

Clarendon Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126493
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	293574
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Teresa Slater
Headteacher	Anthea Turner
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2007
School address	Ordnance Road Tidworth SP9 7QD
Telephone number	01980 843381
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school draws nearly all of its pupils from the nearby military estate. It is above average in size but its numbers vary due to the frequent transfer of army families at short notice. Consequently, there are very high levels of mobility in every year group. For example only a half of pupils in the current Year 2 were in the school's Reception classes. Parental deployment overseas also puts pressure on families. Most pupils are White British although a small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Many children joining the Nursery and Reception classes have limited language and social skills. Pupils joining the school in other year groups often have gaps in their knowledge. Pupils' overall attainment on entry is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with strengths in pupils' personal development and good behaviour. Relationships at all levels are very good. The headteacher provides strong pastoral leadership and all staff's sensitive care and support for pupils' personal, social and emotional needs help them to feel secure and settle quickly. This is important as many have already attended several different schools with consequent disruption to their lives and learning.

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception because they are given activities that are interesting and well matched to their learning needs although, when pupils start Year 1, standards are still below average. Pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but slower than in the Foundation Stage. Standards remain below average in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. The school's efforts to improve provision in reading and writing are beginning to have a positive impact on improving standards but there is scope for further progress. Pupils often show confidence in writing for a range of purposes despite their handwriting, spelling and punctuation being relatively weak. Not enough time is given to the teaching of reading in Years 1 and 2 to make sure pupils' progress is good enough to raise standards.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Warm relationships and teachers' good class management create circumstances in which pupils want to learn. However, in Years 1 and 2 teaching does not consistently promote a steady build up of literacy and numeracy skills from pupils' starting points. Teachers assess pupils' progress but do not use this information well enough to match work to learning needs. These weaknesses sometimes limit the progress of pupils of all abilities. The curriculum is satisfactory and enhanced by a wide range of interesting clubs and outside visits. It is broad, practically based and encourages pupils to enjoy learning. Pupils develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Pastoral care is strong. Pupils are kept very safe and feel they have someone to turn to if they need help. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good. They make a good contribution to their community through taking responsibility for helping others. The school has started to improve assessment systems and teachers are beginning to take a fuller role in evaluating the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress. However, the school is fully aware that assessment recording systems do not give a clear enough view of pupils' progress from the time they enter to the time they leave. This prevents staff fully evaluating the impact of teaching on progress and swiftly making necessary improvements.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. School leaders have identified most of the improvements needed but the school's evaluation of its performance has weaknesses because the procedures and practices to measure the effectiveness of management, teaching and learning are not well established. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are insufficiently rigorous, including by subject leaders. This is limiting the consistency of good teaching and preventing pupils making the better progress needed to raise achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 by using the revised assessment systems more effectively to plan work so that learning activities consistently build on what pupils already know.

- Improve standards of reading, spelling, punctuation and handwriting in Years 1 and 2 by more rigorous teaching of basics.
- Improve the consistency of teaching of literacy and numeracy by rigorously monitoring the impact of teaching on learning.
- Implement effective assessment recording systems across the school in order to make better checks on pupils' progress and to swiftly make improvements where needed. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement in relation to their starting points is satisfactory. Children's good progress in Nursery and Reception raises standards from a low base, although they are still below the levels expected by the start of Year 1. In Years 1 and 2 rates of progress are satisfactory. However, they are not as high as they might be for pupils of all abilities because there is inconsistent build up of basic skills. By Year 2, standards remain below average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Standards have improved in literacy this year for the current Year 2 pupils compared with the exceptionally low standards reached by Year 2 pupils over the past few years. Although standards are now closer to the average in reading and writing, weaknesses in word building and spelling still limit standards to some extent. Pupils write in different ways but punctuation is not always accurate and their handwriting can be untidy. Fewer attain above average standards in both English and mathematics than found nationally. The school's new assessment systems and initiatives for improving the progress of the lowest attaining pupils in literacy are beginning to have a positive impact on standards in Year 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the few with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because the school provides strong pastoral support. Pupils are happy to come to school and attendance is good. Behaviour is generally good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite and well mannered and have a good understanding of what is right and wrong. They have a sound knowledge of cultures beyond Britain and participate in themed days and weeks such as the Chinese New Year. Spirituality is developed effectively through assemblies and in lessons. For example, children in the Nursery wonder about nature after observing mini-beasts found in the school grounds. Older pupils delight in taking additional responsibilities, for example when wearing their tabards to identify themselves as Year 2 monitors at playtimes. When asked what they would do if they had nobody to play with, a Year 1 girl replied, 'No problem, we go and talk to one of them', pointing to a monitor. Taking responsibilities effectively helps pupils to develop the skills required for their future lives but these are only satisfactory because standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough. Pupils feel safe because they know that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent across the school. Typically, it is satisfactory but good in some classes. Most teaching is good in Nursery and Reception where interesting practical work and learning through talking underpin the systematic teaching of basic skills. All teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage them well so they are happy and behave well. There have been recent improvements to procedures to track pupils' attainment, which is a highly complex issue in this school due to very high levels of pupil mobility. However, some teachers are not consistently using assessment information to plan work that is well matched to pupils' prior learning. In Years 1 and 2, teachers do not always teach the basic literacy and numeracy skills to systematically build up pupils' expertise and this is hindering achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In Nursery and Reception, all areas of learning are covered well. There is a good balance between adult led activities and purposeful play. Throughout, there is a strong emphasis on sport and the development of pupils' creative and practical skills through design and technology. Opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in information and communication technology have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Good personal, social and health education makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. However, given pupils' low starting points, not enough time is spent on the teaching of reading in Years 1 and 2, for example, in developing pupils' recognition of commonly used words and their knowledge of sounds. Also there is insufficient focus on developing pupils' spelling, punctuation and handwriting skills in Years 1 and 2.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Strong links with outside agencies help staff to provide very good support for vulnerable pupils. The many pupils that join the school throughout the year are helped to establish happy and secure relationships. Pupils are very well cared for and there are robust procedures and checks to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to work with the school to support their children. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Appropriate systems have been put in place to assess pupils' levels of attainment each term. However, tracking information is predominantly recorded on paper rather than on a computer and this makes it difficult for information to be transferred when pupils move from one year group to the next. There is no single tracking document which shows pupils' progress from entry to when they leave. Target setting is satisfactory but pupils themselves are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Parents are generally very pleased with the school and hold it in high regard. There are strengths in the way the leadership of the headteacher and the staff have created an ethos and environment where pupils feel secure, cared for and enjoy coming to school. The day-to-day running of the school is calm and purposeful and relationships are very good at all levels. The school has recently improved the way it evaluates the impact of its provision on pupils' achievement but the unwieldy recording of assessments prevents teachers, school leaders and governors quickly identifying and addressing inconsistent rates of progress across the school. The monitoring of teaching is regular across a range of subjects but not yet systematic enough and both literacy and numeracy have not been rigorously monitored. Checks on lessons do not provide a sufficiently clear analysis of how pupils of different abilities are learning or identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching.

Governors are dedicated and have recently stepped up their monitoring role and the level of challenge. The contingency fund is now at a satisfactory level. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory and the school has a sound capacity to improve.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

14 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Clarendon Infants School, SP9 7QD

Thank you for making us so welcome when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work and play. You really seem to enjoy school and it was good to hear about all the extra activities in which you are involved. We think your school is a happy one and gives you a sound education.

This is what we thought is particularly good about your school:

- You all get on very well and quickly make friends with new children.
- Those of you in Nursery and Reception get off to a really good start.
- You are very helpful to other people and you behave well.
- You have a good understanding of the food which keeps you healthy and enjoy playing games which keep you fit.
- You have really good opportunities for sport and inventing and making things.
- The staff take really good care of you while you are in school.

Here are the things we are asking the school to work on now:

- Improve your reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- Give you better chances to practise your reading and improve your spelling, handwriting and punctuation.
- Make sure your work is never too easy or hard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Make better checks on teaching so your progress improves.

You can help your teachers by making sure you continue to work hard at improving your reading, writing and mathematics.

Thank you again for being so helpful.

Yours sincerely Eileen Chadwick