

Southsea Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116200
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	338758
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2009
Reporting inspector	David Curtis

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lucy Morgan
Headteacher	Lyndsey Cook
Date of previous school inspection	4 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils and analysed the 104 questionnaires returned by parents.

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

- the success of strategies to increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2
- how well the school monitors the progress of the many diverse groups within the school
- how well the school promotes the national and international dimensions of community cohesion
- the success of strategies to improve pupils' attendance.

Information about the school

This is a two-form entry infant school. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is in two Reception classes. At the time of the inspection, in the Reception classes, autumn-born children attended full time, with spring- and summer-born only attending for the morning. In the mornings, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are taught in three ability groups (sets) for literacy and numeracy. The school has a speech and language resource base, with eight places. All have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils in the main school with special educational needs is just below the national average and these pupils mostly have moderate learning difficulties or speech, language and communication difficulties. A high proportion of pupils, broadly one third of all pupils in the school, come from minority-ethnic families, with 15 different home languages represented amongst this group. A quarter of all pupils speak English as an additional language and a few of these are at the early stages of English acquisition. These pupils either receive extra support from the local authority minority-ethnic achievement service or through additional staffing provided by the school. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal times is high. The school is housed in a building dating back to Victorian times and geographically is on a very cramped site. It does not have a school field. The governing body manages the on-site breakfast and after-school clubs.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It is an inclusive, cohesive and harmonious community full of happy children. Its success is summed up most appropriately by a parent who wrote, 'Our son is thriving in a wonderfully positive multicultural and caring environment. It is truly a pupil-centred school.' Pupils in the resource base play a full part in the day-to-day life of the school. The school's partnership with parents is outstanding and they are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work in supporting their children's academic and social development. The school has excellent links within its local community and uses most successfully a wide range of partners to support pupils' learning, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those learning English as an additional language. The care, guidance and support for vulnerable pupils are exceptional. Despite the school's success in creating a harmonious school and excellent local community links, the headteacher and governors recognise the school needs to do more to develop wider community cohesion; for example, so that pupils know more about the lives of others in the United Kingdom and internationally. The decision to fund extra staffing to allow pupils in Years 1 and 2 to be taught in three sets for literacy and numeracy is paying dividends as most pupils achieve well and as such the school provides good value for money. Observations of pupils' learning in lessons and their books indicate that a significantly higher proportion of pupils are on track to achieve the higher Level 3 in writing and mathematics. Most teachers make sure that pupils know what they are expected to learn and why this will be helpful to them. Many pupils are helped to recognise when they have been successful in learning new things. In a few instances, there remains some inconsistency in teachers' planning to make sure that the needs of all pupils within a particular set are met. As a result, there are occasions when pupils, especially of average ability, do not make the progress of which they are capable. This is because there is not a close enough match between what some teachers expect pupils to learn in lessons (teachers call this 'success criteria') and pupils' individual improvement targets. Some pupils are not always aware of their next steps in learning.

Pupils make good progress in their learning and this begins from their very first days in the Reception classes. Here, children settle quickly and happily into school life. Very effective teaching of letters and sounds makes a significant contribution to their good progress in communication, language and literacy. Pupils enjoy school and show an outstanding understanding of healthy lifestyles and in feeling safe at school. They make an excellent contribution to the school through the school council, contributing to the school improvement plan and the recent writing of job descriptions for part-time teaching posts. Despite its best efforts, including 'Attendance Ted' and 'Punctuality Ted'

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which are coveted weekly 'prizes', attendance remains satisfactory. The key factor behind this is the number of families who take extended holidays back to their home countries. Such holidays impede the learning of pupils because they miss out on important lessons which help them to understand all aspects of the key basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

