

Inspection of Northern Junior School

Richmond Rise, Portchester, Fareham, Hampshire PO16 8DG

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this welcoming, friendly school. Staff and pupils smile often and greet visitors warmly. Pupils speak with pride about their school and all that they have learned. Staff understand their pupils well and develop genuine relationships. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of this school.

Leaders have high expectations of achievement and behaviour. Pupils work hard to meet these. For instance, they behave well in lessons and around the school. Playtimes are social occasions where pupils have fun and look after each other. Pupils feel safe and well cared for because staff take the time to listen and resolve their worries. Pastoral support, including understanding why mental health is so important to learning, is a strength of the school. For example, pupils are taught thoughtfully about their emotions and feelings. Bullying or unkindness are uncommon, but staff take any concerns seriously and act swiftly when it happens.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to succeed. Leaders believe deeply that inclusion and equality must be at the heart of their work. All pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are supported to do their best and participate fully in school life. As a result, confident pupils flourish socially and emotionally.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed an ambitious and exciting curriculum, identifying the knowledge that pupils need to learn which builds from work started at the federated infant school. Teachers know what to teach and present new content clearly, using subject-specific language. However, not all pupils access or gain a deep understanding in mathematics through reasoning and problem-solving. This limits some pupils' opportunities to strengthen their understanding of different concepts. Additionally, teachers do not check pupils' understanding consistently well in some foundation subjects. This means teachers are not always secure on what has been learned before moving learning on. Leaders are aware of both issues and are already working on these.

Leaders have a robust system in place to identify the needs of pupils who require additional help. Pupils with SEND learn confidently alongside their peers, with additional time to break down tasks and effective one-to-one support, where needed. Some pupils with SEND, however, could achieve even more in mathematics.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. Teachers use high-quality texts to inspire pupils, extend their vocabulary and develop their love of stories. Well trained and supported staff teach reading skilfully and spot those pupils who may need extra help to catch up. Pupils quickly develop the confidence and fluency they need to access the wider curriculum.

Teachers develop strong routines so that lessons are both focused and purposeful. Pupils quickly recognise the importance of treating others with respect and being respected themselves. There is a very small number of pupils with SEND whose behaviour can sometimes disrupt lessons. However, teachers take effective action to minimise the impact of this and get learning quickly back on track.

The school's thoughtful personal development programme helps pupils learn about life in modern Britain. They speak confidently about different world religions, faiths and beliefs with the utmost respect. Their understanding of diversity and difference is impressive. The curriculum is supported well by a range of trips and visitors which help bring learning to life and make it memorable. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils spoke excitedly about the upcoming residential trip and the opportunities to test their teamwork and resilience skills.

Governors work well with leaders to rationalise decisions and identify the impact of priorities. They work closely alongside determined leaders to check and challenge that strategic plans are working as intended. Staff appreciate school leaders' care for their well-being and workload. As a result, staff feel valued, are well trained and are proud to be part of the team. The relentless focus on promoting high-quality learning for all pupils starts with what is best for the most vulnerable, and those with SEND.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. There are clear systems in place to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders tackle all concerns as soon as they are identified. They ensure that children and families in need of additional support access this in a timely way. Record-keeping is thorough and systematic. Recruitment and training procedures are strong and carefully overseen by governors. Pupils are taught how to understand and manage risk. For example, they have age-appropriate knowledge of how to keep themselves safe while online and where to go for help if they need to.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment in some foundation subjects is not used consistently well. As a result, leaders and teachers do not know how secure pupils' learning is or what they can remember. Leaders need to establish a clear approach to checking and closing the gaps in learning, so that pupils know and remember more across the school's curriculum.
- Pupils do not consistently secure their knowledge and skills in mathematical reasoning and problem-solving. This means their understanding and achievement in mathematics is not as good as it could be. Leaders and governors should

ensure that teachers fully implement the entire mathematics curriculum fully so that all pupils deepen their knowledge and skills in different mathematical concepts.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	115935
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10241029
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kevin Symes
Headteacher	John Bailey (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.northernfederation.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 December 2019

Information about this school

- Northern Junior School is federated with Northern Infant School, under one governing body and one executive headteacher.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) was appointed in September 2022.
- The school hosts a breakfast club and after-school club run by Sprouts Childcare, who are separately registered.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the continuing impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school and the SENCo.
- The lead inspector met with two governors, including the vice-chair. He also spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. They also reviewed the school's website and other records regarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, design technology and history. Deep dives included visiting a range of lessons and looking at pupils' work. They also involved talking with staff and pupils about how teaching in these subjects builds pupils' knowledge over time. The lead inspector also heard pupils in Year 3 read to a known adult.
- Inspectors checked a wide range of child protection documents, including the single central record. They also assessed the school's culture of safeguarding throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan and relevant school policies.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, along with their written comments. An inspector talked with parents on the morning of the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views about their learning, what behaviour is like at the school, whether they felt safe and about their views on personal development.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views on how leaders support them and took account of their responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Gareth Flemington, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Susan Kelly	Ofsted Inspector

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