

Siskin Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116172
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	362823
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Sheila Nolan

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Tiltman
Headteacher	Rebecca Kingsland
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2009
School address	Nimrod Drive Rowner Gosport PO13 8AA
Telephone number	02392 583029
Fax number	02392 501713
Email address	rebecca.kingsland@siskin-junior.hants.sch.uk

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed every class, saw seven lessons taught by five teachers and attended two whole-school assemblies. Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the schools work, and looked at self-evaluation documentation, the raising attainment plan and information about the pupils progress. Views of parents and carers were also taken into account as reflected in the schools survey of their views. The schools safeguarding procedures were also evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the schools work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

To what extent has the pupils attainment and progress strengthened in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection?

Has the unevenness in the quality of teaching, noted at the last inspection, been addressed?

To what extent are leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, effective in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school?

Information about the school

Siskin is smaller than the average junior school and serves families from an increasingly mobile community as the local area is in the process of a housing regeneration project. The school shares its site with the local infant and nursery school, with which it has recently federated. Also on the site is a Childrens Centre and a youth and community centre. Well over half of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. Double the proportion of pupils compared to that found nationally have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These special needs relate to a range of barriers to learning but are mainly linked to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Since the last inspection the school, with the support of the local authority, established a partnership with another local school. The headteacher of this partner school leads both schools as the executive headteacher. A substantive executive headteacher is about to be appointed for the federated schools and will initially be supported by the current executive headteacher.

When Siskin School was inspected in October 2009, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school received three monitoring visits. At the last monitoring visit, the school was judged to be making good progress.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school now provides a satisfactory education for its pupils.

Siskin has improved significantly under the purposeful leadership of the executive headteacher. Senior leaders have built on the school's previous strengths as well as relentlessly driving forward to improve the quality of teaching and accelerate the rate of the pupils' progress. In this they have been successful. The quality of teaching is consistently at least satisfactory and often good. Pupils' rate of progress has accelerated and their academic attainment is gradually improving. Leadership at all levels has strengthened considerably and self-evaluation is honest and accurate. The members of the governing body, ably led, are perceptive and challenge underperformance in any area. All staff accept their responsibility to determinedly raise the pupils' attainment. A regular training programme, often in conjunction with the partnership school, has restored morale and confidence in their work and enabled them to adapt the curriculum to better meet the needs of the pupils. Key subject leaders, particularly coordinators of English and mathematics, are beginning to evaluate the work of their teams as well as analysing data to review the impact of initiatives on the performance of the pupils. However, not all middle managers have the skills to contribute fully to the school's future success and to monitor and moderate work across the federation. The school has demonstrated a good capacity to continue to improve.

Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is at its highest point for several years, although still below average, particularly in writing. The performance of the youngest pupils in lessons is broadly average and those in Years 5 and 6 are rapidly making up lost ground. This is the result of teaching that is securely satisfactory and often good. Teachers know clearly how well pupils are doing and are increasingly able to pinpoint any misunderstandings that they may have. Pupils are actively engaged in learning and enthusiastic about the rich and varied activities that are helping to improve their speaking and writing skills. They know well how their work measures up to what is expected of them and are confident in trying to improve.

In a recent parental survey, one commented, Siskin is highly effective in meeting individual children's needs. As well as striving to raise the pupils' academic performance, the school has continued to give high priority to supporting the pupils' personal development so that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school has an excellent understanding of the local community but does not yet promote pupils' awareness of life in the United Kingdom outside of their neighbourhood, and to a lesser extent, of that in other countries. Pupils mostly behave satisfactorily and have positive attitudes to learning. Siskin is a safe and happy school where pupils can

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thrive, expand their horizons, and begin to understand what they can achieve. Most pupils enjoy school and attend regularly because of the good care, guidance and support. The school extends this support to families and makes a real effort to engage with all of its parents and carers. Its efforts have been rewarded by the high attendance at the recent Jack in the Beanstalk production.

