

Nursling Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116303
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312250
Inspection dates	26–27 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Scott
Headteacher	Mrs Lorina Smith
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2002
School address	Nursling Street Nursling Southampton SO16 0XH
Telephone number	02380 732289
Fax number	02380 739733

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school has few pupils entitled to free school meals. Pupils come predominantly from a White British background and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average. In recent years, there has been considerable staff upheaval. The school is nationally recognised through the Enhanced Healthy School and Active Mark awards.

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 education for its pupils. One parent wrote correctly that, 'The school has a well-rounded approach to the whole child'. Pupils progress well academically and outstandingly in their personal development. The headteacher has a very clear vision about how the school can improve. This, together with a very strong focus on reviewing and reflecting upon current practice, is shared well with staff, and leads to improvement. For example, improvements in the standards and provision in information and communication technology (ICT), history and geography since the last inspection have been good. The school makes good use of external partners, including the church, to help support learners. The school is moving forward and there is a good capacity to improve.

Pupils achieved well and attained above average standards in the national tests in 2007 at the end of Year 2. This represents good achievement for pupils given their starting points. The most able seven year olds did very well in the 2007 tests in reading and mathematics. They did not do quite so well in writing, reflecting their lower writing levels at the start of Year 1. The picture of standards and achievement in Key Stage 2 has been more mixed. Over recent years, the standards have been broadly average, reflecting the impact of staff upheaval, including the leadership and management of core subjects. The situation is now stable, and the result has been an improvement in standards, which for current pupils are good. Pupils are achieving well.

Pupils benefit from good teaching overall. However, occasionally, inconsistencies in practice exist. For example, the final part of some lessons do not sufficiently identify what pupils have found difficult or what they have learnt well. Consequently, there are missed opportunities for teachers to identify where further reinforcement of pupils' learning is required. In some lessons, progress slows because teachers' questioning is insufficiently challenging.

A further reason for pupils' good progress is that their personal development is outstanding. They behave extremely well, care for, and are eager to help, each other. They make an outstanding contribution to the community. Pupils have positive attitudes to work, want to learn and be involved in their learning. They thrive in a safe, caring and secure environment, and say that the adults listen to, and respect their views. The good curriculum provides a wide range of learning activities. Pupils enjoy school, and talk excitedly about the various things that they have to do. Pastoral support and guidance is very good. Pupils have academic targets, but they are insufficiently reinforced in lessons, and opportunities are missed in marking to identify how pupils can improve their work.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. Careful planning, secure monitoring and evaluation systems, help ensure a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. Managers, at all levels, use their monitoring well to produce their own self-evaluation document. This aids the identification of areas for development whilst ensuring a focus on standards. All staff accept responsibility for pupils' progress and meet regularly with senior managers to review and discuss achievement levels and plan future strategies.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision and the management in the Foundation Stage are good. Children enter with knowledge and skills that are generally in line with those expected of their age. Their physical development is above expectations, but writing levels are below. The adults know the children well, and consequently plan activities that accurately match their needs. Good teaching helps ensure that children achieve well. On leaving Reception the majority of children achieve or exceed the levels that are expected of their age. Children settle well, feel confident and are happy. The exciting learning environment and the well thought out activities make learning fun for young children. Although resources are used well to extend learning, the outdoor area limits the opportunities pupils have to extend and practise their skills and knowledge. Parents are happy about the support they and their children receive.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils to improve more by regularly reinforcing their learning targets in lessons, and by ensuring that marking identifies the next steps in their learning.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that it consistently reflects the school's best practice.
- Ensure that Reception children have more opportunities to extend and practise their skills and knowledge outdoors through the further development of the outdoor area.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards, at the end of Year 2, are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the 2007 national tests for eleven year olds, pupils' standards were average in English and mathematics. The below average standards in science was the consequence of staffing and management difficulties. Most pupils in this small cohort achieved satisfactorily. School analysis identified shortcomings in the pupils' knowledge and accurate use of scientific vocabulary. A whole-school focus on this has contributed to a recovery in standards in science, which are now good. Current standards in Year 6 are above average. These pupils left Year 2 with average standards and are consequently achieving well. This includes pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Regular assessments enable the school to identify quickly where additional support is required.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

