

# Newtown Soberton Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115931
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	338685
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Collard

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	62
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pam Cook
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Eastwood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Church Road Newtown Fareham PO17 6LF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed eight lessons or parts of lessons taught by four teachers. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation provided by the school, including monitoring information and minutes of meetings as well as safeguarding arrangements. They held meetings with pupils, staff and governors and talked informally to some parents and carers. They analysed 38 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and returns from the staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether attainment is likely to stay at the same high levels as it has been for the last few years and how well pupils are progressing
- how well the systems for community cohesion are embedded and whether there are good forward plans to continue the development of pupils' awareness of other beliefs and cultures
- whether subject leaders play a full and active role in whole-school improvements.

## Information about the school

This much smaller-than-average rural infant school serves a wide catchment area from local villages. Its popularity has improved and numbers are rising. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and there are no pupils with statements of special educational needs. Most pupils are from a White British background, although there are a significant minority of pupils from a Gypsy/Roma heritage. A privately owned pre-school operates from premises within the school. Since the last inspection, the school has affiliated with the local church.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

### Main findings

This outstanding school has continued to improve extremely well from a good starting point at the last inspection. This is because there has been a high focus on ensuring all pupils, but particularly those who are capable of achieving higher levels, are challenged to do their best. As a result, pupils attain high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave in Year 2 and are extremely well prepared for the rest of their schooling. In addition, they show exemplary behaviour, have excellent attitudes and enjoy school greatly. As a group of Year 2 pupils said, "We cannot think of anything that needs changing." The highly professional and effective headteacher, along with strong support from other staff and governors, has honed in on developing those areas that will make the most difference. This has ensured there is consistently good and, on occasions, outstanding teaching which results in pupils making excellent progress in their learning.

Although children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment that is above that expected for their age, they get off to a rapid start. They settle quickly and adjust readily to working with their friends and classmates. They have particularly good social skills which helps them to work and play both independently and when with adults. Many already work above the level expected by the end of the Reception Year and have started on work that will be expected in Year 1. Transition is good, with the Year 1 teachers working alongside them and helping to prepare pupils for more formal work later. Through Years 1 and 2, this extremely rapid progress continues in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics and in a number of other subjects. For example, pupils talked about exciting work they had done in science, learning about electricity, and about the work they had completed on various history and art topics. The new computers have brought an added dimension to the work, although this is still at an early stage of development. However, staff are not confident to exploit these to the fullest extent across all areas of the curriculum. Staff training is underway to enhance everybody's skills and so make the most of the resource. Pupils provide excellent support for their local community and are actively involved in various initiatives. More widely, they have fewer connections with schools from different parts of this country or abroad so pupils do not have such a good understanding about different traditions and cultures.

Self-evaluation is extremely rigorous, well founded and accurate. It provides good evidence for the governors to question any decisions about relatively weaker areas of the provision. For example, while still at average levels, there has been a fall in attendance, and the governing body, along with the headteacher, is working with the local cluster of schools to develop a common approach as to how and when absences

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should be authorised. This strong leadership and management, along with the impressive rise in attainment and progress of pupils, all points to a school with an excellent capacity to continue improving further.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the progress of pupils still further by continuing to develop better cross-curricular links within information and communication technology and developing the provision for community cohesion.
- Raise attendance levels by developing ways of encouraging parents and carers to understand the need for regular attendance and by implementing a clear policy for accepting or declining requests for term-time absences.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

The last two years of national test results for those in Year 2 have been significantly high and particularly so in writing. From the work in pupils' books and from the evidence seen in lessons, it is clear that, although attainment is slightly lower this year, the momentum of improvement has continued. It is lower because this group as a whole started in Reception with lower attainment. Thus, the progress of all pupils, including those from different backgrounds, continues to be excellent. This high level of progress is due to the consistency within the learning and the way that pupils apply themselves to their work. When asked to work independently, they concentrate hard and, at times and for long periods, with almost no chatter. They collaborate well, ask each other questions and listen to each other's views. In one mathematics lesson, for example, pupils worked as a whole class on word problems. They took note of what was asked of them and asked pertinent questions to ensure they could complete their own independent task following this. This involved working successfully on highly challenging two-step calculations using real-life problems to solve. The pupils enthusiastically searched out an inspector later to talk about what they had done. It is this combination of learning new skills and applying them in situations they might not be familiar with, along with an understanding about what they need to do to improve, that ensures that pupils consolidate what they have previously learnt.

For their age, pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe, fit and healthy. In their own way, they talk about the reasons for a balanced diet and about how they need to take care when out and about. They relish the opportunities to be active, either in the playground, when playing sports with other schools or through various after-school clubs, such as tap dancing run by the Chair of the Governing Body. Links with the church help develop pupils' spirituality, although there are fewer opportunities to interact with children from other parts of the country or from overseas. Nevertheless, the pupils support a boy from Africa and are proud of the funding they have raised for his school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

There is good teamwork amongst the staff and all teachers plan conscientiously and with generally good subject knowledge to enable them to explain what is expected of the teaching assistants. This planning takes good account of different abilities, ensuring that work is appropriately challenging throughout each lesson. Whole-class sessions move at a brisk pace with good use of open questioning techniques. They are sometimes a little overlong so that pupils then become less engrossed. However, these pupils quickly become focused when they are asked to undertake their chosen work. There are virtually no issues of poor behaviour and it certainly never disrupts learning. The consistency of teaching has been greatly enhanced through better use of assessment procedures to direct the support at those at risk of underachieving. Teachers have a good knowledge of the ability of individual pupils and confidently and accurately predict how they are doing. In turn, pupils use their own targets well in English and, to a lesser extent, in mathematics and science. The school is trialling new methods to make these as useful as those in English.

