

Moorings Way Infant School

Address: Moorings Way, Milton, Southsea, Hampshire, PO4 8YJ

Unique reference number (URN): 144582

Inspection report: 13 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders ensure that the procedures to identify disadvantaged pupils are known by all. Extensive information is gathered from staff, pupils and their families and is reviewed thoroughly. External services and expertise are sought when needed. This systematic and rigorous approach ensures that pupils' needs are well understood and taken into account. Leaders ensure that teaching staff have the knowledge and skills needed to make appropriate adjustments to the curriculum and to provide pupils with tailored support. This includes support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils who need additional support with their learning receive it in a highly personalised way. Leaders routinely check and review the impact of any intervention and support. This work includes the oversight of support with academic learning as well as pastoral and wider support. Parents and carers receive regular information about their child's learning and wellbeing.

Leaders' use of the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is highly effective. For example, it is used to provide targeted booster sessions for pupils who need support with their learning, as well as in promoting enjoyment through growing a love for reading. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils do not miss out on any experiences, including clubs and trips.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school's personal development programme is carefully shaped around pupils' needs and experiences. It benefits from the rich information that is gathered about pupils and their families at the school. Highly effective pastoral care and support is offered to pupils and their families. This offer is further strengthened through the recently established 'parent hub'.

Leaders prepare pupils for their next steps by encouraging them to be confident and resilient learners. Social skills are promoted through the positive relationships which exist across the school. Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths. They welcome difference as being exciting and interesting. They show empathy towards others in the school and in the community. For example, when they attend a local care home to share books, pupils see the value in intergenerational relationships.

Pupils' needs and the school's context inform the decisions leaders make. For example, the school commits to the development of pupils' swimming skills through the 'pop-up pool' on the playground. The school's close proximity to the sea presents risks, which pupils learn about, as well as how to keep themselves safe. Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to attend clubs and go on trips which widen their experiences. Pupils learn about what their locality has to offer and, more widely, what it means to live in modern Britain and its associated values. Pupils have many opportunities to develop and build on their interests.

Pupils have an in-depth understanding about how to be physically healthy. They know that fruit, vegetables and water contribute to a healthy diet. They understand why they need to

brush their teeth and have showers or baths as part of their personal hygiene routine. Pupils learn an appropriate relationships education. They know what it means to be a good friend and show this in their kindness and compassion to each other.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils learn well across the curriculum. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is evidenced in the way most pupils are successful in their national tests and benchmarks. Typically, pupils remember their learning well and make links when they encounter new knowledge and concepts. They make thoughtful comparisons and show skills of critical thinking. Pupils are prepared well for their next educational steps.

Pupils have the phonics knowledge they need to be able to read with increasing fluency. They apply their knowledge of letter sounds in their writing. Pupils take care with their letter formation in handwriting activities and they write with increasing stamina. Pupils draw on their understanding of characters and plot development through the stories and books which are shared in class. These rich texts inspire them to write. Many pupils develop their grammatical understanding and use appropriate punctuation. However, some pupils do not apply this understanding of grammar and punctuation in their written work. Leaders recognise that pupils' writing could be further strengthened across the school. Their work is underway to ensure that there are consistent expectations supported by appropriate staff training.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils want to attend school. They like meeting the school's attendance bears, 'Attendance Audrey' and 'Punctuality Pablo'. Pupils and their families recognise the value in attending school for education and the wider experiences on offer. Leaders' actions to promote school attendance are effective. Families who need support receive it through the school's pastoral care. This results in high levels of attendance for all groups of pupils.

There are high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Leaders identify and address any themes and patterns in pupils' behaviour. Staff recognise pupils' positive behaviour as part of the school's caring culture. Pupils respond well to collective and individual praise and rewards. The school's mantra, 'to be your best self', is known by all and considered with pride. Pupils behave well and instances of poor behaviour are rare. They enjoy their learning and participate with enthusiasm. Most pupils are attentive and motivated, needing few reminders to concentrate. Pupils show respect to each other and staff and in the way they take care of the school's resources. Pupils who need extra help in managing their behaviour receive it in a personalised way.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that the school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. It includes the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. Teachers are supported well by subject leaders and have the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum successfully. Teachers help pupils to remember their learning through the use of working walls and in regular 'flashbacks'. All staff use questioning effectively. They routinely check pupils' understanding and identify any misconceptions. Pupils who need additional help, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive the support that they need.