The local authority has worked assiduously with the school to ensure continuity in its progress, both through the federation and in the appointment of a substantive executive headteacher. There are plans, too, to maintain the strong links forged with the local partner school, a key contributory factor in Siskins recovery.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the pupils attainment further, particularly in writing, by:
 - embedding the childrens understanding of the links between reading and writing
 - providing more opportunities to promote writing from talk
 - providing regular opportunities across all subjects for extended writing.
- Extend the capacity of middle leaders to manage their areas of responsibility effectively by:
 - ensuring they are confident to monitor and moderate work across the federated schools.
- Develop the schools work to promote community cohesion beyond the school and the local community so that pupils have further opportunities to learn about the range of beliefs and lifestyles within the United Kingdom and worldwide.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most pupils enjoy school, have increasingly positive attitudes to learning and progress steadily in lessons. Their enthusiasm and curiosity are most clearly evident when they are able to use their skills in practical, problem-solving contexts. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils made good progress in calculating animal facts through choosing independently non-standard methods and checking a partners methods and results. Year 4 pupils excitement over the visiting Professor Drake, a dragonologist, galvanised them into writing informative reports using a wide range of vocabulary as well as a fact file. Generally, pupils behave sensibly in class and around the site because of the good support they receive. Those with previously challenging behaviour patterns have been successfully helped to feel part of the school community. As a result, fixed-term exclusions have reduced markedly.

From well-below-average starting points at the beginning of Year 3, pupils are now making overall satisfactory progress, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Years 3 and 4 are making regularly good progress. That of Years 5 and 6 is currently fast but their overall progress from Year 3 is satisfactory because of a legacy of underachievement. Attainment at the end of Year 6, although still below average in published test results, has improved since the last inspection. English results in national

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tests this year are predicted to be 50% higher than in 2010. The attainment seen in lessons is close to average overall. Pupils performance in writing, however, is still too low and remains a focus for the school as it seeks to encourage the pupils to make the link between reading and writing and to use their writing skills well across all subjects.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school and that most concerns are dealt with rapidly and effectively. They attend regularly. In their efforts to help others, pupils take on roles and responsibilities in their class groups and are regularly involved in local community events. For example, they met with the architects in charge of the regeneration project and were involved in planning for improvements to the school site. All year groups are actively involved in charity fund raising. Pupils awareness of different cultures is beginning to grow because of the many rich opportunities the school provides. Year 6 assembly monitors, for example, independently sought out Japan on their global issues map to identify the current tsunami events. Most pupils have a sound sense of how to stay healthy and are keen participants in sport. Pupils prepare satisfactorily for their future economic well-being, learning gradually to apply their basic skills to problem solving.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

How effective is the provision?

A strong feature of the curriculum is the enrichment programme that is well planned to provide activities, carefully geared to broaden pupils experience beyond the local context. The impact is seen in the pupils increasing independence in striving to improve their work.

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Themed weeks, visits to the theatre, the local newspaper and the church as well as school productions and music workshops all help to engage the pupils interest. The Year 4 Egypt project with pupils mummified fish is a real favourite. Nevertheless, the school is striving to develop its curriculum further to promote even more and better opportunities for speaking in lessons that then stimulate good writing.

Vulnerable pupils benefit greatly from the schools close partnerships with external agencies and the good care, guidance and support regularly provided for them and their families. The school has been particularly active in identifying those children at risk during the transition from the infant school. Other close links include social and medical services, the police and youth workers so that the pupils are supported out of school as well as within. The reorganised school structure includes a well-being team which focuses closely on the progress of those pupils most at risk. Small interventions like the break-time toast group, the girls group and the social skills group make a significant difference over time. The overall impact of the provision is seen in the pupils improved attendance and behaviour and in the greater engagement of the parents with the school over two years.

