

Netley Marsh Church of England Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116302
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290491
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	77
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss L Dawson
Headteacher	Miss L Dickson
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2005
School address	Ringwood Road Woodlands Southampton SO40 7GY
Telephone number	023 8086 2009
Fax number	023 8086 0899

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average infant school is situated in a village on the outskirts of Southampton. The pupils are predominantly White British and come from a mix of social and private housing. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties varies but it is currently average. The school has the Basic Skills Award and is recognised as an Investors in People organisation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by her deputy has guided the school through a period of fast and very successful change. Recovering from a very low point in 2004, the school is now providing its pupils with a good standard of education. This is a rapidly improving school where standards and achievement are now good. Moreover, the personal development and well-being of pupils, the curriculum and the care, support and guidance for pupils are all outstanding. As one parent wrote, 'the standards are high all-round from teaching, faith, sports and extra-curricular'. Along with very effective teamwork and partnership arrangements that benefit the pupils so well, there is an outstanding capacity to further improve the school.

Pupils get a good start in Reception where many changes have brought improvements in standards. Children enter with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age but make good progress. In Years 1 and 2 the good progress continues and the standards in writing and mathematics are above average and are well above average for the majority of pupils in reading. The school recognises the need to further improve standards in writing by extending the vocabulary of pupils through more opportunities for speaking and listening.

Major factors in the improvement to standards and achievement are the pupils' positive attitudes, excellent behaviour and consistently good teaching. Teachers' planning is detailed and, together with some very good use of assessment, allows them to successfully address the different learning needs of the pupils. On occasions, there are missed opportunities to consolidate the pupils' learning prior to moving onto the next part of the lesson. Pupils respond well to the academic and personal challenges presented by the school and thrive within a caring Christian ethos.

The very impressive rate of change has benefited all aspects of the school's work. The outstanding curriculum motivates and challenges pupils through investigations and problem-solving activities. Pupils have excellent knowledge of how to stay healthy and safe and their preparation for later life is outstanding. This is the result of the good quality of pupils' basic skills, which are enhanced through activities such as the mini-enterprise challenge.

The very good improvement to the school is the result of skilled leadership and management. Upon the current headteacher's appointment, highly relevant priorities were quickly identified. Rigorous monitoring and modelling of good teaching contributed to a rise in the quality of lessons and in pupils' achievement. The curriculum was re-written to ensure more progression of pupils' skills and knowledge, and effective assessment allows for careful tracking of pupils' progress. The outstanding governing body is fully involved in this monitoring and self-evaluation. There is no complacency.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the vocabulary and writing skills of pupils through the consistent provision of opportunities for speaking and listening.
- Provide better opportunities for pupils to reflect on and reinforce their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

A measure of the improvement in the school is that pupils are now achieving well and attaining standards which are above the national average. Children entering Reception have specific weaknesses in linking sounds and letters, and calculating. Changes to teaching methods and the curriculum have resulted in most children now making good progress. Increasing numbers of children are exceeding the early learning goals, particularly in their number work and creative development.

Actions taken by senior leaders have resulted in the well below standards of recent times improving to below average in the end of Year 2 assessments in 2006, and the good standards in current year groups. Progress for pupils in 2006 was good given their starting points. About half of this cohort had learning difficulties and disabilities. The current Years 1 and 2 are on target to attain standards that are above average in writing and mathematics, and well above in reading. Improvements to teaching and the use of very good tracking procedures have contributed significantly to this improvement in standards and achievement.

Pupils identified as in need of additional support benefit well from the very good work of the learning support assistants. The development of a wide range of additional support programmes contributes well to these pupils making good progress; similarly those pupils with learning difficulties achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils conduct themselves exceptionally well. They are polite and, as 'Family Assemblies' demonstrate, they listen carefully and show respect for others. The outstanding personal development and well-being of pupils is another mark of the highly effective work of the school. Positive attitudes, enjoyment and smiles are a consistent part of the daily routine. As one girl said, 'I love my school, and I wouldn't change a thing'. Attendance is less good for, despite the good efforts of the school, it remains satisfactory. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is outstanding and reflects the well-established Christian ethos, which promotes effective opportunities for reflection. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy, mainly because such messages are effectively reinforced throughout school life. Pupils, from Reception onwards are encouraged to become more independent. They take effective decisions in the school council, accept responsibility willingly and are increasingly evaluating their own work. During lunch breaks, older pupils identify others who have 'made someone happy'. Pupils are enthusiastic and the nominees jumped for joy in the playground as their name went onto the board. Pupils have many good opportunities to socialise within school through effective teamwork. Good progress in the basic skills contributes very effectively to the excellent preparation for pupils' later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Comprehensive monitoring of teaching and learning contributes effectively to the good and often better teaching and learning in the school. Teachers receive very detailed feedback, which together with senior managers' commitment to the professional development of staff, helps