The headteacher, staff and governors have a very detailed vision for the school. The target that every pupil should reach at least the national average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 is particularly challenging, given the context of this school. When results fell significantly in 2008, swift and immediate action was taken. Action included a much stronger and more rigorous analysis of pupils' progress by gender, ability and ethnicity. As a result, the school has a detailed and thorough picture of how well all groups of learners perform. The significant improvement in the 2009 results is testimony to the school's success in tackling weaknesses decisively. Such actions, together with a school improvement plan that is focused on priorities identified from accurate self-evaluation, show that the school has the good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teachers' planning in literacy and numeracy by ensuring that
- it meets the needs of all pupils within each of the ability groups
- success criteria are linked to individual pupil targets to guide pupils in their next steps in learning.
- Raise pupils' awareness of communities in other parts of the United Kingdom and in other countries.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children are very enthusiastic and motivated learners. In lessons, they listen attentively, especially when teachers use interactive whiteboards. Pupils concentrate hard when teachers introduce new learning and/or reinforce key skills, for example in mathematical games. In a numeracy lesson in Year 2, pupils thrived on the challenge of rounding numbers up to the nearest 10, especially when the number '126' was introduced and the 'helicopter landed' on 130, proving they were correct in their prediction. In a literacy lesson, pupils enjoyed a game in which two teams had to correctly define key literacy terms, including 'adverb', 'adjective' and 'simile'. What is particularly impressive is that after the game, pupils used and applied this knowledge in examples of their writing which are of a very high standard indeed, especially at the start of Year 2.

Children start school with standards that are below expectations for four-year-olds, especially in communication, language and literacy. During their time in school, they make good progress and reach average standards by the end of Year 2. Higher ability pupils thrive but occasionally those of average ability could be making faster progress. Children and pupils in the resource base make good progress because of effective

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teaching and support. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of high quality support from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar good progress because of effective support from staff, especially bilingual support assistants, and, in lessons, often from their classmates. Although boys do not achieve as well as girls, especially in writing, the gap is closing year on year and boys now do better than boys nationally. The group that make the least progress are those from families who take extended holidays in their home countries.

Behaviour is good and in many lessons it is exemplary. Just occasionally, boys in particular lose concentration, especially on the rare occasions when lesson introductions are too long. Pupils feel very safe at school and their spiritual, moral and social development is good and reflected in their excellent relationships with each other. They have a good understanding of their own community and take part regularly in local community events, such as the 'Albert Road Festival'. Pupils' awareness of the wider national and international community is less well developed.

The personal, social and health education programme, together with SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning), makes a strong contribution to the significant strengths in pupils feeling safe and adopting healthy lifestyles.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ 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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How effective is the provision?

There are significant strengths in the teaching of key skills, especially letters and sounds, with the result that standards in reading and writing are improving rapidly. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and make a significant contribution to ensuring that usually all pupils are engaged and fully included in the whole-class lesson introductions. They also provide excellent support for groups and make a significant contribution to the good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the resource base. Similarly, bilingual support assistants ensure that pupils with English as an additional language play a full part in lessons and, too, make good progress. There are a few occasions where lesson introductions are too long and, as a consequence, younger pupils are not clear as to what is expected of them. In all lessons, teachers' relationships with pupils are excellent. Marking is supportive and helps pupils with their immediate next steps in learning. There is a significant strength in pupils self-assessing their own work, including doing this in physical education.

Pupils benefit from a curriculum which motivates and stimulates their interest. They have good opportunities to use their literacy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects. The personal, social and health education programme helps children to explore their emotions, gain confidence and learn about how to eat healthily.

All staff provide effective levels of care, guidance and support for pupils. In lessons, pupils receive good support. This is reflected in pupils feeling safe in school and most parents who completed the questionnaire agreeing that the school meets their children's needs.

Pupils enjoy their time at the breakfast and after-school club and enjoy a good range of activities, although the constraints of the site restrict opportunities for outdoor play.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported by staff and governors, is totally committed to creating an inclusive school where all pupils are treated equally and no discrimination exists. The very strong partnerships with others, including parents, contribute much to ensuring

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that pupils are treated as individuals. Leaders have very high expectations that pupils should achieve their very best and that the contextual factors facing the school are not seen as, or used as, barriers to learning. The 'wake-up call' of the drop in standards in 2008 galvanised leaders and governors into taking immediate and effective action to drive improvement and raise standards. Leadership and management of the resource base are good and impact positively on pupils' good progress, including their integration wherever possible into the main school.

