

Nine Acres Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118164
Local Authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	312829
Inspection date	18 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	351
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Stott
Headteacher	Mr Steve Bartlett
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	South View Newport PO30 1QP
Telephone number	01983 522984
Fax number	01983 533356

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated the provision for and progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the achievement of more able pupils, and the impact on the curriculum and pupils' progress of recent changes made by school leaders. The inspectors met with pupils, some staff and governors. Parts of lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including its self-evaluation, was scrutinised. 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 is a large school. There are more boys than girls in most year groups. In the current Year 4, and in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the boys outnumber the girls by nearly two to one. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mostly for speech and language delay and moderate learning difficulties. The overwhelming majority of the pupils are White British. The headteacher was appointed in September 2007.

The Nineacres Playgroup shares the school site. Its independently managed provision for children in the EYFS is the subject of a separate inspection report.

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 school. With scaling ambition, it sets out its vision 'To be the best in the world'. It cannot claim to have yet achieved this aim, but the pace of recent change has been rapid and there is certainly a buzz of excitement from staff, pupils and parents alike.

The headteacher and leadership team have had particular success in creating a stimulating environment where the emphasis is strongly on pupils developing their learning and thinking skills. Parents comment on the 'fun and exciting approach to the curriculum,' which includes much learning through discovery and investigation. The changes to the curriculum are new and, as with the other changes introduced over the past year, they are too recent to have shown a measurable impact on standards. However, their impact on pupils' enthusiasm is already very evident. Pupils greatly enjoy school. They are very well motivated, and this translates into an enthusiasm for learning that leads them to work at a good pace and get a lot done. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT), including the interactive whiteboards in every class, to provide varied activities that the pupils describe as 'interesting and fun'.

Good teaching and learning, and the good curriculum, help girls and boys to make good progress in relation to their starting points so that they achieve well both academically and in their personal development. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Too often, however, pupils of different capabilities are given very similar work to do. Pupils who need extra help with their learning cope well because they generally benefit from good support. It is more able pupils who do not do as well as they could because, for them, the work is, as they themselves say, 'sometimes too easy'. As a result, standards overall are average. In some subjects, such as in art and music, the pupils reach standards that are above those expected for their age.

Pupils feel safe at school because they are looked after well and because behaviour is good. They also benefit from good academic guidance, so that, as a Year 2 pupil explained, 'I look at my work and think how I can make it better next time.' Pupils know their targets and understand the marking system, which is helping to improve, for example, the accuracy of pupils' written work. Spelling, which was identified as a weakness in the last inspection, is better as a result. Pupils enjoy learning about their own and other cultures. They are knowledgeable about the need for exercise and a healthy diet, although they do not always practise what they preach when it comes to choosing healthy eating options. They show a great pride in the responsibilities they take on, for example, as school councillors, and initiatives such as the 'My Memories Book' (a bound portfolio each Year 4 pupil has showing examples and photographs of what they have done) are helping to raise pupils' confidence and pride in their work.

Although several school leaders are new to their roles, leadership and management are good because the headteacher, governors and staff team have a sharply accurate picture of how well the school is doing and where improvements have been needed. This also shows the school's good capacity for continued improvement. School leaders have made radical changes, particularly to the curriculum, which have helped enthuse pupils but which have also maintained the confidence of the school's supportive parents. Parents, in turn, commend the school's 'community spirit and feeling' and the way in which, 'The teachers are friendly and you always feel welcome.' Among the initiatives being developed by school leaders and greatly appreciated

by parents is a strengthening of the educational partnership with them, for example, by developing family learning workshops for them to work alongside their children.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Well managed and coordinated provision in the EYFS helps the children in the three parallel Reception classes to make good progress in all areas of learning, and to enjoy themselves. The Reception classes receive a significant proportion of their intake from the separately managed pre-school provision on the school site, with a third coming from elsewhere. Links with pre-schools have improved well, and children quickly settle when they start in the Reception classes, although there is scope for closer cooperation over children's EYFS progress to help them to get off to a faster start in Reception. The children start school with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their ages, but their progress and achievement is good, particularly in fostering communication, language and emergent literacy skills. Good numeracy activities, including use of simple programmable toys, help to embed the children's knowledge of number and logical thinking. As a result, standards by the end of the Reception Year are broadly in line with those expected for the children's ages. The personal development and well-being of the children are good, with an appropriate emphasis on their social and emotional development. A good sense of community is evident in class routines such as circle time (where children sit in a circle and share and listen to each other's views), the start and completion of activities, and story sharing. Healthy eating is promoted by eating fruit together and consuming milk at morning break, and waste fruit is placed in a clean recycling bin with a compostable liner that is fetched by a responsible child. Praise, simple rewards and celebration of personal goals help to support growing independence. There is good partnership between teachers and adult helpers that promotes effective welfare and good day-to-day assessment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that in all lessons work is better matched to pupils' different capabilities, particularly to ensure that more able pupils are challenged to achieve their very best.

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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	3
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	1
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

01 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nine Acres Primary School, Newport, PO30 1QP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Some of you told us how much you enjoy school. We could see why. Yours is a good school where you get lots of interesting and exciting things to do. Most of you make good progress from Reception through to Year 4 because your teachers help to make your learning fun. Some of you told us, however, that your work is sometimes too easy for you. We have asked the school to make sure that they always set you work that challenges you.

Your school is well run and your headteacher and the staff have made quite a lot of changes over the past year. We could see how enthusiastic you are about the new 'learning model' that is helping you to think more for yourselves. Your parents, too, like the way the school works with them to help you with your learning. It was good to see how well behaved you are and how you help each other, including through the school council.

You are looked after well while you are at school. You know and make use of your targets and these, and teachers' helpful marking, are helping you to improve your work. It is early days for some of the changes to have had effect in raising standards but I could see that your spelling is already coming on because of the school's marking policy. You can help to make your work even better by making sure you concentrate hard on your spellings and on learning from the comments that teachers write when they mark your work.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead Inspector