The school prioritises teaching pupils the foundational knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, in mathematics, pupils have access to a wide range of practical resources to support their learning. Teachers demonstrate how to use them to help with place value understanding and calculations.

Staff are skilled at teaching pupils how to read. They demonstrate to pupils how to break down words into their letter sounds and then blend them. Handwriting expectations are modelled through clear letter formation and through the use of resources which support pupils with their writing. Pupils are given time to practise with their handwriting 'sponge cake' templates. However, there is some variability in the expectations for pupils' use of punctuation and grammar in their written work.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years are happy and well cared for. Their emotional wellbeing is prioritised. Teaching staff achieve an appropriate balance of providing support as well as encouraging children to be independent and confident. Parents and carers value the caring and family-friendly start to their child's school journey. They welcome opportunities to attend workshops and understand what and how their children learn.

By the end of the early years, children typically reach the required expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, preparing them well for Year 1. Reading is prioritised from the start through focused phonics teaching. Children build their phonics knowledge and understanding to be able to read and write simple words and phrases. They enjoy hearing a range of stories and sharing books during 'fireside time'. Children learn about the structure of stories and characters' actions and enjoy replicating these in their play. For example, children re-enact parts of the story about 'The Gingerbread Man' and take great pleasure in playing the different characters who chase him.

Children are supported well with their language development. They benefit from their spoken interactions with teaching staff, who model effective use of vocabulary and grammar. Children build their vocabulary well as they have the time they need to practise saying the words they encounter and explore their meaning.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate and well-evidenced understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that require further development. This reflects the shared vision and aim to

transform pupils' life chances and give them the opportunities, knowledge and skills that they need to 'be their best self'. Those responsible for governance, including trustees, fulfil their statutory responsibilities and appropriately challenge and support school leaders.

Leaders and the trust have established a coherent and well-designed professional learning programme. It is underpinned by well-considered evidence and research and successfully promotes the development of staff expertise. Training is sustained over time, linked explicitly to school priorities and aligned with the school's ethos that 'everyone is a leader'. The school engages purposefully with other schools in the federation, local authority and the trust. Staff welcome their professional development opportunities and the consideration given to their workload and wellbeing.

Parental engagement has strengthened further through recent initiatives. Parents and carers value the caring staff team and the breadth of experiences offered to their children. They appreciate the regular, high-quality communication that they receive from the school. Leaders' work to build trust and partnership with families contributes positively to pupils' wellbeing and sense of belonging.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils enjoy attending school. They feel safe and happy and arrive every day excited for their learning and to see the caring staff. Pupils and their families are welcomed with warmth and kindness. Positive relationships are established from the start when children join in the early years.

The well-known mantra, 'be your best self', permeates the school's culture. Pupils live up to the school's expectations for their behaviour. Most pupils are attentive learners who take pride in their work. Over break and lunchtimes, pupils enjoy playing games together with their friends. They are not worried about bullying as they know it is rare and that staff will always help them with any worries.

Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. They accumulate the foundational knowledge they need in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's focus on teaching pupils to read means that they are successful in the phonics screening check. All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are prepared for their transition into junior school. They develop confidence and resilience with their learning.

The school's 'Coastguard' club provides many families with wraparound care for their children. Pupils enjoy having breakfast together and engaging in fun activities at the start of the day. This sets them up well for moving into their classrooms and their learning.

The school prioritises pupils' wellbeing and includes their families in its nurturing ethos. The recently opened 'parent hub' gives family members time to talk to school staff, share information and receive support when needed. One parent and carer summed up the views of many when they said, 'The staff go above and beyond for the children, and the school has a real community feel.'

Next steps

- Leaders should continue with their actions to further strengthen pupils' writing through staff training and consistently high expectations across the curriculum.
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About this inspection

This school is part of The Thinking Schools Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Stuart Gardner, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gerard Newman.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, the head of school, other senior leaders, staff and pupils. This included executive leaders from the trust. The lead inspector met with representatives from the trust and the governing body.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

The school is part of The Meon Way Federation within the overall trust. The executive headteacher of this school is also the headteacher of the other schools in the federation. The school has a 'head of school', who was appointed in January 2026.

Executive headteacher: Sara Paine

Lead inspector:

Kate Fripp, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Justin Bartlett, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 13 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

127

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

135

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

17.32%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

7.09%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.02%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	4.8%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	4.2%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.4%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	14.1%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.7%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	7.3%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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