

Southsea Infant School

Collingwood Road, Southsea, Hampshire, PO5 2SR

Inspection dates 17–18 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has a clear and ambitious vision for the school, and offers highly committed leadership. This leads to the school's very positive and inclusive ethos.
- Governors provide strong support and share her aspirations, as do other leaders. As a result, the school is improving.
- Parents are extremely positive about the school. Without exception, all those who took part in the online survey agreed that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- The headteacher works with teachers to check pupils' progress half-termly. She also checks the quality of teaching regularly. Accurate self-evaluation by school leaders leads to improvement planning of good quality.
- The school's curriculum has breadth and interest for pupils, and makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governors adopt a rigorous approach, and hold the school to good account.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Their attitudes to learning are positive.
- Pupils feel safe at school. There are few instances of bullying. Adults quickly address any that occur.
- Levels of attendance are well above average.
- Pupils' good progress is the result of the good quality of teaching. Teachers and teaching assistants foster good working relationships with pupils, offer good levels of challenge and set high expectations for their behaviour and achievement. Teaching assistants make good contributions to pupils' learning and progress.
- Pupils' overall attainment by the end of Year 2 was consistently significantly above average in the three years up to 2013. Preliminary information about performance in 2014 points to attainment that was similar to the previous year.
- Across the school, all groups of pupils, including those in the speech and language unit, make good progress and achieve well.
- Children settle quickly and make good progress in the Reception classes because of good teaching.
- Teachers accurately assess the learning of children, including those children in the speech and language unit.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' feedback to pupils from marking does not indicate what they need to do next in order to improve.
- Teachers do not give pupils opportunities to put their advice about improvement into practice.
- The school's target setting arrangements for pupils do not help them sufficiently to understand what they need to do to reach higher levels of performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 11 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also scrutinised samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics. They heard a sample of pupils in Years 1 and 2 read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the school's staff, the Chair, vice chair and two other members of the governing body, and also with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed the 28 responses that were recorded on the online survey (Parent View) by the end of the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with small numbers of parents accompanying their children to school. In addition, inspectors received two written communications from parents.
- Inspectors took account of the six responses to the questionnaire for school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress, planning documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding, performance management, the pupil premium, the primary sports funding and the curriculum.

