain their thinking well and show great pride in their work.

- Meaningful links between subjects help children to get the most out of their time in school. For example, pupils developed chocolate bars in design technology. This project developed their artistic, mathematical and computing skills and resulted in high-quality and, according to teachers, delicious products. The carefully considered curriculum helps pupils to make strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress because teachers give them the right support to succeed. These pupils are encouraged to be independent and are increasingly able to find ways to overcome their barriers to learning. These pupils are well prepared to make continued progress.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The early years leader has transformed the provision in Reception, ensuring that an unwavering focus on children's outcomes is combined with the promotion of independence, resilience and a love of learning. Her work to improve the transition arrangements ensures that children 'hit the ground running', as they already know the staff, the routines and the expectations that staff have of them. As a result, children settle quickly into the setting and make excellent progress.
- The proportion of children in the early years who attain a good level of development is now above the national average. The development of strong core skills and positive attitudes to learning means that children are exceptionally well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- Staff in the early years are highly skilled, knowledgeable and attuned to the needs of children. They use their skills to guide children to the appropriate activities for their needs. Teachers and teaching assistants use sharply focused questioning to test and challenge children to do even better. For example, when learning to read an analogue clock, the teacher asked children to explain what they were likely to be doing at different times of the day, while the teaching assistant accurately identified and helped children who needed extra support. Children thrive on this challenge and adore their learning.
- Children show striking levels of self-regulation and determination. At the start of each activity, children use their 'mini-me' sticker to identify their preferred activity and, under the watchful eye of staff, waste no time in settling into their activities. They set out equipment with care, kindness and attention to detail. Their focus and determination ensure that not a moment is wasted.
- The safeguarding procedures match the robust and effective systems in the main school. Staff liaise with nursery settings and parents well before children start at the school, enabling families to receive appropriate support quickly and efficiently.

School details

Unique reference number	115931
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10046489

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hugh Pringle
Headteacher	Emma Howell
Telephone number	01329 833161
Website	www.newtownsoberton.hants.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@newtownsoberton.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 June 2010

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average. There are currently no pupils in the school who qualify for the pupil premium grant.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- Since the previous inspection, every member of the then current teaching staff, including the headteacher, has left the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in 10 parts of lessons, all with senior leaders.
- In addition to discussions with parents, 54 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account.
- A range of the school's documentation was scrutinised to gather information on leaders' evaluation of the school's performance; systems for managing the performance of teachers; the behaviour and safety of pupils; safeguarding; the progress and attainment of pupils; and curriculum leadership.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's website to evaluate the quality of information for parents and whether the school meets statutory publishing requirements.
- The inspector spoke to pupils to gather their views and heard pupils read.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, representatives from the governing body and officers from the local authority.

Inspection team

Daniel Lambert, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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