

Netley Marsh Church of England Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116302
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338786
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dermot Murphy
Headteacher	Ann Brooks
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent around 40% of the time during which pupils were in school looking at learning, visited eight lessons and observed four teachers. They held meetings with governors, a local authority representative, staff and pupils. A small number of parents and carers bringing their children to school were also spoken to. Inspectors also visited the breakfast and after-school clubs. They observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' progress, development planning and monitoring, local authority reports, documents concerning the federation, a range of policies and procedures including those associated with safeguarding, curriculum planning documents and a sample of pupils' work. They also scrutinised questionnaires returned by 34 parents and carers and 18 staff.

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

- the extent to which the school has reversed the decline in progress and attainment seen last year
- the quality of provision for writing
- the impact of the federation on current leadership and provision.

Information about the school

Netley Marsh is a small infant school which became part of a federation of three New Forest Church Schools in May 2009 when an executive headteacher took over leadership of the school. The federation is supported by a joint governing board. For the previous two and a half years Netley Marsh was managed by several acting headteachers. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which cover learning, behavioural and physical needs, is around average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The school also admits pupils from Traveller families. The school has been awarded Healthy School status. The school provides a breakfast club and after-school care for pupils from this school and a nearby junior school. This provision was also inspected.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Netley Marsh benefits considerably from its federation with two other infant schools. In particular, the excellent leadership of the headteacher, together with her accurate self-evaluation and the support of accomplished staff in the other federation schools, has led to rapid improvements in provision. Attainment has risen strongly, especially in reading and mathematics. Writing has also improved, although weaknesses remain in spelling and handwriting. Attainment is broadly in line with national averages and is much higher than the previous year.

Teaching is now uniformly good and often outstanding. Challenging activities and exciting lesson starters engage pupils' interest and motivate them to do well. This is having a very positive effect on boys' attainment in writing. Progress, although much improved, is satisfactory as older pupils are still making up for slower progress made in the past. Improved provision in Reception helps children achieve well. Previously, constant changes of leadership led to inconsistent use of monitoring information to identify and address weaknesses in provision. Good self-evaluation has reversed this, with the school now well aware of where improvement is still needed, for example in writing.

The caring, Christian ethos is evident in the high quality care of pupils. Rigorous attention is paid to keeping them safe and free from harm, including in the breakfast and after-school clubs. As a result, pupils feel exceptionally safe in school. Vulnerable pupils are especially well supported, with the exceptional support for Traveller children and their families ensuring more regular attendance. Very effective pastoral support helps pupils to do well in their personal development, and their spiritual awareness is excellent. Pupils' cultural knowledge is generally good, although the school recognises more could be done to raise their awareness of different groups in this country and overseas.

The headteacher is an exceptionally skilled leader who, together with her very effective deputy, has created especially good teamwork amongst all staff. The consistent approach to development planning and shared commitment are driving forward improvement well. Much has been achieved in the last nine months, with plans already in place to address remaining areas of weakness. These strengths give confidence that the school is well placed to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing through:

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- using activities where pupils learn the sounds in words to help improve their spelling in written work
- improving the way pupils form their letters and encouraging more to write cursively.
- Give pupils better opportunities to develop a greater understanding of the different social, cultural and religious groups in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Staff turnover, caused by uncertainty about the school's future, led to pupils making insufficient progress last year and attainment fell considerably. Results in the Year 2 national assessments were low, exceptionally so in writing. Rapid improvement this year has raised attainment especially well in reading and mathematics, where it is above average. For example, Year 1 pupils are skilled at addition and subtraction, with Year 2 pupils easily identifying shapes such as pentagons and octagons. Pupils' good reading skills support their comprehension and research activities. Although writing skills have improved well, there is still some way to go. Pupils enjoy writing, using 'wow' words such as 'crashing, freezing and exhausted' to effectively recount Grace Darling's rescue of shipwrecked sailors. However, only the higher-attaining pupils spell more complex words accurately. Handwriting is not always well formed and very few pupils write cursively. The school is well aware that this needs to be addressed as a priority, with Year 1 pupils already attaining above what could be expected for their age in writing. Skills on entry are around expectations. Reception children's good progress is evident in their above-average attainment. Very well-targeted support for pupils with specific learning, language, physical or behavioural needs helps them achieve as well as their classmates.

Pupils are well aware of how to eat healthily and the importance of regular exercise and have an excellent awareness of how to keep safe. Pupils enjoy school, get on well together and work hard. Attendance levels, which were below average, have improved. Some pupils find good behaviour difficult, but most behave well. Pupils' capacity for reflection, especially in the excellent worship time, is outstanding. Younger pupils develop very good independence skills, although a considerable minority in Year 2 still need support in this aspect, which limits their contribution to the school and wider community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Underpinning the improving provision is the headteacher's skilled development of teaching quality. Staff expertise is considerably enhanced, especially in behaviour management and in introducing new topics through exciting activities which motivate pupils exceptionally well. Many examples of this were observed during the inspection and led to outstanding learning in some lessons. For example, Reception children loved guessing which object was going to be pulled out of the bag, being sensitively encouraged to ask, 'Is it delicate and smooth?' Imaginative approaches, for example encouraging pupils to write a prayer about the gift of water or the teacher acting out the role of a journalist sent to cover the Grace Darling story inspire pupils to use exceptionally good vocabulary. Staff willingly take on new suggestions such as how to use phonics activities to help improve spelling. They regularly share ideas, including with other federation teachers, supporting improvements especially well in the provision in Reception and for literacy. On a few occasions the pace of learning slows, often because some older pupils are not secure at working independently.

