



# Norman Gate School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 116604  
**Local Authority** Hampshire  
**Inspection number** 290560  
**Inspection dates** 28 February –1 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Jacque Cook

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Vigo Road
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Andover
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		SP10 1JZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01264 323423
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	49	<b>Fax number</b>	01264 354891
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Dr Jackie Morgan
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Christine Gayler
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 October 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 28 February –1 March 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 290560
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector

## **Description of the school**

Norman Gate is a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) or autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) as their main need. A few pupils have severe learning difficulties (SLD) or speech language and communication needs (SLCN). Since the last inspection, the complexity of pupils' needs has increased. There are four times as many boys as girls and three pupils are aged under five. The pupils are predominately White British. The school has an outreach service which is now accredited for social communication and learning difficulties as well as ASD. Awards include a renewed accreditation as Investors In People, Enhanced Healthy Schools and two for achievement. Last year there was a high staff turnover and almost half the teachers in the school are new, including the deputy headteacher.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Norman Gate is a good and effective school with some outstanding features. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide very good leadership which has enabled new staff to settle in quickly. A broad range of innovative practices has been introduced to strengthen the curriculum. These new elements contribute towards helping the pupils to learn effectively and, although most pupils have low levels of attainment, they achieve well.

A whole school focus on improving pupils' achievement in number has been highly successful and they now make very good progress. In Years 3 to 6, however, pupils' progress in using and applying mathematical skills and knowledge is only satisfactory. Children are given a good start at the Foundation Stage. They make good progress, particularly in learning to work with others.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They say they enjoy their work, and their attendance is excellent. Most put into practice what they have learned about healthy lifestyles. Pupils know how to keep safe and participate in many opportunities to contribute to the community. They take a pride in helping staff and younger pupils. Skills are developed that they will need in the workplace, such as learning how to plan and to work in teams. They become self-reliant and work hard. Procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. There are excellent links with support services. The tracking of pupils' progress is very well done. New recording procedures are being used well. Reports on pupils' progress are of a very high standard and contribute well to the good communication with parents. Pupils mostly meet targets on individual education plans (IEPs), but occasionally these are too difficult to be totally achieved. The wording used in these plans is too hard for the pupils to understand in a significant number of instances. The outreach service provided by the school is highly thought of by the schools it serves.

The leadership and management of the school are good. There are strengths in the leadership team, but new strategies to help develop the leadership skills of the middle managers have yet to be fully embedded. Teaching and learning is good overall, but there is a significant variation in its quality due to some inadequate planning. This is being tackled well through good monitoring procedures and appropriate support. Governance is outstanding and contributes very well to the good quality and accurate self evaluation of the school. Based on an excellent track record over a period of change for the school, a highly effective senior leadership team and a committed staff, the capacity to improve further is outstanding.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve pupils' progress in using and applying mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- Ensure that targets on IEPs are realistic and are written so they can be easily understood by pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, so that lessons are consistently good or better, by ensuring that teachers' planning is all of a high standard.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils join the school with low levels of attainment and, from this low base, they achieve well. Good, and at times very good progress is made by pupils with ASD because classroom structures support their learning well. Work is pitched at a suitable level for the few pupils with SLD and good use is made of strategies to help pupils with SLCN learn effectively. Girls make similar progress to boys. The work of looked after children is regularly reviewed to ensure that they do as well as their peers.

In the Foundation Stage, the children's good progress is linked to their clear enjoyment of school. They learn quickly through the 'play' activities.

Pupils' very good progress in number is due to an increased emphasis on effective teaching methods and on ensuring that pupils practise and improve their skills. The initiative to improve progress in using and applying mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is being tackled well but it is too early to gauge the success of the actions taken.

Good progress is made by pupils towards meeting the targets on their IEPs. However, some targets are too ambitious to be fully met and are carried forward from one plan to the next.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their self-esteem and confidence grow enormously as staff praise their achievements at every possible opportunity. Pupils with ASD learn to join group activities and begin to relate well to other pupils and the adults they work with. This, as one parent commented, is 'impressive' as initially her son, in a similar way to many others, could not tolerate the proximity of other children.

