

Inspection of a good school: Northern Infant School

Richmond Rise, Portchester, Fareham, Hampshire PO16 8DG

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 October 2023

Outcome

Northern Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this friendly and attentive school. They are happy and take pride in their learning. There is a strong ethos of respect in the school. Pupils are considerate and show kindness. They are proud to demonstrate the 'super school values'. For example, at playtimes different year groups share the trim trail equipment thoughtfully. The high expectations extend to all aspects of school life, including pupils' academic work. Pupils rise eagerly to these expectations. They work hard and do well.

Staff nurture pupils so they develop confidence and resilience. Pupils willingly share any worries with staff. Staff work closely with parents and carers throughout their child's time in the school. Parents are effusive in their appreciation of this close working relationship and the support it provides for their children.

There is a strong and inclusive school community. Pupils describe the school as 'a family where everyone helps each other'. There is a focus on learning about different backgrounds. For example, pupils with service backgrounds make videos which allow others to understand what life is like in Armed Forces families. These opportunities benefit all pupils because they feel valued and celebrate their way of life.

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

The school has a broad and ambitious curriculum carefully planned to build pupils' important knowledge from Reception to Year 2. This is strongest in core subjects, where pupils remember previous learning clearly. For example, in mathematics, deliberately planned step-by-step approaches to teaching calculations support all pupils to learn and recall this knowledge. However, in some foundation subjects, the curriculum does not revisit previous learning routinely, which means that, over time, pupils struggle to recall some of the important knowledge they have previously been taught.

High priority is given to identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In lessons, adaptations meet the specific needs of pupils with SEND. Teaching assistants provide bespoke support for pupils with more complex SEND needs, which means they achieve well.

Learning activities are carefully chosen to support the intended knowledge pupils need to learn next. Teachers explain ideas well and, in the majority of lessons, they use questioning skilfully to check how well pupils understand that new knowledge across the curriculum. In these cases, teachers provide feedback which supports pupils to understand and correct any mistakes.

The school's approach to assessment is strong across core subjects. Teachers identify where pupils' knowledge is not secure and then reteach this, checking carefully that the knowledge is 'sticking'. However, in foundation subjects, assessment is being improved with a new approach introduced this year. This is not yet embedded consistently across all foundation subjects. Currently, pupils' knowledge gaps are not routinely addressed. This hinders pupils' learning over time.

The development of fluent, confident readers is prioritised. Children are taught phonics from the start of Reception. Any pupils who need extra help are provided with additional sessions, shaped to address their specific needs. These are effective and help all pupils to become confident, fluent readers. Across the curriculum, pupils enjoy regularly listening to teachers read a broad range of diverse stories, rhymes and poems. Pupils regularly visit the library and happily discuss their favourite stories.

Behaviour is impressive throughout the school. Pupils understand the school's high expectations and learn how to achieve these. From the start of school, staff establish clear routines and model their high expectations consistently. In Reception, children who recently started school move to and from carpet time in a calm and orderly way. In lessons across the school, pupils concentrate on their learning. Teachers quickly refocus any pupil who gets distracted, while teaching assistants support pupils with SEND to follow routines effectively. When pupils' behaviour is less positive, teachers guide their reflection, so they learn how to respond differently in these situations.

There is a carefully planned approach to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils use their imagination to create responses in writing and artwork for these events. Pupils develop their moral views about the environment through learning about the school site. For example, children in Reception learn about seasons by studying changes in the same tree throughout the year. A range of visiting performers means all pupils learn about music, writing and lifestyles from different cultures.

Leaders are determined for all pupils to learn well. They thoughtfully consider how to further improve the school. Staff value how leaders try to reduce workload and support their well-being. Governors know the school well and provide appropriate support and challenges. They meet their statutory responsibilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment in foundation subjects is not as effective as it could be. It does not currently show what pupils' knowledge gaps are. This hinders pupils' learning. The school needs to embed its newly launched approach to assessment across foundation subjects and make sure that it does as they intend it to.
- In some foundation subjects, pupils do not retain the important knowledge they have previously been taught. This reduces their understanding in these subjects over time. The school needs to make sure that all staff are confident to revisit knowledge over time and make sure that pupils can recall and use their learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2018.

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' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local

authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	116030
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10287884
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Karen Fryatt
Executive Headteacher	John Bailey
Website	www.northernfederation.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is federated with Northern Junior School, under one governing body and one executive headteacher.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also met with the executive headteacher, head of school and the local authority school improvement adviser.
- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector also spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work in computing.
- The lead inspector observed playtime and lunchtime activities.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to the staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- The lead inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's confidential online questionnaire for parents and the additional free-text responses. This included speaking to parents at the gate.

Inspection team

Phillip Blagg, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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