The curriculum provides all the required elements both for subjects and for personal, social and health education. Many of these are linked. For example, during the inspection an artist was working with all pupils to produce a whole-school mural and the skills being learnt were complemented by the work then going on in classes. Until recently, information and communication technology was less well developed. New

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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hardware and software has been purchased and a programme of staff training is underway. Nevertheless, pupils' use of computers is advanced, with many of the youngest children working at levels expected of those a year or even two years older. Consequently, teachers' subject expertise does not provide the challenge in information and communication technology that they could cope with and so this technology is not used as well as it could be across the whole range of subjects.

A very high priority is given to ensuring the care and welfare of pupils. Systems are clear, potentially vulnerable pupils are monitored carefully, and pupils say they are confident in approaching any of the staff to help them. They are not afraid to share either their successes or their concerns. The heritage of pupils from Gypsy/Roma families is valued within the school and support for them is good.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Since her arrival just prior to the last inspection, the headteacher has made significant improvements to the school which have had a clear impact on raising the attainment of pupils both academically and personally. However, these high aspirations have not always been met with unanimous support from parents and carers. This is because the ideals expressed through the improvements have left a small minority of parents and carers with different perceptions. The school and governors recognise this issue and are actively trying to set out their stall more effectively. For example, the highly rigorous procedures for safeguarding have, quite rightly, ensured that pupils are cared for and looked after extremely well but this is not what is perceived by some parents and carers and so their input into the process has been less successful.

The new and well-developed arrangements to use assessment information ensure that there is no evidence of discrimination and there is full equality of opportunity for all. Governors play a full and active part in deciding the future of the school and show they have a real understanding about how well the school is doing. The governing body, along with the headteacher and staff, is helping ensure that improvements are sustainable and continue at a fast pace. For example, teachers' professional development in the teaching of writing and science has seen pupils' progress in these subjects rapidly improve. In addition, the school recognises the next priorities. All leaders, and particularly subject leaders, are working on developing the provision for information and communication technology and pupils' understanding of the diversity

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of our modern world through a better balance within the curriculum and more contact with pupils further afield. They aim to raise the profile of good attendance and have set challenging targets to achieve this.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a great start in the Reception Year. Parents and carers are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning and a number can be seen helping first thing in the morning. Activities in both the inside and outside areas provide a good balance between child-initiated activities, such as using the handbells or sand tray, and teacher-directed activities to help build up basic skills. Children's development through each area of learning is rapid and sustained. Assessments of those in the present Reception class and those now in Year 1 show significant numbers working at or above the levels expected of them, especially in communication, language and literacy, and in personal, social and emotional development. Only in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy do some struggle a little, but this is being promoted well through counting activities and in learning about shapes through painting and drawing. Children use computers highly effectively and have well-developed skills, for example in the use of pencils, brushes and painting blocks. Their writing is particularly good. The extremely good leadership uses the expertise of outside agencies well to develop better practice and to help refine the use of assessment. The latest development is within the learning journals which are beginning to be shared with parents and carers so that help can be provided outside school and aid the process of better parental involvement.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Over half the pupils are represented in the responses from the questionnaires and over nine in 10 of these parents and carers agreed that they were happy with their child's schooling. In the main, there is positive support to the questions, although there is a significant minority who do not feel the school is well led or that children are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle. The findings of the inspection do not support either of these assumptions. The outcomes for pupils, both personally and academically, are high and have continued to improve since the last inspection. Pupils demonstrate their commitment to a healthy lifestyle. The school is aware of the need to communicate its successes more effectively and is working on ways of resolving this issue.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newtown Soberton Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 62 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	66	12	32	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	63	10	26	3	8	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	50	15	39	3	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	61	13	34	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	71	11	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	47	16	42	3	8	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	47	15	39	4	11	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	45	18	47	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	39	21	55	1	3	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	39	17	45	2	5	3	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	24	21	55	4	11	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	10	26	18	47	6	16	3	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	61	12	32	3	8	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



14 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newtown Soberton Infant School, Newtown PO17 6LJ

Thank you for making us so welcome during our recent visit. We very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing all the great work that you are doing. I am looking forward to seeing pictures of the finished mural that you started while we were there. It will not surprise you to know that we have said you go to an outstanding school, so keep up the good work! I promised some of you I would let you know what we had said about your school so here are the main points.

- You told us you felt you were doing well at school and we agree. Your attainment is high by the time you leave in Year 2 and you are extremely well prepared for your next school.
- You know how to stay safe, fit and healthy, and we can see that you are trying to make sure you keep active. You behave extremely well, especially during lessons. We were very impressed!
- Your teachers know what to do to make sure you all work hard. They make lessons very challenging for everybody □ that is why you are learning so very well. We have asked your teachers to make sure they continue to improve your work in ICT because we know you are very excited about the new computers.
- You do a lot for the local community but we have asked if this could be improved. One way would be to have more contact with other schools, both in this country and further afield.
- Your headteacher, with the help of all the staff, has done a lot since she arrived and still has many good plans for the future. You can help by suggesting anything that you think would help improve your school.
- We know that your teachers have been trying to make sure all of you attend school as often as possible because it is a shame when you miss out on all the great things that are going on. You can help by making sure that you are at school as often as possible □ and perhaps you can persuade your parents and carers to help you achieve this.

Yours sincerely

Finally, keep helping to make sure your school remains one of the best!

David Collard  
Lead inspector

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