

Norman Gate School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116604
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338836
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Kay (Kathleen) Charlton

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Jackie Morgan
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Gayler
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons and all seven class teachers were seen. The inspectors observed the school's work and met with pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers. They scrutinised some of the documentation including the school improvement plan, governing body minutes, assessment and tracking information, and pupils' statements of special educational needs. Forty-one parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed.

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

- the extent to which teaching ensures that all pupils achieve their best with a focus on pupils with more complex needs
- the effectiveness of the ways in which targets are used to improve pupils' performance
- the success of the school in ensuring improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance
- the effectiveness of leadership at different levels, including middle leaders, in ensuring improvement.

Information about the school

Norman Gate is a special school which is designated for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The complexity of pupils' needs has increased since the time of the last inspection and many have additional needs including autism and speech, language and communication difficulties. Almost all are of White British background and very few speak English as an additional language. All pupils in Reception through to Year 6 have a statement of special educational needs. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Nursery, which is attached to Acorns Children's Centre, or in the mixed Reception/Year 1 class. A number of these children either have a statement, or are undergoing assessment. The school has Enhanced Healthy Schools, Investors in People and Sportsmark awards. It is accredited by UNICEF as a Rights Respecting school. It provides outreach support to other schools in the local authority. The school is currently undergoing a major refurbishment.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Norman Gate is an outstanding school. Its entire ethos is underpinned by the UNICEF principle of respect for others and a belief that all pupils and staff have both rights and responsibilities. A very ambitious senior leadership team has established very high levels of expectation and demands very high quality practice. Staff respond to this extremely well and work tirelessly to provide stimulating and challenging experiences for their pupils. Through concerted teamwork they have ensured noticeable improvements in teaching, learning and pupils' achievements since the last inspection. As a result, pupils make excellent progress in both their personal and academic development. Their behaviour and attitudes are vastly improved from when they first start at the school and both are outstanding.

Staff do an excellent job in preparing pupils for the next stage of their education. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and throughout the school, children make excellent progress in learning how to deal with change, how to work together in social situations and how to think for themselves. Staff develop pupils' skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology extremely well and they give them the confidence to be independent learners. High expectations, and a curriculum which is tailored very carefully to pupils' individual needs, are cornerstones of the school's success. Staff care for pupils exceptionally well. They treat them with dignity, value their efforts and listen very carefully to their views.

Teaching is outstanding and pupils get great joy from learning. Staff are very effective in challenging pupils of different abilities, including those with complex needs, to achieve their best. Pupils evaluate their own work and show great awareness of whether they have met their targets and planned lesson outcomes. They are not yet sufficiently confident to evaluate each other's learning and the school has rightly identified this as an area for improvement. As a result of its audit of community cohesion, the school is aware that its links with others are very strong locally. They recognise that they are not as good at a national and international level in order for pupils to learn all that they might about others in a wider context. The school is rigorous in evaluating its own performance with the governing body playing a vital role as its critical friend. Consequently, all are clear about the strengths in the provision and also areas where improvements can still be made. The school is extremely well placed to improve in future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' confidence in evaluating each other's learning so that they can play

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an even greater role in helping each other to improve.

- Implement the plans that are in place to develop community cohesion at national and international levels so that pupils learn more about other communities in the United Kingdom and beyond.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

All pupils thrive in the extremely supportive environment and make excellent progress given their low starting points. Different groups of pupils, including those with the most complex needs and those who speak English as an additional language, enjoy learning and achieve equally well. In an excellent mathematics lesson, it was noticeable how effectively some of the older most able pupils outstripped their challenging targets. This was because of the way staff linked the pupils' learning to real-life situations and also encouraged pupils to think out different ways of solving a problem for themselves.

Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and the importance of being healthy, as evidenced by the Sportsmark and the Enhanced Healthy Schools awards. For instance, they know about road safety, about playing safely on climbing equipment and take part enthusiastically in a wide range of physical activities. They are inquisitive and make extremely good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They gain confidence and do very well in appreciating the needs of others. They are very respectful, caring and learn to work well as part of a team. They demonstrate these skills extremely well when taking part in inter-school sporting events. They make an excellent contribution to the school through their work on the school council. By collecting litter and producing vegetables for a nearby hotel, they make an important contribution to the local community. Pupils' attendance shows noticeable improvement over time and it is above average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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	
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and teaching assistants have excellent relationships with pupils and know their individual needs extremely well. They use resources in very imaginative ways to set up stimulating experiences, such as 'going on a moon walk', to ensure that pupils are fully engaged in their learning. They monitor and assess pupils' achievements exceptionally well throughout lessons and plan the next steps of learning so that they stretch pupils of different abilities. All staff are adept at using a range of communication approaches and are very successful in helping pupils to use different techniques, such as 'mind maps' to think for themselves. They ensure that pupils evaluate their own learning very well using either the lesson outcomes or the pupils' targets as a guide. Staff recognise that there is still further to go in helping pupils be confident in using those skills to check each others' learning.

All pupils follow an innovative and creatively planned curriculum. It is tailored to match the increased complexity of pupils' needs with a wide range of therapies playing an important part. Special events, such as religious education days, participation in the 'Global Rock Challenge' with mainstream schools and a recent plane journey over the school, greatly enhance the provision. Links with the community are used extremely well to support learning and pupils' personal and social development is of exceptional quality. Pupils receive very high quality care. Very effective multi-agency work, for example with health professionals and the home/school liaison worker, produces a coordinated and integrated approach to guidance and support mechanisms. The systems to improve pupils' behaviour, attitudes and attendance are highly effective. Transition from home to school and to the next stage of the education is very carefully planned so that pupils feel confident to make the move. The opportunities for older pupils to work in the nearby secondary special school make an important contribution.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders embed ambition extremely well. They ensure that challenging targets are set for pupils and, in turn, these are used to drive improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Staff development is given high priority and staff appreciate how well they are nurtured as professionals. They show unanimous support for the school and are committed to its aim of achieving 'excellence and enjoyment'. Governors have an extremely wide range of skills and use these very effectively to support and challenge the school. They are particularly successful in the ways in which they monitor the school's effectiveness. Safeguarding procedures are extremely thorough and robust with staff at all levels adopting a very vigilant approach. A recent independent health and safety review demonstrates the effectiveness of the day-to-day procedures. The school is highly successful in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. If any difficulty gets in the way of pupils doing their best, every effort is made to resolve the issue so that pupils quickly get back on track.

There are clear strengths in the promotion of community cohesion. These include the school's involvement locally with different institutions, for example through its outreach work and by its link with the other schools on the campus. It has recently started to link with a very different school in Bournemouth and another in Cairo to extend pupils' understanding about others from different backgrounds. As yet, the pupils have not had many opportunities to benefit from these links.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision in the Nursery and Reception is exceptionally well thought through to match children's needs. Consequently, children make outstanding progress, particularly in their development of communication and personal and social skills. The Nursery outdoor environment, laid out to promote all of the areas of learning for children of this age, is richly resourced. It raises children's curiosity and promotes their all-round development exceptionally well. The outdoor environment for the Reception class is much improved since the last inspection and now supports children's learning very well. Staff work very effectively in teams and carefully assess the children's progress and use assessments to realign their planning to accelerate the children's learning. Adult-directed activities are structured well and significantly enhance the provision. Adults allow the children to run with their interests and very good learning results from such an approach.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Staff reflect constantly on their practice and manage change very well to the benefit of the children. Relationships are excellent and the way that children are cared for is second to none. Very strong partnerships are established with parents, carers and external agencies.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Discussion with parents and carers and the data gathered from the questionnaire completed by about two thirds of parents and carers indicate that they are overwhelmingly pleased with the school. Their views are exemplified by comments such as, 'The teachers and staff do everything they can to help our children.' Inspectors agree with parents' and carers' views, and evidence supports that they have every reason to be proud of what their children achieve in this outstanding school. Inspectors found that the school is extremely well led and managed. It works very closely with parents and carers and, where appropriate, takes account of their suggestions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Norman Gate 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 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 62 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	63	12	29	2	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	66	12	29	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	54	15	37	2	5	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	49	18	44	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	56	15	37	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	54	15	37	3	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	46	20	49	1	2	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)	22	54	13	32	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	63	12	29	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	54	15	37	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	54	14	34	4	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	56	13	32	3	7	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	59	13	32	3	7	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



24 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Norman Gate School, Andover, SP10 1JZ

Inspection of Norman Gate School, Andover, SP10 1JZ

Your behaviour is excellent and you learn very well indeed because of very high quality teaching. Your school provides you with exceptionally good care and support. The staff have very high expectations of you and we could see that you try hard. It is clear that you enjoy school and that your attendance is above average. All staff work hard to make sure you are safe and healthy. You are given a very interesting range of things to do, such as going to the 'Global Challenge' events and even flying over the school; this must have been amazing!

The school is extremely well led and managed. The staff are very keen to do their best for you and to develop the school even further. We have asked them to make sure that you help each other to improve even further by checking each other's work. We have also asked the school to develop wider links to help you gain a greater understanding of the lives of other people in the United Kingdom and even further afield.

Yours sincerely

Kay Charlton

Lead Inspector

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