

# Siskin Infant and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116174
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312200
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6-7 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bernice Magson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	189
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Ruth White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Rose Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Nimrod Drive Rowner Gosport PO13 8AA
<b>Telephone number</b>	02392 581777
<b>Fax number</b>	02392 520654

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<b>Age group</b>	3-7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a small infant and nursery school serving a mixed community, which includes many areas of very high levels of social deprivation. A well above average number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Pupils join the school on a part-time basis in the Nursery, and move to full-time education in the Reception year. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, and a few from minority ethnic groups who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is very high, including a significant number with speech, language and communication difficulties, and emotional and behavioural needs. The school has achieved local and national awards, including Best School and Wildlife Garden in Gosport and the South, South East in Bloom Gold Awards, and enhanced Healthy School's status. A junior school and children's centre share the same site. Extended services are available, including family learning programmes and out of school care.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. An excellent team of headteacher, deputy and chair of governors, ably supported by committed staff and governors, work tirelessly to ensure that pupils have many opportunities to explore the world around them and develop new skills. The needs of each pupil are identified early, and sensitive support ensures that learning is a positive experience. 'This school is like a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow in the area it is in' commented one parent, and many others agreed. Parents are pleased with their children's progress and most report that their children 'are pleased to come each day'.

Pupils achieve well because the teaching is consistently good or better. Staff know children very well and nurture, support and value all their efforts. Targeted support helps pupils who find learning more difficult. In Years 1 and 2, pupils overcome their emotional and behavioural difficulties extremely well by attending the 'Rainbow' nurture groups. Most pupils achieve well in their personal development and well-being from very low starting points. They become confident and independent members of the school community, eager to take on roles and responsibilities and influence the development of the school.

Standards are mostly average by Year 2, although external factors impede the progress of some pupils over time. In 2007, more than a half of Year 2 did not reach expectations for their age in national tests. Continuity in learning was more difficult because above average numbers of pupils had learning difficulties, some moved in and out of school at times other than the normal admission, and others had poor attendance. Standards are average by Year 2 in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) as pupils enjoy practical activities. The school is aware that they need to provide a better range of practical experiences to raise standards in reading and writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2. There is good use of computers, which is accelerating the progress of pupils who find recording more difficult. Teachers' marking is satisfactory, although there is little written guidance about how pupils can improve their work. Pupils do not always know how well they are achieving or the next steps to take.

Leadership and management are excellent. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses, and sets extremely challenging targets, which it strives hard to achieve. The headteacher and senior managers monitor rigorously the school's performance and introduce appropriate measures to raise attainment. However, other leaders have fewer opportunities to monitor teaching and learning or share their expertise across the school. Nevertheless, there is a shared commitment to develop pupils' love of learning. The school's success in raising standards in efforts in some subjects demonstrates its excellent capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage Unit provides an excellent start for children's education. The classrooms are calm, warm and friendly, and the management of children is firm but fair. As a result, children behave very well. Their personal development is outstanding, because teachers are very good role models. When working with adults, children are eager to succeed, and are learning to take turns. Teaching is excellent. Activities are planned effectively to interest and challenge children in depth. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is planned in detail and is effective. For example, children peered through magnifying glasses at frogspawn and noticed, with amazement, that they were developing tails. Through unobtrusive support, the

many children with significant communication, language and social needs achieve well. As a result, children achieve well from very low starting points, although they do not reach expected goals for their age by the end of the Reception year, particularly in their skills of communication, language and literacy.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2 by providing more opportunities for pupils to apply the skills in their independent play.
- Ensure greater consistency in the use of marking, so that teachers and pupils know the next steps to take to bring about improvements in learning.
- Increase the roles of subject managers in developing their subjects and in monitoring and self-evaluation.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are broadly average in mathematics, science and ICT by the end of Year 2 and pupils are making good progress, because a practically based curriculum stimulates their interest and encourages them to learn. Although pupils achieve well in reading and writing from their very low starting points, standards are below average by Year 2. Similar standards are reflected in the current Year 2, but there are signs of better standards in reading and writing in Year 1. These pupils have had a lengthier stay with their teachers in the Foundation Stage Unit and, some teaching of differing ability groups has proved effective. Pupils with severe communication difficulties and other learning needs achieve well, because of the excellent support they receive. Pupils achieve well in ICT as they use computers and interactive white boards regularly in all subjects.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils show good attitudes to learning and work well with others. Behaviour is excellent, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and understand the importance of diet and regular exercise. Attendance, though below average, is improving. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. They have a very good understanding of right and wrong and are learning very successfully about the feelings and beliefs of others. Pupils are gaining extremely well in their understanding about the world and marvel at how it changes. Keenly they watch for bulbs and flowers sprouting in their garden, and take part in projects to improve their environment. Pupils like to help each other and make regular visits into the local community, singing to local residents, or planting trees in a nearby wood. Pupils' are proud to give their views to influence the school's development, but they have few opportunities to assess their own learning and decide the next steps to take. Nevertheless, gains in basic skills are preparing them satisfactorily for their later life and learning.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

