



Southsea Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116200
Local Authority Portsmouth
Inspection number 290454
Inspection dates 24–25 January 2007
Reporting inspector John Seal HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Collingwood Road
School category	Community		Southsea
Age range of pupils	4–7		PO5 2SR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392 828176
Number on roll (school)	168	Fax number	02392 820808
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Lucy Morgan
		Headteacher	Miss Lyndsey Cook
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2001		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 24–25 January 2007	Inspection number 290454
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Southsea Infant is a two-form entry school with an attached unit for pupils with language and communication difficulties. It has a breakfast club and after school provision. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. A higher than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and statements of special educational need. The proportion of pupils leaving or joining during the school at other than the usual times is higher than usually found, especially in Years 1 and 2.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Southsea Infants is a good school with some outstanding features. The pupils make a good start in reception; they become confident learners and achieve well in all areas of learning. By the time they leave at the end of Year 2 they are generally achieving standards which are above average. In 2006, pupils' attainment was significantly above average.

The headteacher's strong leadership and management has effectively focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. In particular there has been a strong emphasis on individual pupil tracking and effective analysis of data to inform lesson planning and target setting. This increases the good rate of progress which all groups of pupils are making.

Good teaching ensures that many lessons are exciting, interactive and encourage pupils to work both on their own and with others. Occasionally pupils become passive learners and become easily bored.

The curriculum is good because it now matches the needs of pupils more closely. Pupils are able to build on their prior attainment which is yet another feature that supports their good progress. The school recognises that some elements of the curriculum do not consistently enable pupils in Years 1 and 2 to make natural and relevant links between subject areas. For example, in subjects such as history or geography there are not always sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills.

The school's ability to effectively support all pupils learning is one of its strongest features. Those with learning difficulties and from all vulnerable groups make at least good progress.

Morale is high amongst the established, committed and stable staff; this, allied to the strong relationships between all adults and the children, means that the school's provision for the personal development and well-being of pupils is outstanding. As one parent stated, 'this school and its entire staff have given my child a fantastic start...I cannot praise Southsea Infants enough'. Pupils thoroughly enjoy most of their lessons and are keen to come to school. This is one of the reasons their attendance has improved. Pupils play and work safely in both lessons and around the school. They are living healthier lifestyles because of the extensive and active, out-of-school provision, wide range of extra-curricular activities and the high take up of the free fruit and vegetable scheme.

The good leadership of the headteacher has fostered warm and effective relationships with an extensively wide range of organisations which enable the school to play a key role in the development of the local community. The school's good track record in successfully addressing all areas from its last inspection report means that is very well placed to make further improvements in securing and sustaining even better standards of achievement for its pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the proportion of good teaching to sustain the upswing in pupils' progress.
- Develop pertinent and well planned links across subject areas in all lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

This key area of the school's work presents an improving picture. Four years ago, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was below average by the time they left the school. Since that time, the school has implemented rigorous tracking systems to ensure that pupils get the work and support they need, and are effectively challenged. Reception teachers have sharpened and accelerated the teaching of reading. As a result, pupils' progress has increased; in 2006, all Year 2 pupils made good progress, and some made exceptionally good progress. They attained standards which were significantly above national average. The progress of pupils with speech and communication difficulties is soundly tracked, and demonstrates that they are making progress in line with their capabilities. Data analysis by the school demonstrates that the performance of minority ethnic pupils is improving; these pupils made at least good progress and attained high standards by the time they left in 2006. Higher ability pupils did outstandingly well in reading and writing. The progress made by boys who left the school in 2006 equalled that of girls, but from a lower starting point. Consequently, their standards by the end of Year 2, although still exceeding national averages, were lower than those attained by girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This area of the school's work is much prized by parents, and rightly so. It is outstanding. Pupils really enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is excellent; they are polite and socialise happily with each other. Many were desperate to show their work and achievements to inspectors. Attendance has improved over the past few years, largely as a result of the increasingly stringent application of checking and support systems by the school. Pupils' attendance now reflects the national average.

The school fosters exceptional personal development and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for all its pupils. They have enviable opportunities to benefit from highly structured sessions when they work with their peers with speech and communication difficulties. Many have highly developed skills of empathy and responsibility and act as role models for these pupils.