Inspection team

Chris Grove, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janice Williams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an infant school that is much smaller than average in size.
- The school serves an urban community on the southern side of Portsmouth.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and children in local authority care) is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about one sixth of all pupils. This is similar to the proportion found in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is about one quarter of all pupils. This is higher than the proportion found in most schools. Where necessary, these pupils receive additional support from the local authority's minority ethnic achievement service.
- The school has a speech and language unit, with eight places for pupils aged between four and seven years. There are currently eight pupils on roll. All the pupils who attend the unit have a statement of special educational needs.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two Reception classes. At the time of the inspection, autumn-born children attended full time, and spring- and summer-born children attended in the morning only.
- There are two classes in Year 1 and two in Year 2. In the mornings, the employment of additional teachers enables the school to form three ability groups (sets) for English and mathematics in both year groups.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader in Education. In this role, she has acted as executive headteacher of another school.
- The deputy headteacher took up her appointment in September 2014, following the retirement of her predecessor. Two other teachers joined the school in September 2014.
- The breakfast club and the after-school club are managed by the governing body and formed part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure greater impact from teachers' feedback to pupils about how to improve the quality of their work by:
 - marking that consistently indicates what pupils need to do next
 - better opportunities to put into practice teachers' advice from marking
 - improved arrangements for target setting so that pupils develop a clearer understanding of what they need to do in order to reach higher levels of attainment.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher offers strong and committed leadership. This results in the school's inclusive ethos and very positive climate for learning. She communicates an ambitious vision for further improvement. The governing body, members of the senior leadership team, and middle leaders fully share the headteacher's ambition. This is shown by the unanimous expression of pride in the school by those who returned the staff questionnaire. They also all agreed that they know what they are trying to achieve as a school.
- The headteacher sets high expectations, both for members of staff and for pupils. School leaders track pupils' progress half-termly. Where these checks identify any pupils who are not making the progress expected, leaders ensure that teachers provide them with additional support.
- Middle leaders undertake a range of activities to check the quality of pupils' learning, and the headteacher conducts regular observations of teaching. Leaders' analysis of this self-evaluation evidence is accurate and leads to whole-school improvement planning of good quality.
- The headteacher makes effective use of the arrangements to set targets for teachers each year. This has successfully led to further improvements in pupils' progress.
- The school has devised a curriculum that is broad and interesting for pupils. It gives prominence to the development of their knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics, and also includes effective links across subjects, providing opportunities to apply these skills. In religious education, the school achieves balance by ensuring that pupils learn about aspects of Islam alongside Christianity. Work in religious education and in the personal, social and health education programme helps the school to promote understanding of other faiths and cultures.
- Pupils begin to learn about democracy and about British values through the decision-making of the school council representatives. In recognition of its focus on environmental issues, the school holds the Eco Schools (Green Flag) award. The school has also gained the Sing Up (Gold) award. The curriculum, assembly themes and the out-of-school programme, taken together, contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders make effective use of the primary sport funding. The school has employed sports coaches through an external agency. This has extended the range of in-school provision and improved participation rates in out-of-school physical activities. The Healthy School award indicates the commitment to promoting pupils' physical well-being.
- Senior leaders ensure that the school, including the speech and language unit, meets all aspects of child protection and safeguarding requirements.
- In the light of the school's continuing good performance, and effective self-evaluation, the local authority has judged that it requires only minimal support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has adopted a rigorous approach, and contributes effectively to the school's strategic direction. Governors have a good overview of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They understand the implications of the national information about the school's performance and have a good overview of the quality of teaching and of pupils' progress. Governors take a responsible attitude to their role in setting targets for the headteacher. They also ensure that they are well informed about arrangements to set targets for members of the teaching staff, and about whether teachers merit salary progression. Governors are well informed about the pupil premium. They assure themselves that the school is using the additional funding appropriately, and are aware of the improved performance of disadvantaged pupils. Governors fulfil their statutory duties, and conduct an annual safeguarding review. They hold the school to good account.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils respond well to the school's positive ethos and say that most pupils behave well. Adults set clear expectations for behaviour and promote positive relationships.
- In their classrooms, pupils show very positive attitudes to learning. They listen carefully to their teachers and are responsive, for instance when teachers ask questions. Just occasionally, a few pupils display restless behaviour.
- Pupils are courteous towards adults around the school and behave sensibly when they move about the building, for example as they walk up or down the staircase. At playtimes and lunchtimes pupils are well behaved in the playground and in school. In whole-school assemblies pupils listen attentively to adults and

to other pupils.

- All the parents who completed the online survey agreed that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. In their questionnaire responses, every member of staff agreed that behaviour is good and that pupils' behaviour is consistently well managed.
- Although pupils' attitudes to learning are typically good, the school does not capitalise on their positive readiness to learn to the extent that it could. For instance, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning, or to put into practice their advice about how pupils could improve their own work.
- Attendance is well above average with a below-average rate of persistent absence.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school because 'the adults look after you'. Pupils also say that they learn how to keep safe and how to deal with risks, such as exercising caution about strangers and when using the internet. In their responses to the surveys, every parent agreed that their children are safe in the school.
- Pupils understand the persistent nature of bullying, and the different forms of bullying. There are few instances of bullying, which adults quickly address.
- There have been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions.
- Those pupils who attend the breakfast club or the after-school club have enjoyable and safe experiences. Two teaching assistants organise the clubs and provide balanced meals for the pupils.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The good quality of teaching, including the teaching of English and mathematics, has a positive impact on the learning of all groups of pupils, including those who are most able and those in the speech and language unit, and results in their good progress. Pupils' improving attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in recent years is testimony to the effectiveness of teaching over time.
- Almost all the parents who completed the online survey agreed that their children are well taught and make good progress. The parents who spoke to members of the inspection team were without exception positive in their views about the school and the teaching staff. For instance, several spoke appreciatively of teachers' ready accessibility and of their friendly approach towards parents.
- Teachers and other adults skilfully foster good working relationships with pupils. This does much to support the school's positive ethos and the warm climate for learning in all the classrooms.
- The headteacher sets high expectations for the teaching staff. Consequently, teachers' expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement are similarly high. Teachers effectively command the respect of their pupils.
- Much teaching offers good levels of challenge for pupils. For instance, in an English lesson for Year 2 pupils, one teacher first engaged pupils well, making good use of short conversations between pairs of pupils, for example, to prepare an answer to a set question or to explore their understanding of a particular point. In the positive atmosphere created, the teacher then set pupils the stretching task of clarifying for themselves the content for a writing task. This helped them later to focus their attention fully on how to express their considered content.
- Class teachers generally organise teaching assistants effectively so that they make good contributions to pupils' progress. In the best instances, teaching assistants naturally provide pupils with good support through adopting approaches and ways of working similar to those of their associated teacher. This helpfully reinforces the purpose of the learning.
- Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and make encouraging comments. However, teachers too rarely indicate to pupils what they should do next to improve their work. Furthermore, there are too few opportunities for pupils to reflect on teachers' suggestions for improvement and to put their advice into practice. As a result, feedback to pupils does not support improvements in their learning to the extent that it could.
- The school sets pupils targets for improvement. However, pupils, including those from the speech and language unit, cannot in practice recall their most recently set targets or say what more they need to be able to do in order to reach higher levels of attainment.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- In 2011 and the two subsequent years, pupils' overall attainment by the end of Year 2 was significantly above average and rose year by year. Preliminary information indicates that overall attainment in 2014 will be similar to that in the previous year.