ensure good teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use well to plan effective lessons, although occasionally opportunities for speaking and listening are missed. Pupils learn well because the teachers consistently ensure that lessons successfully address the different learning needs of pupils. Relationships are very positive and pupils are not afraid to give their opinions. On occasions, there are missed opportunities to check pupils' understanding through regular periods of consolidation, for example after mental mathematics. Teaching assistants are very active in lessons and work effectively and confidently with large and small groups as well as individuals. Those involved in support groups are skilled in designing their own units of work that reinforce pupils' knowledge of phonics and word identification.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils are extremely well motivated by the outstanding curriculum. Constantly under review, it allows for a highly effective use of time. Pupils who learn best through practical methods are motivated by the various themed days and weeks, where pupils mix with other year groups. The multi-cultural day to celebrate Chinese New Year resulted in pupils designing and making good, imaginative and colourful dragons. The flexibility of the curriculum means that teachers use time well to link learning. Because of this, pupils have opportunities to research and develop topics involving different subjects. A good example was in science where pupils considered the moral and social issues associated with people who have little access to clean water. Elsewhere they wrote poetry describing the properties of water. Very good opportunities are presented to children that enhance their learning. The wide range of clubs, visits and visitors effectively support the pupils' learning about staying healthy and safe. These, together with very good opportunities for working in teams to investigate and solve problems, help to develop a strong sense of community. Pupils with gifts and talents are effectively challenged because they have access to three-weekly programmes of specialised study. In Reception the curriculum is very effective in allowing children opportunities to make decisions about what they do.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

In providing outstanding care, support and guidance, the school maximises the many advantages of being a small school. From pre-school visits onwards, the school encourages links with parents, one of whom praised the way that the leadership kept parents informed of the changes that were happening to bring about improvement in standards. The staff know the pupils and their families well. The many parent helpers have a very informative handbook to guide them. Parents agree when pupils say that they feel safe and secure and that the adults respect them. As a result, pupils are able to concentrate on their academic and personal development. Just as there is an outstanding commitment by the school to the care and support of pupils, it also includes the well-being of staff. For example, pupils have 'playground friends' and all staff similarly have 'buddies'. On another level this extends to the care taken to meet the professional development needs of all staff. Pupils generally know their targets and use them effectively, although a few have difficulty in fully understanding some of the language used.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The degree to which the school has progressed in three years is a testimony to the outstanding leadership and management of the school. At the heart of the quick and successful transformation of the school has been the highly effective leadership of the headteacher. Another crucial element has been the establishment of a team that shares the drive and vision for improvement. Highly effective monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders have played a significant part in the consistent and rapid rise in pupils' standards and achievement. The quality of teaching was first improved through senior leaders' modelling of good teaching and then reinforced by rigorous monitoring of teachers' planning and their lessons. Standards have risen as a direct consequence of these managerial actions. To guide teachers' planning the curriculum was re-written so as to identify where pupils' skills and knowledge were to be developed. The progress of pupils is now carefully tracked by a thorough assessment system that enables the school to present pupils with consistent and appropriate challenge.

Long-term, strategic planning has already had a very positive impact on the distribution of responsibility amongst staff. All staff are members of a 'school improvement team' (SIT) with a management and leadership role in self-evaluating, monitoring subjects and at least one target from the whole school development plan. Staff now have a more accurate overview of whole school issues. This is having an impact at all levels. For example, the part-time librarian is better able to identify the reading needs of pupils because of the work of her SIT and hence contributes to rising standards.

The school is outward looking and has developed some very good partnerships with local businesses. The school contributes very well to the local community, for example, in areas such as Family Learning and the provision of extended services such as the breakfast club. The outstanding governing body is ably led by an experienced chair. Through effective monitoring arrangements it knows the school very well and is able to act as a critical friend. Through such support, it has contributed significantly to the rapid improvement of the school. In common with the new school policy, there is on-going training to ensure that when one governor departs, there are others already trained to take their place.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

You will remember my visit to your school. I listened carefully to what you told me and how much you enjoyed your schooling. I agree with you that your school is good. I also believe it is doing many things very well. You said that the teachers make lessons fun and you behave very well and want to learn. As a result, you do well in your work and learn quickly. I agree with the school that your writing could be even better if you had the chance to discuss your ideas before starting to write.

You get good teaching and this helps to explain why you learn quickly. I have asked that you get more time in some lessons to think about what you are learning. You understand about how to stay healthy and keep safe and get along really well when working in teams. You benefit from so many good things that prepare you so well for your later life. I particularly liked the mini-enterprise activity and the gardening that you do.

You also told me that you are asked to work hard and that you enjoy it. You obviously have very good things to do in lessons and I particularly liked the way that you are asked to solve problems. I also agree with you that there are really good and exciting things to do outside lessons. Many of you told me about how you like the sports clubs and that you enjoy your visits. Your work on behalf of others is very good, whether fund-raising for charity, singing at the local nursing home, or when you take part in church services. Well done! I also like the way that you are eager to help out and accept responsibility. The playground friends carry out their work well. You could further help the school through ensuring that you come to school as often as you can. This would help to improve the attendance.

The school is extremely well run by the adults and you have benefited from the changes they have introduced. The result is a school that is now successful in ensuring you learn and that you become caring, thoughtful and confident young persons.

I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael PyeLead inspector