

Petersfield Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115936
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326295
Inspection date	27 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Bernice Magson

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	273
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	Mrs Louise Brown
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Lee
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St Peter's Road Petersfield GU32 3HX
Telephone number	01730 263048
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how effective are strategies to arrest the dip in standards in mathematics and eradicate the differences in the performance of boys and girls in national tests, and how effective are leaders and managers in maintaining the school's strengths and developing it further. Evidence was gathered from the school's records, planning and policies, from observing teaching and learning, from discussions with staff, pupils and governors and from a scrutiny of parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but 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 in the report.

Description of the school

This is a large infant school situated in the centre of the market town of Petersfield. Most pupils are of White British origin and a few are from a range of minority ethnic groups. Pupils are admitted in the autumn term of the school year in which they are five years of age. Average numbers of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including moderate learning needs, autism, and speech and communication difficulties. A very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has a Becta Award for information and communication technology (ICT), a bronze Eco-Award, an Activemark for sport and enhanced Healthy Schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'What a great school, I couldn't have wished for a better start for my child', commented one parent expressing the views of many. Indeed, in this outstanding school, pupils are extremely happy and achieve very well. 'Everyone is special and everybody has gifts' are central to the school's philosophy and this motto is included in the school song. Pupils are encouraged to be supportive and respectful of others' views. They are making excellent progress in developing as responsible citizens and in learning basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT important for their future economic well-being. Pupils join enthusiastically in community activities, visiting senior citizens and raising considerable funds for local and national charities. As 'eco warriors', pupils are focusing on developing sustainability within their own environment, participating in activities to reduce, reuse and recycle materials, such as at a 'waste-free lunch'. Parents praise the strong emphasis on 'environmental issues which ensure that children are growing up understanding that we all need to look after our world.'

From average starting points, pupils have attained exceptionally high standards in national results in reading, writing and mathematics over a five-year period. In 2008, there was a slight dip in standards in mathematics, because there were fewer pupils attaining the higher levels. Nevertheless, standards remained well above national and county averages and significant numbers of pupils attain the higher levels. The progress of pupils is tracked rigorously and any slight dip in performance is addressed early. Strategies to achieve improvement are monitored robustly to ensure they are fully effective. Recently, the curriculum has been refined, new equipment has been purchased and a wider range of teaching methods have been used to eradicate any differences in the performance of boys and girls. Early evidence indicates that this has been successful and all pupils achieve equally well. Additional tasks have been introduced that enable pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills more effectively. The school's assessments show that pupils are well on track to reach their challenging targets.

Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and participate enthusiastically in all activities. Relationships and behaviour are outstanding. Pupils are very good communicators, expressing their ideas confidently and listening intently to the opinions of others. This is because teachers are excellent role models and pupils are eager to meet their high expectations for behaviour and inclusion in activities. Pupils work hard in lessons and are proud of their achievements, which they celebrate in class, assemblies, and in daily meetings with the headteacher. Parents and members of the community appreciate the opportunity to view children's work in school and at the annual school parade, which culminates in a display in the town square. Attendance is good.

The quality of teaching and the curriculum are outstanding. The curriculum is enriched by many first-hand learning experiences in school and the locality. A visit to 'Pizza Express' was popular with pupils and led to pizza-making sessions in school, for example. The care and welfare of pupils is a high priority so that all pupils feel safe and secure and are eager to attend. Learning is matched extremely well to individual needs. Improvement targets are set for each pupil and shared with parents. Support is organised for individuals and small groups and, as a result, the pace of learning is excellent. Lessons are extremely well structured and resourced. Pupils have a very clear understanding of what they are expected to learn. They are involved in regular conferencing with adults about the quality of their work. However, teachers' marking in exercise books is inconsistent in quality and, as a result, some pupils find it difficult to measure their success and the next steps to take in learning.

Leadership and management are excellent. An outstanding headteacher, supported by a very able deputy headteacher, provide the school with an excellent direction in maintaining high standards and introducing improvements. For example, an extensive programme of training is underway for staff and parents so that pupils have many opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills at school or at home. Under the guidance of the headteacher, leadership is shared very well among staff and governors. Staff expertise is used to great advantage to raise standards and remove barriers to learning for individuals. For example, following extensive developments, computers and interactive whiteboards are often used to support the learning of pupils. Self-assessment is strong and strategic planning is tightly managed, challenged and reviewed. Financial management is efficient. Actions are monitored robustly to ensure value for money. Parents appreciate the outstanding quality of school leadership. 'I'm completely amazed at the way our school grows, changes and improves', commented one parent. 'The headteacher, staff and governors are not complacent and are always looking for ways to make things better.' This very effective organisation with a strong focus on high standards, and shared commitment to provide pupils with an effective learning environment, shows that there is an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start to their education in the Reception year. In a warm, friendly and supportive environment, children develop as confident learners. Relationships and behaviour are excellent and children have a very good understanding of right and wrong. In lessons, concentration levels are high. Children learn extremely well because of a well-planned curriculum with an excellent balance between adult-led activities and child-initiated play. There is an extensive range of facilities both indoors and out, and well-planned visits and visitors enhance learning experiences. Good links are made between subjects. For instance, children were involved in playing in the toy shop, making shopping lists, discussing purchases and counting money. Teaching is of an outstanding quality because staff understand extremely well how the young child learns. Adults engage children in meaningful conversations to encourage discovery, promote speaking and listening and improve personal development. Leadership and management are outstanding ensuring that children make excellent progress. The year group leader, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is rigorous in tracking children's progress and planning experiences to best suit the needs of individuals. From average starting points, many children reach beyond expected goals for their age in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking is of a consistent quality across 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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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	1
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**

09 December 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Petersfield Infant School, Petersfield, GU32 3HX

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the exciting things you are doing. We can see why you are all so proud of the adventure playground and other exciting play activities outdoors. We think that your school is outstanding. We liked these things most about your school.

- You reach high standards, well above those in most schools, particularly in your reading, writing and mathematics.
- You work hard in lessons because there are many exciting things to do.
- The teachers plan activities that interest and challenge you very well.
- You have a very good understanding of how to eat healthily and enjoy taking part in many sports.
- You understand very well the importance of taking care of the environment in school, locally and overseas.
- Your parents and carers are very glad that you go to this school.
- The school is very well led by your headteacher.
- All the adults are working very hard to make your school even better.

To make your school even better we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to make sure that all teachers explain clearly how well you are doing so that you know how to improve.

We hope that you carry on enjoying your time at Petersfield Infant School. We are sure that your school will continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector