

Cumberland Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116192
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	312207
Inspection date	29 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Janet Sinclair

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	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs R Woodford
Headteacher	Mrs S Kett
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Methuen Road Southsea PO4 9HJ
Telephone number	02392 733161
Fax number	02392 827184

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Cumberland is a small infant school. It is settling down after some recent staffing difficulties. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and some face particular social and economic challenges. There is an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. The school has been awarded Enhanced Healthy Schools status and the Active Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Cumberland Infant is a satisfactory school, which ensures good personal development, good curricular enrichment and strong community links for its pupils. The headteacher has created a caring ethos, which enables pupils to become confident, motivated learners. The majority of parents are very happy with the school and are pleased with the effectiveness of the home-school partnership. As one parent commented, 'my child enjoys school and has made lots of new friends. All staff are helpful and supportive'.

Good provision in the Foundation Stage means that children make good progress across the areas of learning. Most are working within the goals expected by the start of Year 1, except in their writing, which is below expectations. Pupils reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. They make satisfactory progress in their reading and mathematics and good progress in their writing. Pupils with moderate learning or speech and language difficulties make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are well organised and managed, teaching assistants are effective and relationships are good. As a result, pupils enjoy their work and behave well. However, teachers do not always extend pupils' ideas or develop their thinking enough through challenging questioning or activities, and this hampers their progress.

Pupils are friendly and welcoming. They enjoy school and work well in lessons, which contributes to the progress they make. Through the effective school council, pupils have contributed to improvements such as the trim trail and playground markings. Although pupils enjoy what the school has to offer, attendance is broadly average. This is mainly because a small number of families persist in taking extended holidays in school time.

The curriculum is soundly planned to ensure continuity in pupils' learning and is enriched by a good range of after school clubs, visits and visitors. Pastoral care is good. Procedures to ensure pupils' health, safety and protection are robust. As a result, pupils feel safe and well cared for. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving as the school is beginning to make more effective use of curricular targets and tracking in order to accelerate pupils' progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory with good pastoral leadership ensuring pupils' good personal development and care. There is a sound school improvement plan and regular monitoring of teaching and learning, but these are not always evaluated rigorously enough to secure good improvement in pupils' academic achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. The school has worked hard to maintain provision since the last inspection given the impact of staffing issues on such a small school. It is clear about the importance of the revised curricular targets and improved procedures for tracking progress as a means of improving pupils' performance. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join this small infant school with a wide range of skills and abilities that are generally below expectations in literacy and numeracy. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage because they are well cared for and relationships are very good. This ensures good personal development. Children have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening through group and class discussion, but their progress in writing is hampered because they do not have enough opportunities for independent writing. The effective use of the 'plan, do,

review' system enables children to choose activities and this helps them to collaborate with each other as well as giving them some independence in their learning. However, the small number of children in the mixed Reception/ Year 1 class have fewer opportunities for this due to the restrictions imposed by the size of the accommodation and being part of a mixed age class.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all lessons are challenging and questioning is used more effectively so that pupils' rates of progress are accelerated.
- Ensure that the curricular targets set for individuals and groups are sufficiently challenging and regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure pupils achieve them.
- Ensure senior leaders rigorously evaluate all improvement and monitoring initiatives in order to improve the outcomes 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

Over time standards in Year 2 have been average or slightly above. There was a slight downward trend in standards during the recent staffing turbulence but this has now been addressed and pupils currently in Year 2 are on target to reach slightly above average standards overall. Progress across Key Stage 1 is satisfactory in reading and mathematics, with good progress in writing due to the opportunities pupils get to write for a variety of purposes. Pupils with moderate learning or speech and language difficulties make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans and on specific intervention programmes.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy their time in school and in discussions they said, 'There are lots of events and different activities and it is fun'. They behave well in class and around school, collaborate well with each other on activities and are kind and courteous to each other. Very occasionally, they lose interest when lessons do not fully engage them. They feel safe within school and know that any member of staff will help if they have a problem.

Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils devise their own class rules and learn to respect each other's views in Circle Time. They learn about other cultures through festivals such as Diwali. Pupils know about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and enjoy their daily fruit and vegetables as well as the many physical activities on offer at playtime. Good links with the community are shown in the school council's successful fundraising for Children in Need, recycling projects and classroom responsibilities. These personal skills, along with their acquisition of basic skills, prepare them satisfactorily for their future life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers plan and organise lessons well and expect good behaviour from pupils. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and concentrate well. Learning support assistants, work well with small groups and individuals to support learning. A strength of the teaching is the good opportunities provided for paired and collaborative work, enabling pupils to fully develop their speaking and listening skills as well as contributing to their personal development. Sometimes a lack of challenge in teachers' questioning or planned activities hinders pupils' progress. Additionally there is an over use of worksheets, which limits the development of pupils' own skills in setting out of work or designing investigations. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and tell them what they have done well. They do not routinely tell them what they need to do to improve or ensure it happens.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. However, there are currently few effective opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum. Cross-curricular links are only now being established. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and personal safety through, for example, involvement in the enhanced healthy schools award and the personal, social and health education programme. There are many trips, visits and special events, which the pupils enjoy. These, alongside the good number of after school clubs such as yoga, football and dance, contribute well to their personal development. The breakfast club and after school club are especially well attended. Parents are supportive of the school and take part in many of its activities, for example, the reading group sessions where they find out how to support their children's reading more effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school has focused very successfully in ensuring pupils not only enjoy school but also feel safe. All policies and procedures to safeguard pupils and ensure their well-being, health and safety are fully in place. Parents appreciate this level of commitment and comments such as 'the school really cares about our children' are frequent. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified at an early stage and appropriately supported. The school works effectively with parents and outside agencies to ensure their needs are fully met.

Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. Pupils are now fully involved in their targets for literacy and numeracy and can monitor the progress they are making towards them. An added benefit is the sharing of targets with parents so that they can also help to ensure their children achieve them. However, targets are not always sufficiently challenging. Tracking has been stream-lined so that the school now has a clearer view of progress over time, and can use this information more effectively to inform planning and target setting.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and her deputy provide good pastoral leadership and sound academic direction for the work of the school. Subject leaders, some of whom are fairly new, have been well supported and are developing their roles satisfactorily. Good training for learning support assistants in literacy intervention programmes has been very successful and has ensured that the pupils involved have made good progress. All staff work together well as a team and are keen to bring about further improvement.

Self evaluation is satisfactory. The school recently carried out a review of its procedures for target setting and tracking pupils' progress. As a result, it has been able to set more focused individual and group targets for literacy and numeracy and these are slowly beginning to have an impact on improving overall provision and rates of progress. There is regular monitoring of teaching. However, this does not take sufficient account of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and the progress they make. Additionally, although the school improvement plan is detailed and clearly identifies the most important areas for improvement, specified outcomes are not always clear, making it difficult to measure effectively the success of initiatives.

Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are fully supportive. They are starting to hold the school to account, but need to be more fully involved in monitoring the initiatives designed to bring about improvements.

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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?	3
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

13 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cumberland Infant School, Southsea, PO4 9HJ

I am writing to thank you for being so friendly and helping us with the inspection. We enjoyed chatting to you and were pleased to learn how much you enjoy school and the opportunities it offers.

We think that Cumberland is a satisfactory school with some good features.

Here are the things we like about your school.

- You get a good start to school in Reception.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do well with their writing.
- You enjoy school, especially all the extra activities you have, and are keen to learn.
- You are well cared for and in turn are thoughtful and kind to each other.

These are the things we have asked your school to work on.

- Ensure that your targets are sufficiently challenging and that you are all working hard enough to achieve them.
- Check that all of the plans to help you improve your work are working well enough.
- Ensure that all lessons challenge you fully through questioning and the work you are given, so that you all make the best progress possible.

I wish you all the best for your future success.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Sinclair

Lead Inspector