There are some outstanding features in teaching and learning. Staff are deployed well and work as effective teams. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and an excellent understanding of the needs of young children. They plan well-organised and carefully constructed lessons, which are well supported by a very good range of resources, including good use of ICT. The range of tasks is very well matched to meeting the differing levels of pupils' abilities. Teachers have high expectations and, with excellent relationships, pupils and teachers work well together. Teachers' marking provides information about lesson content, but does not give enough information about how well pupils are learning, or the next steps needed to improve their work. Some teachers make only limited use of pupils' targets to help them improve.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is practically based to suit the needs of its pupils. Subjects are linked effectively and supported very well with a wide range of trips and visits. A curriculum priority is the use of play, so that pupils learn skills that are important in daily life, such as learning about the care of pets in an animal hospital. The school is aware that, in Years 1 and 2, practical situations are focused mostly on social development, science, mathematics or ICT skills, and a greater emphasis is needed on reading and writing. Across the school there are bright, stimulating and challenging displays, which invite pupils to reflect on their world and observe changes around them. The Sunny Delight garden is a focus of the school community and its use contributes greatly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Staff know the pupils well and establish strong, caring relationships of trust with them. A home-school worker and a trained counsellor help children and their parents with problems or concerns. Joint initiatives with pre-school providers are used to create initial links with families, and help children make a smooth transition to school. Systems for health and safety, risk assessment, first aid and child protection are securely in place and there is rigorous monitoring of attendance and punctuality. Assessment information is analysed extensively to identify weaknesses in pupils' performance. There is a wide range of additional activities to help the more vulnerable pupils to play and learn effectively. Pupils with emotional and behavioral needs attend nurture groups where they work on a carefully adapted curriculum. Learning assistants give valuable support in lessons. Academic guidance is developing in Years 1 and 2. Although teachers know which pupils need support and guidance, their marking does not move learning on sufficiently. Pupils are aware of their learning targets, though they do not yet apply them consistently.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

An outstanding headteacher, ably supported by the deputy and chair of governors, has established a very effective and committed team of staff and governors. They have a very clear vision about the priorities for the school and its pupils. They work hard to sustain the pastoral care of pupils and raise standards over time. Every opportunity is taken to contribute to the growth of the local community, and their reputation as valued participants is high. Senior leaders and managers use their very good expertise in identifying areas requiring improvement and undertake extensive monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance. In planning changes, the views of pupils and parents are sought regularly in conjunction with the ideas of staff and governors. The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is outstanding. However, members of staff are keen to increase their roles in leadership and management, and in sharing expertise, as a result of their continued and effective professional development. The budget is managed very efficiently, so that money is targeted to perceived needs.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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 disabilities make progress	2

### 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

### 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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 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	2
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

19 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Siskin Infant and Nursery School, Gosport, PO13 8AA

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much, and finding out about all the exciting things, which you are doing. We think that your 'Sunny Delight Garden' is very attractive, and we understand why you like working there. We think that you go to a good school.

Here are the things we liked about your school:

- you are friendly and very welcoming
- your behaviour is excellent
- you enjoy school very much and work hard in all activities
- your teachers provide many exciting things for you to see and do
- you make an outstanding contribution to your community, especially by joining in local community events
- your headteacher and all the adults work very hard to make to your school even better
- your parents and carers are glad that you attend this school. They love to see your work.

To make your school even better we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do three things. We think that, in lessons and in your exercise books, the teachers could tell you more about how well you are doing and the next steps to take to get even better. In Years 1 and 2, we would like to see a greater range of things for you to do to improve your reading and writing. Also, we think that some of the teachers should have more opportunities to help in the development of your school.

We hope that you carry on enjoying the many interesting things provided for you. We are sure that your school will continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector