

# Netley Abbey Junior School

Westwood Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO31 5EL

**Inspection dates** 10–11 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>3</b>
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good and continues to improve. Standards of attainment are increasingly above average and are rising across the school.
- Teaching is typically good, with teachers' high expectations and encouragement promoting the belief that all pupils can achieve and 'Be the best they can be!'
- As a result, pupils make good progress and an increasing number are doing even better, including some from below expected starting points.
- The school has well-developed systems for checking pupils' progress. These are used effectively to meet pupils' needs at an early stage and ensure that they do not fall behind.
- The headteacher's inspirational leadership has established a successful team approach to leadership and management, which has brought year-on-year improvement since the previous inspection.
- Leaders at all levels, including experienced and knowledgeable governors, contribute well to the determined drive for further improvement.
- All staff value pupils' efforts, work closely with parents and carers, and safeguard the pupils' welfare very securely.
- Consequently, pupils behave well, feel very safe and greatly enjoy school. Pupils also benefit from the very caring relationships they share with each other and with all adults who work in the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is some inconsistency in the way pupils' abilities to find things out for themselves and check their own work and bring improvement is developed in some classes.
- Pupils' spelling is not always as accurate as it should be because sometimes teachers do not devote enough attention to this, or ensure that pupils themselves check that they spell words correctly when they write.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 20 lessons and the lead inspector was accompanied by the headteacher during several of these observations.
- The inspectors observed morning playtime and lunch breaks, attended assemblies, and also visited the school's part-time nurture group.
- Meetings were held with members of the school council, and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes. The lead inspector met with governors and also met with a representative of the local authority. The inspectors spoke informally with a number of parents and carers as they brought their children to school.
- The inspectors held meetings with school staff, including senior leaders and teachers in charge of subjects.
- The inspectors also took account of 31 parents' and carers' responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection and also received 18 staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data of pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Sue Horsnell

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is average in size.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a part-time nurture group known as The Lighthouse for a few pupils with emotional needs.
- There are breakfast and after-school clubs, but as these are funded and managed independently, they did not form part of this inspection.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the overall quality of teaching and pupils' achievement from good to outstanding by:
  - developing pupils' ability to learn by finding things out for themselves in a step-by-step way as they move through the school through giving them more opportunities to set up and follow their own lines of enquiry
  - ensuring that pupils more consistently check the quality of their own work to bring improvement.
- Improve pupils' spelling, by teachers:
  - increasing the emphasis and time given to developing and demonstrating accurate spelling
  - instilling in pupils the need to think more carefully about their spelling every time they write.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' skills on entry generally match those normally expected for their age, but at times personal and literacy skills are lower.
- Strengthened links with the adjacent infant school raise pupils' confidence and help them to make a smooth transition. Observations during lessons show that pupils settle quickly into well-established class routines and respond positively to the teachers' high expectations that promote their readiness to learn.
- The most recent national assessments show that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2012 broadly matched national expectations in writing, and slightly exceeded them in reading and mathematics. An examination of pupils' recorded work now shows more securely the development of good literacy and numeracy skills.
- Observations of learning, and pupils' responses during lessons, and while out of class, and the school's own checks of pupils' progress, confirm that pupils currently in Year 6 and in other year groups across the school are achieving well. This is especially so in their speaking and listening skills, and notably in the breadth of their vocabulary. For example, when questioned in an English lesson in Year 5, pupils said that they were confident in taking part in role play, and they talked expressively about life in Anglo-Saxon settlements.
- Pupils' good achievement and above average attainment in reading stem from improved teaching and learning within well-organised guided reading sessions, during which pupils apply themselves enthusiastically in a range of adult-supported group and independent-reading activities. Teachers help pupils to develop their understanding of phonics (how letters sound) well so that they can read more complex words, but pupils' spelling skills are weaker.
- Across the school pupils learn well by cooperating with each other, and many show good skills in using computers and in music and art, but their ability to learn by deciding for themselves how to set about improving their work and take their learning to the next level, is less developed.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, pupils eligible for free school meals and those supported through pupil premium funding also achieve well. This is because they benefit from a wide range of extra support that meets their differing needs. This includes, for example, boosting pupils' confidence through practical activity and role play in the The Lighthouse, which also shows the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. As a result, for example, the average points progress made by pupils eligible for free school meals now closely matches the average points progress of other pupils, showing a significant narrowing of the achievement gap.

### The quality of teaching is good

- All staff have benefited from the school's strengthened systems for checking pupils' progress, which have led to the earlier identification of learning concerns, and the matching of support to pupils' needs. In addition, senior leaders sustain regular and effective checking of classroom practice, and have provided informative feedback to teachers on how to improve.
- This has brought improvement and secured consistently good teaching and learning across the school, the school's records of the quality of teaching closely matching that observed during the inspection.
- The increased emphasis on developing pupils' mental recall and use of number has lifted pupils' numeracy skills. This was seen to very good effect in a lesson in Year 6 where the teacher quickened progress by insisting that pupils think carefully before explaining their ideas about how to sort multiples of 10 across a complex diagram.
- The improved organisation and teaching of literacy skills and reading during guided reading

sessions have improved pupils' reading and writing skills; as seen for example, in a lesson in Year 6, where the teacher's technically accurate explanations developed the pupils' ability to read unfamiliar words. At times, teachers do not give enough emphasis to requiring accuracy in spelling, which is a relative weakness for some pupils.