Pupils have a very clear idea of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, enjoying, for example, the fruit and vegetables on offer each day. The school has organised healthy eating workshops for parents to try to increase awareness of good eating habits in the community. Physical activity is also very effectively emphasised. All pupils have two hours of physical activity weekly. Some pupils take part in the Wednesday 'walking

bus' pilot from the partner junior school attended by older brothers or sisters, and the school is actively seeking funding to extend this valuable initiative.

Pupils and parents appreciate the unusually wide range of clubs that are on offer at different times during the school year. At least half of the pupils at the school attend a club, and the school monitors this carefully to ensure all pupils who wish to attend have opportunities to do so.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In Reception, teachers provide a calm, enjoyable and relevant learning experience. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is never less than satisfactory and is often good. The school is aware that there is more to be done in achieving consistently good practice. In the best lessons, teachers' planning provides appropriately structured activities which match the different learning needs of all pupils, are enjoyable and support good progress.

A strength of the school is its ability to cater for all its pupils. Teachers employ effective strategies to help pupils from the language unit work alongside their mainstream peers and new children from a wide range of backgrounds are helped to settle in quickly and make good progress. Teachers use the school's assessment procedures effectively to inform their planning both on a day-to-day basis and over time. Good assessment is a very significant factor in enabling pupils' to achieve above average results.

In a few lessons there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to debate and discuss their work, and the oral feedback from teachers is not frequent or sharp enough to ensure pupils make consistently good progress. Occasionally, teachers' explanations and instructions are too long to hold the interest of young children.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, and has improved since the last inspection. The school has rightly focused on raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics, whilst delivering a broad and balanced curriculum which is underpinned by schemes of work. Increasingly, because of more rigorous assessment procedures, teachers are gearing the curriculum to accelerate the progress of different ability groups. The school recognises it is now at a transition stage. Some areas of practice now need to catch up with improvements made elsewhere. For example, more able Reception and most Year 1 pupils do not yet have regular opportunities to practise using their good phonic knowledge to write at length.

The school accepts that parts of the existing curriculum in Years 1 and 2 lack excitement for pupils, because pertinent and well planned links are not always made between subject areas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good care, guidance and support. Over the past few years, improvements in systems have enabled pupils to make increasingly good progress. Rigorous tracking procedures are allied to targets set for pupils. Pupils told inspectors that these targets help them to make better progress, although inspectors seldom heard teachers referring to pupils' targets in conversation with individuals or groups.

Marking is generally good. The best marking gives clear guidance to pupils about the steps they need to take to improve their work, and pupils value this.

Personal guidance and support for pupils is outstanding. Pupils know that there are adults to whom they can turn if they are worried. The school's racial incident log demonstrates that very occasional occurrences are treated seriously and resolved with pupils.

The excellent behaviour guidance enables the few challenging pupils to become increasingly self-reliant and sociable. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are secure.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides clear direction and her very effective leadership has developed a common sense of purpose and high morale amongst staff. The leadership team share her all-encompassing vision for the school which values the development of positive relationships amongst children, parents, staff and the wider community. In conjunction with the effective and involved governing body there is a clear view of what the school does well and what its priorities are for improvement. The pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning are regularly and effectively monitored and evaluated by the senior management team which has contributed to the increase in the proportion of pupils achieving above average results in 2006. There are appropriate strategies in place which support peer observation and enable teachers to learn from each other. These are beginning to improve the range, repertoire and consistency of good teaching strategies across the school.

The school has strong links with a high number of outside agencies and the headteacher has ensured that the school is the hub of a number of local initiatives which have benefited the pupils. The school is well placed to continue its journey of improvement.

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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?	1
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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	1

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.

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Thank you very much for your friendly welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing you in lessons. You told us that your school is a good school and we agree.

You make good progress and some of you reach above average in your work. This is because your teachers and helpers give you exciting and interesting lessons and you work hard. In some lessons you spend a long time listening so you do not have a lot of time to do work that helps you learn even more.

The adults in the school look after you very well and you all get on together very well. You told us that you feel safe and really enjoy coming to school. It is a very happy place. You know a lot about being healthy and how the right foods can make you even healthier.

Your teachers are good at checking how well you are getting on so they can help you to do even better. They are working hard to make all your lessons interesting, and are already planning ways to do this.

Your headteacher and staff know how well the school is doing and are good at making it even better.

We hope you continue to be happy at school and continue to learn as much as you can.

Best wishes

John Seal
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools