

Sun Hill Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115930
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	379173
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2012
Lead inspector	Judith Rundle HMI

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 of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stewart Boon
Headteacher	Mr Neil MacKenzie
Date of previous school inspection	11–13 May 2009
School address	Sun Lane Alresford SO24 9NB
Telephone number	01962 732801
Fax number	01962 733326
Email address	lynn.paul@sunhill-jun.hants.sch.uk

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Judith Rundle

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynn Alexander

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed eight teachers teaching 12 lessons, of which four were joint observations with senior leaders, and paid short visits to a further 11 lessons. In addition, the inspection team made visits to a year assembly and enrichment activities. Meetings were held with four groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and evaluation records and development plan, safeguarding policies and a sample of teachers' assessments and planning. Inspectors analysed 121 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Sun Hill Junior School is an average-sized school with slightly more girls than boys on roll. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average although the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average, most of whom have moderate learning difficulties. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. It works in close collaboration with other local schools to share effective practices. Several new teachers started at the school in September 2011 and the headteacher took up his post in January 2012.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because not enough pupils attain the higher level 5 by the end of Key Stage 2 and there is inconsistency in the use of monitoring information to raise standards further. Leaders responded positively to the last inspection to bring about improvements that have accelerated further this academic year. The headteacher and other senior leaders have established an ethos of aspiration across the school that has resulted in rapid improvements in pupils' progress since September. The vast majority of pupils, parents, carers and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school and its work.
- Procedures are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and the school's work. However, the depth, understanding and use of the outcomes of monitoring are not embedded firmly with all leaders to accelerate pupils' achievement even further.
- Pupils' attainment has been on an improving trend in recent years and has been in line with national averages. Work seen in lessons, books and the school's own information show that the rate of progress has accelerated considerably this year and is now good. Evidence shows that pupils are on track to attain above-average standards by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. The use of marking and feedback has improved since the last inspection although procedures to assess and monitor pupils' progress over time are not securely embedded in all classes. Teachers plan activities to match the needs of different abilities but miss opportunities to use assessment information to direct pupils quickly towards higher levels of challenge. In outstanding lessons, teachers' use of extended questioning helps pupils to deepen their thinking and to work out solutions independently. However, this excellent practice is not used consistently in all classes.
- Although a few responses from pupils, parents and carers raised concerns about behaviour, particularly of boys, inspectors found that behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy being in school, say they feel safe and show good care for one other. High levels of respect exist between staff and pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the depth, understanding and use of the outcomes of monitoring by leaders at all levels to accelerate pupils' achievement further.
- Raise the achievement of pupils further, particularly in the proportion that attain Level 5 in English and mathematics, by:
 - embedding the new procedures to assess and monitor pupils' progress over time
 - ensuring the consistent use of assessment information to set and direct pupils to activities that challenge their ability and drive improvement
 - more consistent use of extended questioning to stretch pupils' independent thinking about finding their own solutions to challenges and activities.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' attainment has been in line with national averages in English and mathematics at both Level 4 and Level 5. Attainment in mathematics, which continues to improve, has been slightly better than in English because of the school's focus on developing provision and standards since the previous inspection. Pupils' writing was identified as a weaker aspect in English and leaders have taken robust action to tackle this. As a result, pupils have extended opportunities to write across the curriculum, have a better understanding of writing for a purpose and its relevance, leading to the considerably accelerated progress in all age groups. Pupils have produced powerful writing on the Second World War and the importance of the Olympic values to people's lives. Pupils' communication and reading skills are well above average by the time they leave school. Most read for enjoyment and with fluency. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their favourite books and how authors' visits to the school inspire them to read more widely and write more interesting stories. As a result of changes, pupils' attainment in Year 6 is now above average in English and mathematics and a greater number are on track to attain the higher Level 5. Almost all parents and carers are very positive about the progress their child is making at the school.

The gap between the attainment of boys and girls has narrowed significantly over the last three years and they now achieve equally well. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make the same good progress as others in the school and attain above the same groups of pupils nationally. The careful deployment of teaching assistants and their one-to-one support ensure targeted pupils are engaged in learning and making good progress from their starting points. As a result, pupils supported through school action plus, with a statement of special educational needs or with a disability make good progress. Lower-attaining pupils demonstrate a good range of strategies to read texts and develop their writing and communication skills well.

Work seen in lessons reflects pupils' determination and perseverance to succeed in all aspects of their learning. They thoroughly enjoyed exploring how circuits work in science and there was genuine excitement when the first group made a buzzer work. Their time at the 'discovery centre' and in the library enhances further their knowledge and understanding of the class theme. They are adept at using laptops to support their work and are skilled at using search engines to find relevant information and in manipulating data to present their findings in several subjects. Their good work is celebrated and displayed prominently around the school to motivate others.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good across all age groups. Pupils, parents and carers recognise this in their positive responses in their questionnaire responses. Teachers have high expectations and most pupils respond positively. They have secure subject knowledge and use this to plan work that matches the different needs of pupils in the class. They use a broad range of methods and resources, especially modern technologies, to stimulate pupils' interest and engage them actively in learning. All teachers use questioning effectively although the excellent use of extended and probing questions seen in some lessons is not consistently applied in all classes. The pace of learning is generally good, although it slows occasionally when the level of challenge is not pitched correctly. Pupils work cooperatively in pairs and small groups and listen to each other's input respectfully. Most are good at sharing equipment and taking turns to ensure all have equal opportunities to complete tasks. Pupils have good opportunities to lead and drive their own learning. For example, where pupils are learning about other countries as part of the Olympic Values project they create their own questions based on 'what I want to find out'. These generated interesting ideas, particularly about Cuba and its inception. Teaching and the planned curriculum enable pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. For example, pupils in Year 3 explore Islam and the Qu-ran, and pupils explore green issues and their implications for the local environment and other countries.

The use of marking, feedback and assessment has improved and is consistently good in written feedback. All classes use the same systems for setting targets and evaluating progress against them. Pupils are confident in their use and, as a result, know how well they are doing and what they need to do specifically to improve. English and mathematics targets are used equally well in other subjects. For example, in science the marking commented on how a 'grammar' target was used well to reflect fair testing. Teachers are good at observing and intervening to bring about improvements or to correct misconceptions. However, at times, verbal feedback in lessons misses the opportunity to be as specific as written comments. The continuous assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress has also improved, with increased levels of accountability for the progress pupils make in class over time. However, not all teachers use assessment information on prior learning to direct pupils to higher levels of challenge at an early stage of the lesson to ensure all pupils are stretched.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Around 11% of parents and carers who returned questionnaires expressed concerns

about the disruption in lessons and in the playground caused by bad behaviour. However, inspectors found that most pupils behave well in lessons and play cooperatively in the playground. The school is aware that some pupils are more boisterous than others and is introducing a range of playground activities to channel excesses of energy in appropriate ways. Expectations of behaviour are high and pupils say that behaviour is typically good. Occasionally, some pupils drift off task in lessons but this tends to be when work is not challenging enough. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and help to create a positive and purposeful learning environment. Attendance is above the national average and improving.

Pupils are polite and courteous, know right from wrong and understand the rewards and sanctions system well. They are confident that any issues they raise are dealt with effectively. They have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and how to deal with this, including an acute awareness of e-bullying. However, pupils are adamant that bullying 'never occurs'. Almost all say they feel safe in school and most parents and carers agree. A few parents and carers expressed some concerns about the access of cars onto the school site. Leaders have already started to tackle this. The 'Den' is a strong aspect of provision and supports pupils, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, extremely well both emotionally and/or academically. As one says, 'We nearly always come here when something has gone wrong and they always make it better.'

Leadership and management

Leaders at all levels have responded positively to areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. The school development plan has become increasingly focused on using quantifiable targets to measure and monitor pupils' progress over time. The use of marking and feedback to pupils has been strengthened significantly. Leaders have created a sharp focus on raising pupils' achievement and the collective staff approach is driving this forward at pace, indicating strong capacity for sustained improvement. The new headteacher is already making an extremely positive impact at the school and has the confidence of staff, parents and carers. He is raising aspirations rapidly in an already good school.

Effective systems are in place to monitor and record the school's work. Consequently, senior leaders and governors have a secure view of its strengths, weaknesses and of pupils' achievements. However, the analysis and use of monitoring outcomes to drive improvement further is not yet securely embedded with leaders at all levels. Middle managers demonstrate secure understanding of their areas of responsibility and have been supported effectively into their roles through professional development. They model good practice in their teaching and have brought about improvements in the quality of teaching in their phase teams and across the staff through sharing these practices. A good programme of professional development is in place, including peer observations within the school and with partner schools, which is resulting in consistently good teaching.

The curriculum is well organised and its imaginative approach supports pupils' outcomes well. Good emphasis is placed on improving and using pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across subjects. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with particular strengths in supporting their

moral and social awareness. However, there is less emphasis on preparing pupils for living in a multicultural society.

The governing body has an astute knowledge of the school and uses this well to challenge and support leaders and to hold them to account for improvements. It has benefited from external training and is increasingly involved in setting and monitoring the strategic direction of the school. Secure procedures are in place to ensure the safeguarding of pupils and staff. Leaders and governors successfully ensure that groups of pupils achieve equally well. The engagement with parents and carers is a strength of the school's work.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



1 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sun Hill Junior School, Alresford, SO24 9NB

Thank you for your help and for talking to us during the recent inspection. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and seeing your work. I am writing to tell you about our findings.

Your school provides you with a good education. Since the last inspection, it has brought about improvements in your achievement, which is accelerating quickly this year. The headteacher and other leaders provide a strong lead that is raising the aspirations of everyone at the school. You are very positive about the school and its work. You and your parents and carers raised some concerns about behaviour, but we found your behaviour to be good. You told us you feel safe and well cared for and we agree. You experience mostly good teaching and, consequently, you are making good progress and are on target to reach standards that are above the national average.

We have asked the school to improve these two areas.

- Strengthen the use of monitoring information that leaders have to accelerate your achievement further.
- Raise your achievement further, and enable more of you to reach Level 5 in English and mathematics, by:
 - using the new procedures to assess and monitor your progress over time in all classes
 - using assessment information in all classes to make sure you are completing the most challenging work for your ability
 - ensuring all staff use questioning to stretch your thinking and to help you find even more creative solutions to challenges and activities.

We hope that you continue to work hard, and continue enjoying school and learning new things. Thank you once again for showing us your school.

Yours sincerely

Judith Rundle
Her Majesty's Inspector

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