

Newtown Soberton Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115931
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290369
Inspection dates	12–13 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Beryl Richmond

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Caroline Barfoot
Headteacher	Miss Sarah Eastwood
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2003
School address	Church Road Newtown Fareham PO17 6LF
Telephone number	01329 833161
Fax number	01329 833161

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Newtown Soberton is a small infant school. Most pupils come from White British heritages. They come from a wide catchment area and from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. A well below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. A new headteacher joined the school in January 2007, following a term when an acting headteacher led the school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Newtown Soberton provides its pupils with a good education. Pupils' enjoyment of school and their personal development and well-being are excellent. Parents value the education that the school provides and are supportive of their children's learning. One parent said, 'I could not have asked for a better start in the education system for my daughter. The school and staff are fantastic'. Although there have been significant changes in leadership and management during the last year, the staff team have worked together well to ensure continuity and consistency in pupils' education. There is a strong commitment to school improvement and the work of the school is evaluated well by staff and governors. Although teachers have responsibility for standards and achievement, leadership and management of English, mathematics and science subjects are not sufficiently developed and improvement is too dependent on the work of senior managers.

Pupils achieve well. From broadly average starting points, standards in reading and mathematics were above average by the end of Year 2 in 2006. Standards in writing were only close to the national average because more able pupils did not do well enough. Standards are improving because pupils now have more frequent opportunities to write at length.

Through their good links with a wide range of other schools and organisations, the school provides excellent care and support for pupils and consequently they are keen to learn. Academic guidance is good in terms of the thoroughness with which pupils' progress is tracked and the marking of their written work.

Leadership and management are good. The impact of the work, led by the headteacher, can be seen in improved standards and achievement in Year 2, and better behaviour and attendance. Provision in Reception is good and children make good progress. The construction of a new school hall means that provision for gymnastics, dance and games is much improved and standards in physical education are improving. Pupils can now eat together in one sitting at lunchtime and there is sufficient space for school events.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are good and consequently pupils achieve well. The curriculum has excellent opportunities for enrichment, through visitors and visits and opportunities to learn musical instruments and participate in school clubs.

The school has evaluated its work well, is focusing on the correct areas for improvement and is in a good position to improve further. Improvement overall has been good since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards in writing, particularly for more able pupils.
- Develop the roles and skills of subject leaders in leading and managing English, mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good, their progress is tracked rigorously and parents support their children well. There has been a gradual decline in standards in reading and mathematics but they are still above average. Standards in writing were only close to the

national average in 2006 because more able pupils did not achieve well enough. In 2007, there has been a reversal of this trend, standards are improving and are above average, including in writing.

From average starting points, with strengths in general knowledge and social development, children progress well in Reception so that most attain at least average standards. Their needs are addressed well through well planned stimulating activities. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve as well as other pupils because they receive focused support. The school is now setting more challenging targets for improvement, particularly through performance management procedures. This year's targets were met.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' enjoyment of school is excellent because they benefit from good teaching and learning and good assemblies. As one parent said, 'It's a pleasure to walk into the school and see so many smiling, happy faces at any time of the day'. Pupils particularly enjoy rabbit and hedgehog time when they have opportunities to select activities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Attendance is good because the school has acted positively to address poor attendance. Pupils have good self-esteem and are confident when talking with adults. They understand very well how to stay safe, know the rewards and sanctions systems and know whom to contact in school if they have concerns. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy by drinking water, eating fruit and vegetables and by exercising regularly. Teachers are good role models and have created a caring environment where pupils feel secure. Pupils' views are taken into account, including through the valued school council and their suggestions have led to playground improvements. They learn well about other cultures through visits, visitors, creative subjects, texts in English and parental involvement at the school. They are very actively involved in fund raising like 'Shades for a Day', and in a wide range of other good community activities, like country dancing at the church fete. Bearing in mind their excellent personal and good basic skills, pupils are prepared well for their future life as adults.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers and pupils enjoy good relationships. Pupils work well independently and cooperate when working in pairs and groups. Teachers are enthusiastic and manage behaviour effectively so that pupils engage with their learning successfully. They focus well on key vocabulary in lessons and consequently pupils learn to use the correct terminology quickly. All classrooms have good vocabulary prompts to support pupils' learning and independence. Most lessons move along at a brisk pace and contain a good mix of teacher-directed and independent work, including in Reception. Where teaching is less effective, expectations of pupils' achievement are not high enough, particularly in writing, and time limits are not made explicit to pupils and, consequently, the pace of the lesson slows. Learning support assistants support pupils' learning well, particularly in focused group work. Communications between home and school to support pupils' learning are good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A range of well-attended clubs, visits, for example, to HMS Warrior and Longdown Dairy Farm, visitors like the African drumming group and creative opportunities for music and art make pupils' learning interesting and exciting. The physical education provision has improved well both in terms of its content, like the 'Get Fit Get Active' programme and because of the construction of the new school hall. The Reception curriculum is very well planned, is responsive to children's needs and supported by a wide range of appropriate resources. The outdoor provision lacks a covered outdoor area for children to learn and to play whatever the weather. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are usually met well and consequently they make good progress but more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged when writing and so they do not achieve well enough. Pupils now have more opportunities to write at length. The school provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education and consequently the outcomes are excellent.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care and support are excellent but there are still areas to be developed in academic guidance. Pupils' welfare has a very high priority and the school carries out thorough risk assessments. Proper checks are made on people who have regular contact with pupils and consequently arrangements for safeguarding pupils are very good. The school has excellent links with specialist help to support pupils when necessary. Transition arrangements between the Early Birds Pre-school and between the classes are very good. Year 1 pupils particularly value rabbit time when they are able to self select activities, as they did in hedgehog time in Year R. The emotional literacy support assistant's work is having a positive impact on the emotional well-being of pupils who need help managing their feelings and behaviour. Verbal feedback in lessons is good and marking shows pupils satisfactorily how to improve. Pupils' targets for improvement are not always challenging enough, particularly in writing. Opportunities for pupils to carry out assessment with their friends and to assess their own writing are missed and there is sometimes an over reliance on feedback from the class teacher.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

In the short time since her appointment, the headteacher has put in place several initiatives to bring about school improvement. Some of these are already showing success in improving pupils' personal development and well-being and achievement. She has increased teachers' accountability for pupils' achievement and standards, and especially, for the achievement of able children. Teachers' performance management is being used well to achieve this, but the full impact of this work on pupils' progress is yet to be seen. Responsibility for leading mathematics has been recently assigned but individual teachers do not have responsibility for English and science. The school is in the process of changing the leadership and management structure to ensure that a member of the teaching staff leads these subjects. New tracking systems have been introduced with the full involvement of all staff. Monitoring of pupils' progress has ensured good achievement.

The school has evaluated its work mainly accurately although too positively in two areas, curriculum and care, guidance and support. The headteacher and governors know the school well and are focusing on the correct areas for improvement. Monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and consequently pupils benefit from good teaching and learning.

The governing body is good. It supports the school well and is now much more effective as a critical friend in terms of monitoring the work of the school by regularly checking on standards achieved by pupils and by questioning other aspects of the school's work.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

25 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Newtown Soberton Infant School, Fareham, PO17 6LF

Thank you for your help during the inspection, especially by talking to me about all the interesting activities that you are able to enjoy at your school. I think your school is good. You are learning well.

Here are some of the things that I liked best about your school.

- You enjoy school because you learn in a happy place. Your behaviour is good and you are keen to learn.
- Adults in your school make sure that you are well cared for and safe.
- You are taught well and you work hard. This means that you are learning many skills that will help you, as you get older.
- You know how to stay healthy by eating the right foods, like fruit and vegetables, drinking water regularly and by taking plenty of exercise.
- Your headteacher and staff are working hard to make your school even better.
- Your teachers and parents work together very well to help you to learn.

Here are some things that I think could be better.

- You could do better in writing, particularly those of you who are doing very well in reading and mathematics.
- To ensure that continued improvements in English, mathematics and science are made, your teachers should lead and manage these subjects.

I enjoyed my visit to your school and would like to send you my very best wishes for your continued success.

Yours sincerely,

Beryl Richmond Lead inspector