- All teachers encourage pupils to talk about their work, explain their thinking and share ideas with each other to deepen their learning. Similar steps to further develop pupils' ability to reflect for themselves about how well they have done, and to set up their own investigations to bring improvement, are not yet applied as consistently in all classes.
- Staff question pupils closely about their work and value their ideas. This positive approach is proving effective in developing pupils' self-confidence and consequently promotes good progress. This is especially the case during the frequent one-to-one support sessions for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and for others such as those with emotional needs who attend the nurture group as well as pupils aided by pupil premium funding.
- Teachers enhance the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well across a rich curriculum full of stimulating topics and activities. In a Year 3 English lesson, for example, the pupils' enthusiastic discussions with each other as talk partners extended their use of adjectives such as 'gigantic', 'enormous' and 'colossal' when writing about the mythical Hydra.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils readily share their ideas with each other and help each other to learn. They say, 'Everyone's kind and friendly towards one another.' Often, as in assemblies for example, pupils take just as much pleasure in celebrating the achievements of others as their own.
- School records and the views of pupils, parents and carers, staff and governors all show that pupils' behaviour has significantly improved over time. There have been no exclusions in recent years and bullying is a rare event. Pupils know about the different forms that bullying can take, for example, verbal abuse, but say that if it should occur, 'The staff would talk with parents and soon deal with it.'
- Good and often excellent behaviour underpins pupils' effective and joyful learning in all classes, pupils confidently expressing their opinion that, 'Netley Abbey Junior is a great school because we never feel left out... and we don't just do lessons we have fun!'
- At times, a few pupils need reminders to concentrate, but the vast majority show very positive attitudes towards learning and take their responsibilities seriously, for example, as reading buddies, helping younger pupils with their reading.
- Pupils appreciate the excellent care and support that they receive from staff, but also show keen awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe. They knowledgeably say that they feel very safe in school and, 'If ever we are upset there are always lots of people there to help us.'
- The staff's close links with parents and carers, including the sending of regular letters to encourage good attendance, and rigorous action by school leaders in recent years, have significantly reduced the amount of persistent absence. As a result, attendance is now securely above average, further reflecting the pupils' enjoyment of school.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The very well-respected headteacher leads the school's fully shared vision and strong commitment to improvement. All those who work at the school fully promote the school aim of 'Aiming Higher – Towards Outstanding'.
- Leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, work well together and have

strengthened the way they check the work of the school to ensure that the right priorities for improvement are consistently developed across the school.

- As a result, pupils' number and mental calculation skills have improved and a focus on pupils talking about and sharing their ideas has accelerated their progress in English. However, actions to develop pupils' independent learning and spelling skills have not been in place long enough to fully develop these skills in all classes.
- Senior leaders have effective systems in place to check and manage the performance of teachers, and ensure there is a close match between how well teachers are paid and how well pupils learn. As a result, good teaching is now a consistent feature across the school, showing a strong capacity to improve further.
- The school provides a rich, stimulating curriculum with a good variety of clubs, an exciting range of topics, for example 'volcanoes', and valuable links with other schools in which the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully promoted.
- Strong links with parents and carers promote the pupils' positive attitudes to school, and exemplary practice in caring for pupils equally, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, serves to eliminate discrimination and provides a positive learning environment in which all pupils achieve well.
- Leaders and managers fulfil their statutory duties very effectively. Actions include the safeguarding of pupils' welfare through fully vetting all those who work in the school. Finances are managed efficiently to ensure that funds, such as the pupil premium, are used effectively to boost pupils' confidence and achievement.
- The school's leaders have cooperated well with the local authority to continue improvement. The local authority currently provides light touch support to this good and improving school.

#### ■ **The governance of the school:**

- Since the previous inspection the experienced governing body has carefully plotted its own development, ensuring a good breadth and balance of expertise. Governors have made good use of training opportunities to ensure that they have the ability to compare school performance data with schools nationally. They work closely with the headteacher to make sure that their own frequent visits to the school, including to classrooms, and their discussions with teachers, are productive. Consequently, governors have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching, understand how it promotes pupils' progress, and are aware of how pupil premium funding is being used. Their regular interrogation of detailed reports from senior staff ensures their security in holding the school to account, and in being well informed to oversee efficient budget management. They oversee the systems for checking the quality of teaching and pupils' learning, and ensure that staff appraisal and performance management meet school, pupils' and staff needs effectively, especially in the retention, development and appointment of talented teachers.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116061
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401555

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	243
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Forder
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shirley Nicholas-Bond
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	02380 453731
<b>Fax number</b>	02380 454240
<b>Email address</b>	admin@netleyabbey-jun.hants.sch.uk

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