Pupils are rarely absent and their behaviour is good. Those who initially have difficult behaviour make very good progress towards conforming to what is expected. Pupils have an exceptionally clear understanding about healthy living. They talk enthusiastically about their healthy food and snacks. Extensive and varied physical exercise is enjoyed and many pupils take advantage of joining in with extra sporting activities at lunchtimes. Many older pupils have a keen sense of responsibility and undertake roles to help younger pupils at lunchtime, during assemblies, in the playground, and in the library. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They learn to be kind to one another and to think about their actions. Children in the Foundation Stage begin to take turns and to share toys. Through activities that include the 'intercultural day', pupils gain an excellent insight into the customs and practices of many countries. They regularly fund raise and have suggested causes to support and suitable events to raise money.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Staff make lessons enjoyable and praise pupils when they are being good. This improves self-esteem and supports learning. A range of strategies is used effectively to encourage hard work and improve behaviour. One pupil, talking about a reward system based on retaining cards that are lost for inappropriate behaviour, explained, 'There are red cards and you must try to keep them.' Another showed his sticker which read 'Ask me what I have done today' and proudly explained he had done some work at home. Pupils especially like writing their answers on the interactive boards. Support assistants are highly skilled. They have an important role in enabling some pupils with ASD to complete their work successfully.

The main cause of the variation in the quality of teaching and learning is the standard of lesson planning. Where it is not sufficiently detailed, the pace of the lesson is not sustained and pupils become restless. This slows learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and has been improved to meet the increasingly complex needs of the pupils. Staff are committed to the development of a new two-year topic plan. This includes more subjects and identifies opportunities for pupils to use and apply the mathematics they have learned to improve their achievement. Highly successful activities such as 'Thinking Hats' and 'Rights, Respect and Responsibilities' develop life skills that are needed in the work place. Additionally, opportunities are planned for pupils to learn to use tools correctly and safely.

Extra activities during the lunch hour enrich pupils' learning well. Horse riding, swimming and a cricket club, for example, contribute to pupils' healthy lifestyle. Further breadth and challenge is provided by performing in the 'Global Rock Challenge' with mainstream schools, and taking part in concerts.

The curriculum for children at the Foundation Stage is restricted due to the lack of direct access to a stimulating outside environment. Otherwise, there is a good range of activities and experiences for the children.

There are very good links with local schools. Older pupils improve their skills in information and communication technology through using facilities at the secondary special school. Familiarity with this school also contributes to a smooth transition at the end of Year 6.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Safeguarding arrangements are robust and pupils say they feel safe in school. Where problems are encountered, such as with difficult behaviour, levels of supervision are

increased and support plans reviewed. Recently, the classroom for the youngest pupils has been made more secure. Staff build extremely strong relationships with the pupils and know their needs very well. As a result, pupils are confident to talk to them about anything that worries them.

Pupils' progress is increased through the school's links with support services. The work with the speech and language therapist, for example, contributes effectively to the good progress made in speaking and listening.

Academic progress is monitored very well and a new system of recording learning has been introduced. Daily targets are achieved very well as they are easily understood by the pupils. IEP targets, however, are not always so clear for pupils so they know what they are working towards. Annual reports, which were a weakness at the last inspection, are now very detailed and provide excellent information for parents.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Due to good monitoring and self-evaluation procedures the school is very aware of its strengths and areas for development. Action taken to make improvements builds on good practice. Outstanding lesson planning, for example, is being used as an exemplar to help to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The outreach service is managed very well. Regular meetings with the headteacher ensure high standards are maintained, but formal feedback from schools is not collected often enough at present.

A great deal has been accomplished that has increased the achievement of all pupils. Adjustments to the timetable and grouping pupils for their lessons according to their ability have helped improve progress in number. The curriculum has been enhanced with successful life skills courses that develop pupils' learning strategies. Clear staff induction packages, written for all school roles, contributed to the smooth running of the school when there were a significant number of staff changes last year. Effective procedures and good communication between all staff have contributed to new staff speedily becoming established. Teachers have adjusted well to the new arrangements for managing subjects in teams. This strategy has many benefits, including sharing of expertise and joint planning. However, the skills of monitoring and leading subjects are at the early stages of development.

The support and challenge of the governing body are a major strength of the school. Governors have excellent first hand information about the work of the school and follow a robust monitoring programme.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I would like to especially thank those who talked to me.

This is what I liked about your school.

- It is a good school and there are some things that are outstanding.
- All of you are doing well and you are making very good progress in your number work.
- Lessons like 'Thinking Hats' and 'Rights, Respects and Responsibility' help you to learn very well.
- The way you become more confident, try to stay healthy, help others and learn things that will help you when you grow up is outstanding.
- You told me you enjoy school. Your behaviour is good and your attendance is excellent.
- Staff look after you exceptionally well.
- Your headteacher and deputy headteacher are very good at making changes that help you to learn.
- Teachers and support staff work hard to make your lessons fun.
- The governors are excellent.

This is what I have asked your school to do now.

- Help older pupils to improve the ways they use their skills in mathematics. Ensure you understand your targets and they are not too difficult.
- Make sure all your lessons are thoroughly planned and taught well.

With best wishes

Jacque Cook

Lead inspector