



Northwood Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118166
Local Authority Isle of Wight
Inspection number 291038
Inspection date 14 March 2007
Reporting inspector Peter Thrussell

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wyatts Lane
School category	Community		Northwood
Age range of pupils	4-9		Cowes PO31 8PU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01983 293392
Number on roll (school)	183	Fax number	01983 293392
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Wendy Bluestone
		Headteacher	Mrs Thelma Howland (Acting HT)
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school with a falling roll. Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. The great majority of them are of White British heritage. A lower than average proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is much less than in most schools. There is currently an acting headteacher whilst the school is looking to make a permanent appointment.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Northwood is an outstanding school. Under the excellent and committed leadership of the acting headteacher, the school provides an outstanding level of care for its pupils and promotes both their excellent personal development and academic achievement. Parents recognise and greatly appreciate this, with one commenting, 'Our children have enjoyed every day at Northwood; they have been stretched, motivated and praised at every chance'. The acting headteacher, very well supported by her staff, maintains an excellent level of teaching and learning despite a permanent headteacher not yet being appointed. A parent comments, 'The acting head has done a superb job in keeping the school focused and continuing with its high standards'.

The children are keen to start school and settle very quickly. The school works extremely closely and effectively with parents, the community, other schools and agencies to promote pupils' education, well-being and safety. Excellent links with a London school help pupils to become aware of life and cultures beyond their own community. Extremely good provision for personal and social development in Reception lays a very strong foundation for the outstanding behaviour throughout the school. Pupils enjoy everything about school that its outstanding curriculum provides. They concur that 'everything about the school is fantastic'. The ECO council, excellent approaches to healthy eating, keeping fit and readily taking responsibility form an integral part of the pupils' outstanding personal development. These personal qualities fully contribute to the progress pupils make throughout the school and the extremely high standards they reach.

Children make excellent progress in Reception due to a very well planned and lively curriculum. The majority achieve the learning goals expected at the end of the Reception year; a high proportion exceeds them. Teaching is outstanding throughout the school. Work is extremely well planned and prepared to meet individual learning needs. The next steps in learning for all pupils are readily identified through very good assessment procedures. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress. By Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are significantly above average. This level of progress continues in Years 3 and 4. By Year 4, a very high proportion achieves standards beyond those expected at this age.

There is a shared vision amongst staff for the work and direction of the school. The acting headteacher has been largely responsible for ensuring that the school's outstanding practice continues. Teachers themselves are not yet fully accountable for the areas and subjects they manage. Consequently, the school is keen to further develop their leadership potential. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Given the school's consistently excellent performance, it has a similar capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop the leadership roles of teachers so that they become more accountable for the subjects and areas they manage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are significantly above average and achievement is excellent. Children generally enter the school with an average level of skills, but this varies from year to year. They make excellent progress in Reception and throughout the school. By Year 2, standards are extremely high and these are maintained in Years 3 and 4. This has been the continuing trend in recent years. The school analyses its results extremely carefully to identify where any improvement can be made. Some more able boys were not doing as well as expected in writing. Closer work was done on target setting to show them how their work needed to be improved and more of their written work was displayed and celebrated. As a result of this effective action they are now achieving the high standards of which they are capable. Sustaining rapid progress in reading in Years 3 and 4 is being helped through daily opportunities to develop reading skills. Parents are also encouraged to continue home support for reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. They feel immensely proud when their achievements are celebrated and so develop a very high level of self-esteem. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the above average attendance. The school works very closely with the families of those few children whose attendance is irregular. Pupils feel extremely safe in school and know who to turn to if they have any concerns. They are keen to take on additional responsibilities. This is especially noticeable amongst the very active school council which organises many fund raising events that support the wider community. Members were excited about their preparations for Red Nose Day when flapjacks, with a red cherry on the top, will be sold to raise money. Pupils have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles, with a full regard for the environment, recognised in national awards. They are keen to take part in the many sporting and physical activities provided. They grow fruit and vegetables which are sold to raise funds or used by the school kitchen. A topic in Reception helps children to become aware of different vegetables and the importance of eating them. Excellent progress in literacy, numeracy and computer skills, along with their personal skills, means pupils are extremely well prepared for their later life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Very good relationships encourage pupils and they are eager to learn. In Reception the very warm relationships ensure that children

develop the confidence to choose from a wide range of very well-organised activities. Lessons are planned extremely well, taking full account of pupils' previous learning. Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team and with great enthusiasm. They encourage pupils in their learning and use a range of techniques and styles to make lessons enjoyable. Interactive whiteboards are used to good effect. Pupils benefit from stimulating role play and group work, where they have opportunities to discuss their learning and report back to others. Teachers help pupils to meet high expectations by asking questions that encourage them to think hard and justify answers. 'The work is definitely not too easy', commented one pupil. Pupils have very helpful target cards alongside them, which are used to make them think about the content of their work. Year 1 pupils were reminded in this way to use 'ambitious' words. Teachers' marking is thorough and gives good direction for pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and fully meets the learning needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who are gifted and talented. There is very good provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and pupils have many opportunities to use these skills to support, record and evaluate their learning, for example through the use of digital cameras. A very wide range of visits, visitors, and a good number of additional activities, greatly enrich the curriculum. These add interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning and promote their personal and social development extremely well. Work in the Foundation Stage is extremely well planned to provide a good balance between structured sessions and activities chosen by children. The school's comprehensive programme of personal and social development includes very useful life skills that help pupils to become healthy, safe and responsible people.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. The school has a very strong commitment to caring, which is reflected in the very good arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of pupils. Procedures for safe recruitment, risk assessments and for child protection are clear, well known and rigorously applied. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils' personal needs very well. Where pupils are identified with social or behavioural needs, very good one-to-one support is provided. The support for pupils with learning difficulties is very good, enabling them to achieve as well as their classmates. From Reception onwards, pupil's progress is assessed and monitored extremely well. Targets are set for them to work towards. Pupils understand that these give them something to aim for and are designed to help them improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school's performance is monitored extremely well and areas for further improvement identified and acted upon. The school wants teachers themselves to be more fully involved in these processes and to become more accountable for the areas and subjects which they lead and manage. Regular classroom observations help teachers to further improve their practice. Through very good performance management procedures, staff are encouraged to improve their performance in line with actions that the school is taking. Governors are very supportive of the work of the school and have a very good understanding of its performance. Their monitoring role is becoming better focused and they fully appreciate the budgetary implications of a falling roll. The school has extremely good links with parents. They are encouraged to take a full part in their children's learning. The close links with the on site playgroup, effectively foster curriculum development and support the transition of children to Reception.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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.

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	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	1
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

I am writing to let you know what I found when I visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. I spoke to some of you during my visit and you were interesting to talk to, very polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. I decided that Northwood is an outstanding school.

I liked these things the most.

- You enjoy school and are very keen to learn.
- You do extremely well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You have many exciting and enjoyable things to do both in and out of lessons.
- The school is extremely caring and looks after you well.
- Teachers are very good at sharing with you how well you have done and what you need to learn next. Year 1 pupils were good at meeting their target to use ambitious words.
- You understand the importance of taking plenty of exercise and eating the right things. Yes, we all need occasional treats!
- You behave extremely well and want to do your best in lessons.
- The school listens to you when you suggest how things could be better and you value being given responsibilities. Well done to the ECO council. Your work is very important.
- Your acting headteacher and staff do an excellent job.

I have asked the school to work on this now.

- Involve more teachers in leading the work of the school so that it remains outstanding.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector