

Northern Parade Junior School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 116190 |
| Local Authority | Portsmouth |
| Inspection number | 298563 |
| Inspection dates | 3–4 July 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Michael Pye |

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

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 310 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Nigel Huxtable |
| Headteacher | Mr Chris J Watts |
| Date of previous school inspection | 14 June 2006 |
| School address | Doyle Avenue Portsmouth PO2 9NE |
| Telephone number | 023 9266 2129 |
| Fax number | 023 9266 1376 |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The pupils in this larger-than-average junior school come from mixed social and economic backgrounds; many families are from the armed services. The majority come from a White British background and few pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average, and there are currently nine pupils who have a statement of special educational need. The school has a special resource area for hearing impaired children and is shortly to open an on-site children's centre. The school has the Active Mark Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005 HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

'The school does appear to have taken account of the previous inspection and made changes that have improved things.' This parent echoed others' beliefs about the school. Improvement is good, and the school now provides pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. Strong teamwork, particularly in the senior management team, has contributed to a recovery in achievement and standards, and in the increased opportunities pupils now have to learn independently. Additionally, the care, support and guidance of pupils and their personal development and well-being are good.

A determined focus on raising standards has been successful. New, detailed tracking documents show that achievement levels are satisfactory and that standards by the end of Year 6 meet the national average.

Whilst some good teaching and learning was observed in lessons, there are inconsistencies which result in teaching and learning being satisfactory overall. In particular there are variations in the quality of the work planned for pupils of different abilities. On occasions, insufficient emphasis is placed in lessons on what pupils are expected to learn rather than what tasks they are being asked to carry out. Pupils enjoy school and make good use of the many activities provided. These include the offer of residential trips for all year groups. The curriculum is satisfactory because, as the school has identified, there is a need to develop more links between subjects so as to make learning more meaningful for pupils. The school makes use of a very good range of partners to support pupils' learning, including other schools to support sport and art.

The high quality support given in school to those pupils with hearing impairments is typical of the very positive approach towards the general pastoral care, support and guidance given to pupils. Academic guidance and support has improved; pupils have targets but they are inconsistently referred to in lessons and in teachers' marking.

Senior leaders in the school have used good monitoring and evaluation systems to determine the way forward for the school. Thorough tracking of pupils' progress has contributed significantly to the improved standards and achievement. Also, the managers of mathematics and English, together with other leaders, have worked successfully to identify and address any weaknesses in provision. Their role is still developing and reflects a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that in all lessons the pupils have a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn, and that work consistently meets the needs of all pupils.
- Ensure that in lessons and in their marking, teachers consistently reinforce the pupils' understanding and use of targets.
- Develop more links between subjects so as to make learning more relevant for pupils.

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 enter the school with broadly average standards. After the last inspection a number of actions were taken by the school to help improve standards and achievement. These were necessary because in the 2006 national tests for Year 6, pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science were well below average. For the majority of pupils achievement was unsatisfactory. The school has made good progress in improving the way in which it monitors the progress made by pupils. There are now rigorous systems for tracking progress in English and mathematics, although further development is required in science and information and communication technology.

These changes, together with a whole school focus on literacy and numeracy have had a positive impact. Current Year 6 pupils are on target to attain standards that meet the national average. Given their starting point this reflects satisfactory progress. Targets are increasingly challenging and have been exceeded this year, particularly for the higher attainers in science and English. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a hearing impairment, make satisfactory progress towards their academic targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning are evident throughout the school. The pupils say that they enjoy lessons. This was evident in the hearing impaired resources centre where pupils laughed and showed obvious pride when reading out their own poetry. Pupils behave well and show respect for each other, for example, during paired discussion time they listen carefully to what their partners are saying. The good work of the pastoral counsellor has helped pupils with specific emotional needs, and this has had a positive effect on their learning and attitudes towards school. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating, and the importance of physical exercise. They respond positively to the school's strong emphasis on sport, making use of specialist coaches in lessons and in after-school clubs. The pupils talk with pride about their school council which has contributed well to decisions as diverse as school dinners, and the appointment of the deputy headteacher. Such activities, together with the current levels of basic skills help prepare pupils satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Consistent monitoring by senior leaders has contributed to good improvement in the provision for pupils to work independently. They now work well whether alone, in pairs or in groups. This reflects the good relationships in lessons, where pupils know that their views are valued. Teachers have good subject knowledge, with one pupil commenting that, 'Our teachers make interesting activities extremely educational'. Questioning is focused and does explore whether pupils understand their work. Teachers manage their classes well, but there are inconsistencies, particularly in marking, and in the degree to which they highlight the learning that is expected of pupils. In some lessons teachers clearly identify

the learning objectives and refer, when marking, to pupils' improvement targets. Although work is identified to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, teachers' planning sometimes refers only to activities rather than what the pupils are expected to learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. There has been an understandable and clear focus on literacy and numeracy. Consequently, topics such as those in history and geography require further development. There is good enhancement, particularly in music and sport, where all pupils benefit from specialist teaching. Pupils contribute well to their community, accepting responsibilities within school and maintaining links with schools abroad to share differences, fundraise and provide resources. The curriculum is well enriched by visits, visitors, residential trips, and a range of well attended school clubs. School productions and themes such as Healthy Week, and Book Week further enhance the curriculum, and pupils speak excitedly about their Challenge Week. Pupils learn in a more practical way when links are made between subjects but these have not yet been fully developed. Pupils with a hearing impairment are included well and have full access to the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after its pupils well and has good arrangements for safeguarding them. Pupils say they feel safe, are well looked-after and are confident in asking for help from adults they know. They feel secure in a supportive environment which helps to build their self confidence and self-esteem. The good support provided by teachers and classroom assistants is well complemented by the work of the school's pastoral assistant. As a result, pupils and their families are provided with a good range of support which is aimed at improving the quality of pupils' work. One family, in reporting the importance of the school's support, said 'Where would we have been without the school?' The school's very good links with external agencies provides further helpful support for pupils. There is particularly good support for those pupils with hearing impairment.

Most pupils know their targets. When asked, some pupils replied that to improve their work they should 'work harder', thereby reflecting a misunderstanding of how to use targets to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior management team has successfully given a good, clear direction for school development. Crucially this has involved improvements to assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress. Regular assessments, such as in unaided writing, are providing data which is carefully analysed to identify trends and those pupils requiring additional help. Progress review meetings with individual teachers examine the impact of any interventions and are contributing to the rise in standards and achievement. Some good managerial appointments, such as the 'Leaders for Learning' have further helped to ensure that there is a continuous focus on the performance of pupils.

The governing body gives satisfactory support and is increasingly raising questions of the school. It has yet to develop a formal programme of visits which would enable all governors to get a more in-depth knowledge of the school. Inspectors agree with the parents who felt that school managers, including governors, could be more pro-active in seeking their views. The school has good embedded systems which allow it to monitor and evaluate its work well. These form the basis of detailed and accurate whole-school improvement plans.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <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

| | |
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| 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 effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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 | 3 |
| 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? | 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

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| 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 | 2 |
| 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

13 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Northern Parade Junior School, Portsmouth, PO2 9NE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and were particularly pleased to see how much you enjoy school. Your singing in assembly was very good. Well done!

We judge that your school has improved well since the last inspection and now provides you with a satisfactory standard of education.

Your work has improved and you are now learning at a satisfactory rate. One reason for this is that the staff keep a much better eye on how you are doing and provide help for those who need it. We liked the way that you said you enjoy a challenge in lessons. Keep working hard!

You told us how well the adults care for you and that you feel safe and able to concentrate on your work. You also told us how much you enjoy the various trips that you have. We are pleased to see how active you are in the playground and in physical education lessons. You behave well and are polite - listening well to the views of others in lessons. Your teachers have worked successfully to give you more opportunities to work in pairs and on your own.

All the adults in the school want to improve things even more. They make use of a very good range of people from outside the school to help you. Those of you who have difficulties in hearing are very well supported.

We have asked that:

- all teachers make it very clear to you what you are expected to learn
- during lessons, and when teachers mark your work, they remind you more about your targets and how to use them to improve your work; you could help them by telling them when you find the work too difficult or too easy!
- the school increases the links that are made between subjects so that you learn more easily.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael PyeLead Inspector