

Niton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118165
Local Authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	312830
Inspection date	29 April 2008
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	Community
Age range of pupils	5-9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Metcalfe
Headteacher	Mrs Ingrid Ramsdale-Capper
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2004
School address	School Lane Niton Ventnor PO38 2BP
Telephone number	01983 730209
Fax number	01983 730209

Age group	5-9
Inspection date	29 April 2008
Inspection number	312830

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, and investigated:

- the quality and impact of leadership on standards and achievement, particularly in writing and for higher attaining pupils
- whether lesson planning and the curriculum reflects the effective use of assessment information
- the quality of academic support and guidance for pupils.

The inspector gathered evidence from an analysis of information and data about pupils' achievement provided by the school, observations of parts of lessons, scrutiny of parents' questionnaires and other documents, and discussions with the headteacher, the Chair of Governors, other managers, and pupils. The inspector did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These judgements have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The pupils in this smaller than average primary school come from a primarily White British background. There are below the average number of pupils entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is well below average, and there are two pupils with a statement of special educational needs. This group tends to be learners with moderate learning difficulties. The school is nationally recognised through the Healthy School Award, Artsmark Gold and Activemark, Quality Mark, and is an Ecoschool.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school provides a good education for its pupils. The personal development of pupils, the curriculum and the quality of pastoral care are outstanding. One parent was accurate when writing, 'The school provides an enviable breadth of experiences for the children, and this combined with professional expertise and strong leadership make for a most rewarding environment.'

Pupils' entry levels vary year on year but are broadly as expected. Usually, on entry to Year 1, pupils have met or exceeded the expected learning goals for their age. Pupils, including high attainers, make good progress and attain above average standards. In 2007, Year 2 pupils attained above average standards in writing and reading and were well above average in mathematics. This was a slight dip on the previous year, reflecting the impact of a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in this small cohort. Pupils continue to achieve well and leave Year 4 with above the expected levels of skills and knowledge in English, mathematics and science.

A contributory factor to the pupils' progress is their outstanding personal development; they behave well and are polite. Pupils develop very well as independent learners. The school has adopted the promotion of critical skills. This results in pupils being encouraged to investigate, and to work co-operatively. They work extremely well together, share ideas and resources, and show a very great enjoyment of their learning. They have an outstanding understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Walking, in this coastal area is part of school life, and often involves families. It links well to pupils' learning, for example, when pupils use the locality to study plant and animal life. Pupils' attendance since the last inspection has improved. The school continues to do all it can to raise parents' awareness of the need to take holidays outside of the school term. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community. For example, in school they act as school councillors, or eco-warriors, whilst outside the school they have researched aspects of rural post offices and delivered a petition to Downing Street. The above average standards of basic skills, including information and communication technology, together with the teamwork encouraged through the critical skills approach helps ensure that these pupils are extremely well prepared for the future.

Senior leaders carry out effective monitoring of teaching and learning, and this helps ensure the maintenance of good teaching. Teachers make good use of the new pupil tracking system to plan appropriate work for pupils, and provide them with activities that meet their different learning styles. Consequently, they respond positively and achieve well. As one pupil said, 'the teachers make it easier for us to learn'. Very positive relationships exist in lessons and pupils are keen to get involved. Lessons have good pace, because pupils know clearly what they need to learn. On occasions, the learning objectives could be further developed to challenge pupils on a more personal basis. They know that their views are respected and are prepared to risk mistakes.

The curriculum provides extremely good links between subjects, which as one pupil said, make learning 'come alive'. Pupils studying the theme of voyage of discovery learnt mapping skills, symmetry and direction in mathematics, keeping safe as part of their good personal and health education programme, and linked their learning to the Ancient Greeks and Egyptians in history and art. A strength of the school is the flexibility it brings to curriculum delivery. Effective learning assistants lead small group work where individual needs are able to be met. Also, Years

3 and 4 are combined to study English and mathematics and this allows pupils to be grouped by ability and challenged appropriately. Those pupils with gifts and talents are well provided for by such measures, as well as some good opportunities outside the school, such as sporting academies and musical experiences. Pupils and parents praised the extra-curricular activities and enhancement opportunities there are for their children.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The school maximises the opportunity afforded by its small size to ensure that it knows the pupils and their families well. Pupils feel safe, and know who to approach if they have a problem. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well, and this results from some good evaluation of the impact of the support provided. Some aspects of academic guidance and support require further development. Most pupils know their learning targets and are able to use them to improve their work. However, there are inconsistencies in the degree to which teachers reinforce, for example, literacy targets in all subjects, or when marking, refer to them and the next steps in pupils' learning.

The very good leadership of the headteacher has resulted in the establishment of a very clear and shared vision, based on continual improvement. Induction of new staff reinforces well the message of high expectations. All staff benefit from the effective use of monitoring and performance management to help develop them professionally, and thereby benefit the school. On-going evaluation is part of school life. Its impact at the whole school level is very apparent in the introduction of the new mathematics approach and reflects a good capacity to improve the school. Despite well above average standards the school was not complacent. After research and thorough training, a new approach was adopted. Current Year 2 pupils are on track to attain high standards, and speak confidently about numeracy, and their great enjoyment of mathematics. There are inconsistencies in the quality of evaluation and action planning by subject leaders. Their evaluations do not always have a sufficient focus on standards and achievement across the school. Action planning does not always show starting points against which measurable success criteria can be judged. Governance is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Overall, the entry levels into Reception vary, but broadly meet or slightly exceed expectations. The children achieve well, largely because of good teaching and management of this stage. On occasions, teachers' questioning could further challenge the children's knowledge and understanding. The children share resources and work well together. They also contribute extremely well to their community, for example, when researching and publishing the impact of dogs on the locality. They respond well to the varied opportunities they have in lessons, showing excitement when faced with Joseph and his dreamcoat. Consequently, they started to explore colours, whilst linking their learning to a school production.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that there is a more consistent approach by teachers to reinforcing pupils' learning targets in all subjects, and that the next step in pupils' learning is made clear in marking.
- Remove the inconsistencies in subject leadership regarding their evaluation of standards and achievement levels across the school, and in their use of criteria in action plans, against which progress is measured.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	1

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?	1
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

12 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Niton Primary School, Ventnor, PO38 2BP

You may remember my recent visit to your school. You were keen to talk to me and I listened carefully. Thank you for your welcome, and I agree with you that the school is good. I also believe that in some areas it is outstanding. This means it does some things very well, especially in the way it helps you develop as young people, the learning opportunities you have, and the way it cares for you. You told me you feel safe and respected.

You have very positive attitudes to your work, and this together with the good teaching you have, helps you to progress well in your schoolwork. You told me that teachers make lessons fun, and I like the way they plan activities that match the different ways in which you learn. I have asked that when they mark your books you are given a clear idea about what to do next to improve your work.

I liked the way you take part in walking trips and that you realise that this helps you keep healthy and fit. Good luck when you 'Walk the Wight'. I am extremely pleased that you told me how much you enjoy school and your lessons, particularly the new approach to mathematics.

The school provides you with a large number of very good activities, both in and out of the classroom. I liked the way you can now join up your learning, for example, studying maps of Egypt while learning the history and art of that country. Many, but not all of you, know your learning targets and use them well to improve your work. Some, but not all of your teachers, remind you about your targets in lessons such as history, and I have asked that they all do this. This will help you remember, but you can also help by telling your teachers when you find the targets too easy or too hard.

Your headteacher leads the school very well, and like the other adults wants to further improve things. I have asked leaders to keep a close eye on how you are progressing. This will help them to identify any things they need to take action over.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pye

Lead Inspector