The rate of classroom learning has improved significantly since the last inspection and reflects the improved quality of teaching. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, there is much that is good. Major strengths in teaching now include high expectations for the pupils, skilful questioning to assess progress in lessons, and identifying and challenging pupils misconceptions so that effective interventions can be planned. Information from support staff is used well to inform next steps in learning. There are examples of very helpful written guidance to pupils on their next steps towards their targets, although such good practice is not yet consistent across the school. In the less successful lessons, the pace of work is sometimes too slow and activities do not always include all pupils sufficiently well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The skilful leadership of the executive headteacher and her clear understanding of how to move Siskin forward have increased significantly the capacity of the senior leaders. All senior managers actively promote a strong team approach to ensure high expectations and to challenge underperformance at all levels. As a result, staff have responded with a genuine commitment to improve provision for the pupils. Middle leaders are increasingly able, with guidance, to use the robust information gathered on the pupils progress to inform their planning and drive up attainment but have yet to develop the confidence to monitor and moderate work fully across the federation. Efficient systems accurately

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evaluate the quality of teaching and develop teachers skills through well-considered training.

This inclusive school is committed to promoting equal opportunities and to eradicating any discrimination. The realisation of this ambition is demonstrated in the way the school identifies the performance of its various groups and strives to narrow the gaps in their performance. The school recognises the additional challenge presented by its monocultural setting in helping its pupils to understand the world beyond their locality. It does its best to promote community cohesion satisfactorily through its regular sessions on international news and its Our World displays. Links with the local church encourage the pupils involvement with other cultures. However, the school knows that its next steps must include highlighting the pupils awareness of other parts of the United Kingdom, very different from the immediate school locality. The governing body of the recently established federation supports the school well. It is rapidly growing in confidence to challenge information robustly, guided effectively by an able Chair, the previous leader of the interim executive board.

Requirements in relation to the safeguarding of children are in line with recommended good practice. The school acknowledges that it has yet to formally seek parents and carers views on safety issues, although it does so informally. The school has been successful in forging strong partnerships with a wide range of external agencies to promote the pupils welfare and to support learning. At the same time it has developed close links with the local infant school so that the federation has proceeded smoothly. It has also been effective in challenging and developing the way parents and carers engage with the school, especially through its work with hard-to-reach families.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Views of parents and carers

As this was a section 8 inspection, Ofsted did not send out a questionnaire to parents and carers prior to the inspection. However, the school did issue its own survey, to which 31 parents and carers responded. These show that the views of parents and carers are increasingly positive. The majority of parents and carers say that they are happy with their childrens overall experience of the school and that it is improving. Some still have concerns about pupils behaviour but this is also often related to issues outside of the school. The inspection found that behaviour within the school was generally at least satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



16 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Siskin Junior School, Gosport PO13 8AA

Thank you very much for your welcome when I visited your school recently. It was very encouraging to see how interested you now are in your lessons and how sensible you are around the school. Thank you to those of you who took the time from your busy day to speak to me.

Your teachers have worked really hard to provide you with a sound education. Yours is a satisfactory school that is improving rapidly. Staff really care about each one of you as well as about the progress you make in learning. They make sure you are well looked after. Most of you attend well but just a few of you and your families need to understand that you cannot learn if you are not present or if you miss lessons because you are late for school. Well done, though, because last week only three of you were late and the attendance of Year 4 was 99.4%!

I have asked the staff to do a number of things to help your school become even better. I would like you all to do really well in reading, writing and mathematics. In particular, your teachers will work even harder on improving your writing. Your teachers will also concentrate on helping you to learn more about other parts of the world, including the United Kingdom. Some of your teachers have special responsibilities and your school is going to help them to carry them out in the best possible way.

For your part, you can help by keeping up your present efforts in lessons and by using your writing wall in your own work. I also hope that you will all help to make your class attendance as high as possible and keep on getting to school on time.

I wish you all the best for your futures at Siskin and beyond. Thank you, too, for singing Crunch to me!

Yours sincerely

Sheila Nolan

Lead inspector

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