One pupil reflected the feelings of others when commenting, 'I enjoy the school because we do lots of fun things and people are kind'. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their multi-cultural understanding is met well by specific activities, such as theme weeks and the good links with Nyaksynga School. However, they have a less deep understanding of the diverse cultures and traditions found in Britain today. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They react enthusiastically to the wide range of physical activities on offer, particularly those offered by the specialist coach. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and local community, adopting responsible attitudes to their work as school councillors, monitors, and mentors. They are fully involved in local recycling, fair-trading activities, and

charity fundraising. Such activities, along with good standards in basic skills such as ICT, prepare them well for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils want to learn because relationships are very good. This contributes to the establishment of a positive learning environment where pupils are confident. They have positive attitudes and want to get involved in lessons and the interactive whiteboards are used well to motivate pupils. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to give clear explanations at the start of lessons. 'Teachers encourage you and they explain things to you', said one older pupil. Teachers use assessment information well to plan for individual needs. However, they are less skilled in using questioning to further challenge pupils during whole class sessions. This slows down the progress for some pupils. Effective support from teaching assistants contributes well to the good progress of lower attaining pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum effectively provides for the development of basic skills. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of out of school activities that inspire them and promote their personal, social and academic development. They talk enthusiastically about how they enjoy being able to play a musical instrument and taking part in sports activities. One pupil said, 'Every child gets a chance to be involved in sports even if they are not very good at it'. They say they enjoy activities such as the residential trips, clubs, other visits and visitors. The curriculum is under review with more opportunities now provided for pupils to investigate, to solve problems and make links between subjects; the school acknowledges the need to provide even more of these opportunities. Specialist help from the local secondary school is used well to extend pupils interests and skills through the introduction of French and the 'Able Child programme'. Pupils knowledge of how to keep safe and stay healthy is effectively developed through the personal, social, health and citizenship education and through theme weeks such as the 'healthy school week'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils feel safe, know the adults care for them, respect and listen to them. For example, the 'learning detectives' identified that there were differences between the older and younger pupils' classrooms regarding displays. The school addressed this, and pupils now say that all classrooms are bright and have 'lots of our work on display'. There is a good range of support for pupils, both from within and outside the school. In particular, pupils benefit well from occupational therapy courses run by a trained learning support assistant. Teaching assistants also work effectively to reinforce pupils' learning in areas such as spelling, phonics, and key word recognition. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well cared for and the support they receive is effectively monitored for impact. Opportunities are missed in lessons to consistently involve pupils in evaluating the progress they are making towards their literacy and numeracy targets. They are not reinforced consistently in teachers' marking.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership of the headteacher and her deputy has resulted in a shared understanding about the direction for school development. Staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. All managers are involved in a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation cycle, which leads to the accurate identification of areas for development. On occasions, managers do not establish a benchmark against which they can fully judge the impact of their initiatives. Recently, managing teams have been established where staff share responsibility for various subject areas. Besides giving staff the opportunity to develop their monitoring and general management skills, this also minimises the negative impact of long-term absence, and teachers or managers who leave. Subject action plans link well with the whole school development plan and effectively guide the professional development of staff. Governors visit regularly and give good support to the school.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	2

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

5 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nursling Church of England Primary School, Southampton, SO16 0XH

Thank you for welcoming us into your school during our recent visit. You were eager to tell us about your school and we listened carefully to what you had to say.

Like you, we believe you go to a good school. It does some things very well indeed. The way it helps you to develop as young people, the way you behave, care for, and help each other, are outstanding. Your knowledge of how to stay healthy and safe is excellent. We liked the way you are extremely eager to help within the school as well as outside, and that you are very concerned about things such as re-cycling. Your school councillors and learning detectives carry out their work very responsibly. Well done!

You progress well in your work because you have very good attitudes and receive good teaching. You told us that teachers make your lessons fun. We have asked the school to make some lessons even better. Many of you told us about the learning targets you have in literacy and numeracy. However not all of you know them or how to make the best use of them to improve your work. We have asked your teachers to remind you more often about your targets so that you use them more.

Your headteacher and other adults work hard, and successfully, to ensure that the school runs smoothly and that it is a pleasant place in which to learn. You told us that you feel safe and we saw for ourselves how well the adults care for you, and respect you. They are very concerned to make sure that the school improves even more. We have suggested that the outside area in Reception should be made even better.

Thank you again. On behalf of my team, I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Pye

Lead inspector