

Alverstoke Community Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116169
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312198
Inspection date	12 March 2008
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stuart Rodwell
Headteacher	Mrs Marion Clist
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2003
School address	Ashburton Road Alverstoke Gosport PO12 2LH
Telephone number	02392 582403
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Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the pupils' achievement and progress, pupils' personal development and well-being, and the quality of the curriculum and pupils use of information and communication technology (ICT). In addition, evidence was gathered from discussions and school documentation to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection 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 in this report.

Description of the school

Alverstoke is a two-form entry infant school where most pupils come from a White British background. Pupils come from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. Just over half live within the catchment area. A number come from service families, which means that there is some movement of pupils throughout the year. A below average number of pupils do not have English as their first language. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with an above average number having particular special needs. The headteacher joined the school just over a year ago.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Alverstoke is a good school, and it is rapidly improving. The outstanding leadership and management by the headteacher is enabling all involved to move the school forward rapidly. As one parent observed, 'The new headteacher seems to have brought new life to the school. Well done to Mrs Clist and staff.' The school provides a warm, supportive environment where the caring welfare for each pupil ensures the outstanding development of their personal qualities.

Children join the school with a range of skills but, taken overall, their attainment is just below that expected for their age. Children in the Foundation Stage are now getting off to an excellent start because the staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn and take meticulous care to make sure all children are able to settle in quickly and smoothly. Throughout the school pupils make very good progress. By the time they leave in Year 2 standards are above average because the quality of the teaching and use of assessment have improved recently. The school's data shows that their focus this year on writing has been very successful. In the 2007 national tests, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics was above that found in most schools and this is now the case in writing. Although many of the systems for assessment and monitoring are new, they have already begun to be very effective in the day-to-day planning in most classes. However, the use of assessment varies and very occasionally, the tasks set for pupils are too easy for them and progress in those lessons drops.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. Having been given many opportunities to develop their own individual skills, support staff make an outstanding contribution to the developments of these pupils. Pupils who have statements of particular special need make exceptionally good progress. Very careful assessment of their needs means that they are provided with effective individual learning programmes and support. Detailed school tracking data shows that this intervention is very carefully focused and monitored, and very successful. One parent with a child with specific needs wrote to say how grateful she is, affirming that, 'I have never seen a school bend over backwards the way that this school does to ensure my child's education is as close to his peers. He has progressed so much since being at the infants. This school is brilliant and Mrs Clist has done a wonderful job.'

The school has very thorough procedures in place for safeguarding pupils. Pupils say that they feel very safe and happy, show very caring attitudes to each other, and they also have a very good awareness of how to eat and live healthily. They are eager participants in all of the school's physical activities. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils' relationships with each other and with staff are excellent. The way they revelled in the success of others in the 'Achievement Assembly' was a joy to see. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The input of the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant is outstanding. It is significant that she now has a considerable waiting list for her services, with some pupils recommending her to others! Parents, who enjoy an excellent relationship with the school, recognise the school's excellent pastoral support for their children. One reflected the views of many in noting, 'Behaviour of pupils towards each other is good and any bad behaviour is dealt with by the teachers very well. If only all schools were like this one!'

The curriculum covers all subjects very well and has been modified to make pupils more responsible for, and aware of, their own learning. The use of ICT across the curriculum has improved considerably since the time of the last inspection and is now an integral part of

teachers' planning. Pupils appreciate their teachers' efforts to make lessons interesting. School leaders realise that the implementation of this exciting curriculum varies from year to year and are using their good monitoring systems to try to ensure all lessons are as relevant as possible. Throughout the school, teachers aim to make learning fun and although most of the teaching is now good or better, there is some inconsistency. The expectations of pupils' responses and the pace of lessons are good in most classes, but there are variations across the school. Some teaching is not as brisk or as challenging as it could be. The staff, teachers and learning support assistants are determined to make their provision consistent. They now plan and work together, and have a zeal to improve that is infectious.

The excellent leadership of the headteacher, in partnership with the very effective deputy headteacher, ensures that complacency is not tolerated. Teamwork is excellent and the administrative team and site-manager are considerable assets to the school and are very much appreciated by all concerned. Staff have a shared vision of continued improvement and they are working tirelessly to identify and tackle the identified areas for development. The outstanding governing body is fully involved in this process, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where necessary. Given the track record, the school is excellently placed to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start to their education in the Reception classes. When children start school, their skills are generally below those expected for their age, especially in language development. The huge level of commitment and care shown by all Foundation Stage staff is evident in the way that all children settle into the school so well from so many different playgroups and nurseries and immediately begin to learn. As one parent wrote, 'After my daughter's first day at school, I wondered what I would be collecting. I picked up an extremely happy child who relishes each day at Alverstoke, and who cannot wait to go each morning. She is happy, content and confident and so therefore am I.' Staff work especially hard to give the children a real sense of determining their own way forward, which guarantees their full involvement in all activities. Children make very good progress and achieve exceptionally well, especially in their language and social and emotional development. Adults have high expectations, provide very clear routines and enable children to build strong, positive relationships. The enthusiasm and enjoyment of the children as they worked on their initial sounds and used the interactive whiteboard was outstanding. The classrooms are all stimulating and resources are used exceptionally well as children move from one to another. The outstanding outside areas provide the same exciting level of challenge and stimulation. This is especially well used by the staff to provide challenging, and thought-provoking, tasks for the more able children to ensure all are able to make maximum progress. Staff get to know the children very well. They make a careful note of all responses and feedback. The information collected about children is used particularly well to ensure that the least able and most vulnerable settle well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching is of a constant high standard by carefully matching work to the needs of the pupils through the consistent use of the school's good assessment and tracking systems.
- Ensure all pupils have the same learning opportunities by consistently implementing the revised curriculum in all classes.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

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?	2
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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alverstoke Community Infant School, Gosport, PO12 2LH

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I am very grateful for the way you shared with me your thoughts and feelings about school. I think you go to a good school which, as some of you told me, is getting better and better.

You obviously enjoy most lessons and activities and contribute much in making the school a happy place to be. Your behaviour, great attitudes to work and play, and the ways in which you care for one another are excellent. Many of you said how much you enjoy being at school, and how proud you are of what you can do.

The school is a very caring place and the staff work hard to make learning fun. I was very impressed by your enthusiasm for all of the extra activities you join in and for the sensible way you discuss your work. The school is well organised and your headteacher and the staff make sure that everything runs smoothly. You play your part well in making decisions through the school council.

I have asked your teachers to make sure that, no matter which class you are in, you all learn well. I have also asked them to make your lessons as interesting as they can be. In turn, I hope you will carry on listening carefully and take note of what your teachers say. Then you will all continue to make very good progress in your learning.

Finally, I would like to thank you once again for all your help. I wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall

Lead Inspector