Good assessments help staff set effective targets to raise attainment, with pupils themselves beginning to check on their progress towards them. Information on progress is used well to identify the needs of different groups such as boys or the youngest in each year group, ensuring curriculum planning takes much better account of this than in previous years. The curriculum is developing well, although the school recognises more emphasis needs to be given to spelling and handwriting. Vulnerable pupils are especially well supported, particularly by the highly effective classroom assistants. Procedures for the vetting of staff, health and safety checks and child protection are excellent, with

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pupils well aware that adults are vigilant about their welfare. Arrangements for starting school or moving on to the juniors are especially good. Those children who attend the breakfast or after-school clubs thoroughly enjoy the wide range of activities on offer, especially for sport.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The key to the school's rapid improvement is the high quality leadership and management of the headteacher. She and the deputy are exceptionally good at getting the best out of the staff, helping them acquire the skills needed to address weaknesses in provision. The sense of purpose and commitment amongst the whole-school community helps drive forward improvement well. Effective self-evaluation ensures areas of strength are constantly refined, for example to maintain the excellent safeguarding arrangements, and weaker aspects are successfully addressed. As a result, no pupil is discriminated against and all have equal opportunity to attain the levels they are capable of. There is a secure awareness of where further improvement is needed, such as enhancing community cohesion by widening pupils' knowledge of different social, cultural and religious groups.

Most parents and carers believe the federation has been positively introduced. They are regularly consulted, recognising staff are very responsive to their needs. Parents and carers support the school's work well, especially in the 'Faster Reading' scheme. Effective partnerships with a range of agencies enhance pupils' learning. The partnership with other federation schools is especially strong, for example, in the shared subject leadership across the three schools, ensuring very good expertise in areas such as early years education. Netley Marsh benefits considerably from the high quality in-service training provided by federation leaders, for example in literacy. Governors are effectively organised in committees to address the needs of the federation as well as those of individual schools. The need to put in place a range of new policies and procedures has been a main priority and governors recognise that some areas, such as improving communication with parents and carers, have yet to be addressed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

High quality care and excellent induction procedures, which very effectively include parents and carers, benefit children especially well. They settle quickly, love coming to school and make good progress because activities engage their interest and enhance learning. Good leadership and management have ensured a very good balance between focused activities when children work with an adult and those where they discover things for themselves. The latter support independent learning skills exceptionally well. For example, children set up the role-play area as a sweet shop themselves. Good levels of adult support ensure progress is monitored well, with staff skilfully questioning children to move learning on. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well, although occasionally the size of groups limits individual children's contributions. There is a cohesive approach to children's learning and observational assessments made of their progress, because the out-of-school club manager is also a classroom assistant. Progress is carefully tracked, with future planning taking full account of this. The accommodation is very well organised to support learning, including in the good outdoor area where children enjoyed helping to build the bog garden and watching the ice in the water tray melt. Access to outdoors is limited in inclement weather, but plans are well in hand to erect a permanent cover.

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

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

A very large majority of parents and carers have positive views. They are fully confident that children are kept safe and taught well. Those spoken to could not point out anything wrong with the school even though invited to do so by the inspector.

Positive views are typified by the following comments.

- The school provides a warm and friendly atmosphere.
- The staff team does a splendid job.
- All the teachers are very professional and caring.
- The pre- and after-school clubs are excellent.
- We love this school!

A few concerns were raised with regard to communication, especially concerning the federation. Both governors and inspectors agree this is an area for development. A small minority were concerned about the headteacher needing to spend time away from the school. Inspection evidence shows that the school is very well led by the deputy headteacher on these occasions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Netley Marsh Church of England 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 90 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	76	8	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	79	7	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	47	17	50	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	65	12	35	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	74	7	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	74	9	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	76	8	24	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)	19	56	9	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	50	17	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	47	15	44	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	44	17	50	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	29	20	59	2	6	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	71	10	29	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.



3 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Netley Marsh Church of England Infant School, Woodlands, Southampton SO40 7GY

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed our time talking to you and seeing all the things you do. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their lunchtime to talk to us. We think your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. However, things are improving very quickly and some things are already especially good.

Here are some of the good things we found out about the school.

- The way that staff look after you is excellent. You feel very safe and happy in school and your parents and carers know that too.
- Teaching is good. You have lots of fun in lessons and work hard.
- Children in Reception get off to a good start and all of you are making better progress this year.
- You all get on well together and behaviour is good. You know a lot of things about healthy food and enjoy sports activities.
- Your parents and carers do lots of things to help the school, especially in helping you learn to read.
- Your headteacher and deputy have been exceptionally good at helping your school to improve and all staff support them well.

Here are some of the things we have asked the school to improve.

- Although you are getting much better at writing, you still need to improve your handwriting and spelling. You can help by writing carefully and thinking very hard about which letters make up the sounds in words.
- Help you to learn more about people who live in other parts of this and other countries.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson

Lead inspector

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