

Netley Abbey Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116061
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	298561
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	279
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Forder
Headteacher	Mrs Shirley Nicholas-Bond
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2006
School address	Westwood Road Netley Abbey Southampton SO31 5EL
Telephone number	023 8045 3731
Fax number	023 8045 4240

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average junior school is experiencing a falling roll. It has a lower than average number of pupils entitled to free school meals. Pupils come from a predominantly White British background, and there are few pupils for whom English is an additional language. There is an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, but a low percentage have a statement of special educational need. The school has experienced considerable staff absence in recent times.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005 HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

'Since the last inspection I feel there has been a marked improvement in several aspects; teaching, more individual attention to pupils, higher morale and in leadership.' The parent who wrote this echoed others' beliefs about the school. Inspectors agree that improvement has been good, and that the school now provides pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. Skilled leadership by the headteacher has contributed to better standards, achievement and teaching. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good.

Pupils now achieve satisfactorily. Standards have improved since 2006 when they were well below average in the tests for Year 6. Most pupils in this year group are on course to reach broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. The school is getting to grips with supporting pupils who have underachieved in the past. Well organised intervention programmes are having a beneficial impact on pupils' learning but standards in writing are not high enough.

The reorganised senior management team has also contributed to raising performance through more effective monitoring of pupils' progress. Leaders and managers now call teachers to account for the progress of pupils in their classes and regularly review the impact of any additional support provided. This rigorous approach has led to some improvements in teaching. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory and there is an increasing percentage of good lessons. Nonetheless, in some lessons, pupils have insufficient opportunities to work independently and teachers' explanations lack clarity.

Pupils enjoy their schooling, adopt positive attitudes to work and behave well. One pupil said she liked literacy because, 'It's the thing I will learn and know forever!' They particularly enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities. The pastoral care of pupils is good. Academic guidance is satisfactory but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to check their own work and to use targets to help them to improve. The school involves a wide range of outside agencies to support pupils' learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The successful distribution of responsibility within the school is a result of good management by the headteacher. Her skilled leadership is also reflected by the continued progress made by the school despite considerable and unavoidable staff absences. The roles of the governors and of some new managers are still developing. Good recent improvements in raising standards and improving the quality of teaching indicate that the school has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English especially by improving pupils' writing.
- Improve some aspects of teaching especially in providing clearer explanations and giving opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- Ensure pupils have consistent opportunities to evaluate their work, and understand how to use targets to help them improve it.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter the school with overall standards that are broadly average. In the past pupils have not achieved well enough but the school has successfully tackled this issue in the last year. Standards have been too low in the past especially in English, mathematics and science. Recent improvements have contributed to better performance overall and standards are now broadly average at the end of Year 6. Nonetheless, there remain weaknesses in pupils' writing. The school has identified improving writing as a priority and through more thorough tracking of pupils' work, setting by ability, and improvements to the quality of teaching, pupils are now making satisfactory progress.

The school quickly identifies those pupils requiring additional help. Good support and booster programmes have been introduced and they have had a significant impact on raising standards. The school has invested heavily in these programmes and provided additional training for learning support assistants. This has worked well especially for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, who are making good progress towards their personal targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with pupils particularly showing respect for others' feelings and opinions. Pupils enjoy school, relationships are secure and the school has a welcoming ethos. Pupils tell of feeling safe and know who to approach if they have problems. Through the good provision for sport and the emphasis laid on healthy eating, pupils have a secure understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils make a good contribution to their community, acting as house captains or playground buddies. They elect school councillors, who, in turn, are enthusiastic about their role in taking decisions about school life. They raise money for different causes, including charity, and have made suggestions about redecorating the school hall. As part of a local 'Tidy Schools' award scheme they volunteer to regularly patrol the school to ensure the site is kept clean and tidy. Pupils develop a view of the wider world through their keen involvement in fund raising appeals, such as 'Water Aid', and show a strong empathy for people in less favourable circumstances. Pupils' satisfactory progress in developing basic skills, including information and communication technology, and their good personal development contribute to them being adequately prepared for their later life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and improving. Good relationships within lessons and some skilled management of pupils help to ensure positive attitudes to learning. As one pupil commented, 'When you're naughty the teachers are firm but fair'. A significant improvement has been seen in the degree to which teachers plan work to meet the needs of individuals. This reflects the more accurate use of assessment by teachers in identifying progress. Effective teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants helps to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities participate fully in lessons and make good progress. In most lessons teaching is brisk, and different teaching methods are used which motivate, and help

to maintain pupils' concentration. Some good use of interactive technology engages and motivates pupils. Whilst some lessons are good, there are inconsistencies. In some lessons pupils are given insufficient opportunities to develop their ideas independently, and teachers' explanations are insufficiently clear, resulting in pupils not always understanding what to do next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The pupils benefit well from the good personal, social, health and citizenship programme which provides valuable guidance on personal safety, keeping healthy and community responsibility. This involves links with the police, the church, health organisations and participation in a 'Junior Citizenship' event. The school recognises that there is a need to develop better links between subjects especially to promote pupils' competence in writing. Whilst provision for pupils who are gifted and talented is satisfactory there are missed opportunities for this group to fully develop their creativity. Good links with a specialist sports college contribute to pupils' physical well-being. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities, such as residential trips, after school clubs, visits and performances that broaden their experiences and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory although the quality of pastoral care is good. Pupils tell of feeling safe, that they are listened to, and that the adults care for them well. Good relationships are encouraged through the 'special mention' award, and the 'behaviour passport' which rewards good on-going behaviour and attitudes. Procedures for the protection and safeguarding of pupils are secure. The school makes use of a good range of external agencies to meet the social, physical, behavioural and emotional needs of pupils and their families. Academic guidance and support is satisfactory. In the written assessments in English there is evidence of pupils being well involved in self-evaluation and target setting. However such approaches are inconsistently delivered across other subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is good and has a clear understanding of what needs to be done. Her views are shared with all staff. She is ably assisted by her senior managers. Good teamwork has resulted in the rapid improvement because effective use is made of accurate self evaluation to set priorities. A recent success has been in providing good guidance for pupils on how to improve their writing, although standards still require improvement. There is a good focus on raising standards through rigorous observations of lessons by senior staff which is bringing about improvements in teaching. However, more needs to be done to improve aspects of teaching so that pupils are clear about what is expected of them. The assessment manager effectively tracks pupils' progress and analyses data. This detailed evaluation leads to the early identification of appropriate support programmes for pupils. Governors are supportive of the school and through training, regular visits and reports from school managers now recognise the school's strengths and areas for development.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

11 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Netley Abbey Junior School, Southampton, SO31 5EL

Thank you for welcoming us during our recent visit to your school. We spoke to many of you and listened carefully to what you had to say. We agree with you that your school has improved and that it is now satisfactory.

We really liked the way that you are polite, well behaved and enjoy your school. Many of you spoke to us about the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise. We liked the way that you are very active at breaks and that you attend sports clubs. Well done to all of you for wanting to get involved in your school and the local community. Congratulations on winning the silver 'Tidy School' award.

As a result of improvements in teaching your learning is improving. You told us that lessons are better now and that you get more to do. We have asked the teachers to make sure that all of your lessons are explained clearly and that you have plenty of opportunities to work independently. Because the school is good at deciding who is finding the work difficult and then helping them, many of you are making better progress.

The adults in the school are working hard to improve the school. Your headteacher and her staff have good ideas about how to do this. What they do well is to use people outside of the school to help you. We have asked the teachers to find more ways of helping you to improve your writing. We have also asked them to find ways of getting you involved in checking on how well you are doing. You could help your teachers by telling them when you find the work too difficult or too easy.

We liked the way that you told us that you want to do well, and that you like the challenge in lessons. Well done and keep working hard! We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Pye

Lead Inspector