- More-able pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teaching provides appropriate levels of challenge for them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in all subjects, often because teaching assistants support them well. This includes those pupils who attend the speech and language unit.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make the same successful progress as other pupils because they receive good support from local authority and school staff.
- Pupils participate readily in physical activities. For example, pupils in Year 2 enjoyed taking part in a lesson in which they practised how to throw and catch a ball. They worked well together in teams, responding positively to the physical challenges and making good progress in developing their skills.
- In assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2013, the gap in attainment between those supported by the pupil premium and other pupils narrowed in reading and more considerably in writing when compared with results in 2012. The gaps were about three quarters of one term in reading and a quarter of one term in writing. These gaps are smaller than those found nationally, especially in writing. In the case of mathematics, the wide gap in 2012 has now been closed. In 2014, pupils in Year 2 who were eligible for the additional funding made progress similar to their classmates.
- The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination effectively. It spends most of its pupil premium funding on the provision of a third, and smaller, class for the literacy and mathematics lessons every morning in both Year 1 and Year 2, to ensure pupils enjoy equal opportunities. The funding has also supported the employment of teaching assistants to work with identified pupils on short-term programmes, for instance to improve their spelling or their social skills.

The early years provision

is good

- When children first come to the school, their knowledge and skills are typically as expected for their age. They make good progress and develop firm foundations for later learning.
- By the end of the Reception Year in 2012/13, the great majority of children reached a good level of development in all aspects of their personal and physical development, and in communication, literacy and mathematics. Furthermore, the proportions of children whose attainment exceeded expected levels were greater than the national figures.
- Preliminary information about the school's performance at the end of the 2013/14 session indicates further improvements in children's attainment. More than half the year group exceeded expectations in most areas of learning, including their skills in speaking, reading and number work.
- Children's good progress shows the effectiveness of the teaching. Teachers and teaching assistants create a positive climate for learning. Classroom displays also provide good support for children's learning.
- The learning journals from the 2013/14 session show evidence of correct letter formation by children with different levels of ability, and writing that involves some well-constructed sentences by the most able.
- Children in the Reception classes show positive attitudes to learning and behave maturely. The very caring atmosphere of the school leads to the good cooperation between children as they share resources. They behave safely and responsibly, responding well to adults' directions.
- The school works well with parents both before children start at school and during the Reception year. One satisfied parent wrote to praise the high quality of the weekly information that the school provides about forthcoming learning activities. The same parent also wrote appreciatively of the staged transition to full-time attendance. Besides regular opportunities for discussion with parents, the school also provides workshops to help them to understand how the school approaches children's learning.
- Leadership and management are good. Effective safeguarding procedures have been put fully into place. Teachers make accurate assessments of children's knowledge and skills on entry to the school. They also regularly undertake ongoing assessments and recording of children's learning and progress.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	448784
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	116200

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	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rebecca Mason
Headteacher	Lyndsey Cook
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 September 2009
Telephone number	02392 828176
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