Governors are hard working and very supportive of the school. They are enthusiastic in researching new learning opportunities for pupils; for example, one member of the governing body is investigating how the introduction of the 'Forest School' project may benefit pupils. There are strengths in governors seeking the views of parents and pupils in identifying aspects for school improvement. Governors are aware that they have not been sufficiently active in carrying out a detailed audit of community cohesion, but this is their number one priority within their own action plan.

Safeguarding of pupils meets fully the current statutory requirements. All parents who returned the questionnaires agreed that their children are safe in school. Pupils who attend the breakfast and after-school club are safe and their welfare needs are well met.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly and happily into the day-to-day routines of school life. They enjoy their time in school and have excellent relationships with each other and adults. Children show good levels of concentration when working alone. For example, when 'painting'

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pictures on the computer, they know how to change colours, brush size, insert their own name and print their pictures. In the home corner, boys and girls play happily together, taking turns to do household chores. During their time in Reception, children make good progress, with the majority reaching the expected levels in all six areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. Children make particularly good progress in communication, language and literacy, and in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy, because of high quality teaching of basic skills, especially letters and sounds.

Teachers and teaching assistants have excellent relationships with children and their parents. Currently, there is an over emphasis on adult-directed activities, with children not having sufficient time to chose their own activities. The nature of the school site means that children have no free flow between indoor and outdoor learning, although staff work hard to overcome this barrier. Staff work hard and effectively to promote partnerships with the pre-school providers. Children's welfare is paramount for all staff. There are significant strengths in the quality of support for children learning English as an additional language, including that provided by skilled bilingual assistants.

Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed leader has a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and recognises the need to ensure that children have more activities which they choose for themselves. Day-to-day assessment of children's learning is good.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents completed the questionnaire and most are extremely positive in their views of the school and are endorsed fully by the findings of the inspection team. No concerns were raised in relation to safeguarding or their children's welfare. Inspection findings support the views of the few in relation to aspects of pupils' progress, in that the school has not 'fine tuned' planning sufficiently to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met consistently.

Comments such as, 'My daughter can't wait to go to school everyday!' and, 'I have had a child at Southsea Infant continuously over the last six years ' I have never had a day where they didn't want to come. Family learning, drop-in mornings and community activities have kept my partner and I involved alongside more formal parents' evenings. Southsea has been the most fantastic start to my children's education,' capture the

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essence of this successful school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Southsea 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 104 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 186 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	71	30	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	80	77	23	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	55	53	43	41	0	0	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	55	40	38	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	64	61	33	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	52	44	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	52	47	45	0	0	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)	48	46	46	44	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	45	51	49	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	48	47	46	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	42	52	50	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	54	42	40	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	71	68	31	30	0	0	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



1 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southsea Infant School, Southsea PO5 2SR

Thank you so much for the wonderful welcome you gave to my colleagues and me when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and meeting the school council. Please thank your parents for completing the questionnaire.

I am delighted to tell you that you go to a good school. There are too many outstanding and good features to mention here but I have included the most important things.

- You make good progress in learning how to read and write; some of the writing I saw in Year 2 was very impressive and of a standard I would expect to see in a junior school.
- You feel very safe in school and have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- I think it is really good that you give your ideas to your headteacher and governors to help make your school even better.
- You enjoy lessons and work hard on occasions on your own but at other times in groups.
- The adults take great care of you and you all get on brilliantly with each other.
- Your headteacher and governors want all of you to achieve your very best.

There are some things that we have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to do in order to make your school even better.

- To make sure that teachers always plan work that is just right for you in literacy and numeracy ' not too easy and not too difficult.
- To make sure that they help you understand how you can improve your work.
- To help you to find out about and understand how different people and communities live and work in the United Kingdom and in other countries.

Yours faithfully

David Curtis

Lead Inspector

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