

Elson Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116163
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312196
Inspection date	16 September 2008
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	234
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	90
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Gell
Headteacher	Mrs A J MacCallum
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Elson Lane Gosport PO12 4EU
Telephone number	02392 581208
Fax number	02392 588142

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. The inspectors looked particularly at the children's progress and standards as they move through the school, as well as the impact of initiatives taken by school leaders to raise standards and the quality of provision. The inspectors met with staff, governors and pupils. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves a suburb of Gosport. It is very popular and the numbers starting in the Early Years Foundation Stage [EYFS] are increasing rapidly. Pupils come from a wide variety of social backgrounds and are almost all of White British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties varies from year to year but is broadly similar to that found nationally. The school has achieved Enhanced Healthy School Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good standard of education. Pupils really enjoy learning because teachers make the activities fun and everyone is friendly and well behaved. Parents overwhelmingly agree. One parent, representing the views of many, wrote, 'It is well organised with a friendly atmosphere and I have no fears or worries about leaving my child in the care of Elson Infants'.

Pupils reach broadly average standards overall by the end of Year 2 and achieve well given their starting points. The school is successfully raising achievement in reading and writing, which was a school priority. Pupils with learning difficulties including those who struggle with basic skills make good progress and achieve well because they are given good quality help and support.

Achievement is good because teaching and learning are good. Teachers relate well to their pupils and help promote the family atmosphere of which the school is justly proud. They know their pupils' needs very well because they make regular and detailed assessments of their day-to-day social and academic development. This information ensures that work is suitably challenging for pupils at all levels. Teachers are increasing the opportunities for pupils to work independently and to explore their own ideas during lessons. However, this is not yet consistent across all classes so pupils' progress is not as rapid as it could be.

Another reason behind the school's success is the good level of pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils behave well, treat each other with great respect and genuinely want to learn. They feel safe, are safety conscious without being fearful, and are very knowledgeable about how to live healthily and adopt healthy lifestyles. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and enjoy making suggestions about how to make the school better. Pupils' regular attendance and willingness to become actively involved in their own learning is further evidence that they enjoy coming to school. This is good preparation for future life and learning.

Care, guidance and support are good overall. The school is good at tracking pupils' progress and using the information to plan challenging tasks and activities. This is because teachers have an accurate overview of each individual's performance and set realistic yet challenging targets for them to achieve. Pupils enjoy having targets to aim for. Some older pupils when discussing the merits of targets said, '...otherwise how would we know how to make your work better...and you get a reward when we do well...a certificate which everyone can see'. They agreed that lessons are enjoyable and teachers are really helping them improve their performance.

The curriculum is of good quality and is constantly evolving. It meets the basic academic needs of pupils well, and supports their social and personal development through initiatives to encourage healthy living and staying safe. Planning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has been adapted well to reflect the new single age classes. It includes a good range of support programmes to boost the progress of pupils who need extra help. A good start has been made in increasing the opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their reading, writing and communication skills through creative and imaginative links between the different subjects. However, the school acknowledges there is still more to do.

Leadership and management are good. Under the good leadership of the headteacher, all adults are working with determination to meet the changing needs of an increasingly diverse school population. They have acted decisively to meet the challenge of increasing numbers on the

school roll. The checks carried out by the school show that pupils are achieving the challenging targets set for them. School review is rigorous and results in actions that are accelerating achievement and sustaining improvement. This confirms the school's good capacity to improve further. The governing body is increasingly involved in school development.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well because they are well looked after and benefit from good teaching and support. Teachers continually share their accurate assessments so that activities are adapted well to meet children's individual learning needs. They make good progress but some do not reach the expected levels for their age by the time they move into Year 1, because they start with low levels of skill in communication, language and literacy. Many parents were quick to praise the happy and positive start their children make in Reception classes. This is because adults are sensitive to the needs of both parents and children and support them well both formally and informally. Consequently, the numbers starting at the school are increasing. Children behave well and thoroughly enjoy the wide variety of stimulating learning opportunities organised for them. Adults ensure there is a good balance between activities chosen by the children and those planned for them by the teacher. Senior managers have responded promptly to the rapidly growing numbers of children starting in Reception by increasing the teaching space, which is bright, colourful and well resourced. The outdoor provision is too limited, however, and restricts learning. Staff are now working at extending the space for outdoor learning to match the very good indoor provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Give pupils more opportunities to work independently and to use their initiative, in order to accelerate the rate of progress.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 September 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Elson Infant School, Gosport, PO12 4EU

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We believe, like you, that you go to a good school. We were very impressed with your friendliness and your sensible and helpful attitudes towards each other.

We especially enjoyed talking to you about your work and were impressed with your enthusiasm for school. I was excited to see you searching for mini-beasts in the school garden and was impressed to see the homework you had completed about spiders and other creepy crawlies! The teaching in your school is good and it means that, together with your enthusiasm for work, you achieve your targets and get a certificate to celebrate it.

The adults are always looking at ways to improve your learning. To make it even better, we are asking your teachers to give the youngest children a larger outdoor area in which they can learn and play. We are also going to ask them to give you more opportunities to work on your own and explore your own ideas. We know that you enjoy working like this because you told us so.

I am sure that you are ready for this challenge! We know that you will continue to work hard and we are sure that you will help your teachers to make your school even better.

We hope that you have great success in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Earish

Lead Inspector