

# Bitterne Park Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116090
<b>Local Authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	357878
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christopher Grove

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

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<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>	350
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Julia Potter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ceinwyn Curtis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Manor Farm Road Southampton SO18 1NX
<b>Telephone number</b>	02380554541
<b>Fax number</b>	02380679289
<b>Email address</b>	info@bitternepark-jun.southampton.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 23 lessons taught by 13 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, with members of the governing body and with staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' attainment and progress, records of governing body meetings, the school's development planning and documents relating to monitoring, safeguarding and the curriculum. Inspectors analysed inspection questionnaires returned by 98 parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils.

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

- How well teaching provides challenge for the different pupil groups, and how successfully assessment is used to support pupils' learning and progress.
- The impact of the school's self-evaluation arrangements in improving pupils' performance and the quality of teaching and learning.
- How well the school promotes the strands of community cohesion, especially at the national and international levels.

## Information about the school

Bitterne Park Junior is larger than most other primary schools. Most pupils are of White British heritage, and others are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is below average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, principally moderate learning difficulties, is broadly average. A new deputy headteacher has been in post since September 2010. The school has achieved national accreditations, including the Healthy Schools (Enhanced) and the Activemark awards.

**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**

**3**

## Main findings

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. It offers a welcoming atmosphere for pupils, which is reflected in their positive attitudes and good behaviour. Most parents and carers agree that their children enjoy school. One wrote that, 'My son always seems very happy when talking about school when he arrives home.' Another family recorded that their daughter had been 'treated as an individual child. Staff know her well and she receives positive affirmations about herself.' Most pupils who took part in the survey also say that they enjoy school and that the adults care about them. 'Support staff, administrative and teaching staff are very dedicated, approachable and professional,' as a third parent noted.

The good aspects of pupils' personal development are the result of the school's good pastoral care and the inclusive ethos. As a consequence, most pupils feel very safe, and believe that the school helps them to lead healthy lifestyles. Although some aspects of pupils' cultural development are good, their multicultural understanding is limited. Positive action by leaders and managers has improved rates of attendance, which are above average. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average and in past years pupils' progress has been satisfactory, which indicates satisfactory achievement. However, current evidence shows that progress is improving, though this is not yet consistent across the school.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and some is good. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace of learning is not always sufficient to maintain pupils' interest. In the best teaching, the tasks set are well matched to the previous attainment of the different groups, so that there is a good level of challenge for all pupils. However, this is not consistently the case. Teachers' use of assessment is satisfactory. In their marking of pupils' work, teachers do not consistently advise pupils how they could improve their work. In addition, teachers' use of target setting does not indicate sufficiently to pupils the steps needed to reach higher levels of attainment.

The headteacher, with the good support of the deputy headteacher, has developed a confident vision for the improvement of the school. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are robust. The engagement of parents and carers is satisfactory. Although a majority of parents and carers acknowledge the school's good features, the school has not yet sufficiently addressed the concerns of a small minority about the support and information they receive about aspects of their children's learning. Although teachers do much to promote community cohesion within the school and in the locality, there are insufficient opportunities for reflection on the different cultures in modern Britain and in societies elsewhere in the world.

The impact of the school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. Improving arrangements to review pupils' individual performance with class teachers and to check the quality of

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teaching are leading to the recent acceleration in progress. Issues for improvement have been effectively tackled. For instance, teachers have better access to the improved tracking information about pupils' progress. In the light of the current improvement to pupils' progress, the school has a satisfactory capacity to sustain further improvement.

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

- Accelerate the progress of pupils through ensuring that teaching and the use of assessment are more consistently good by:
  - improving planning for lessons to ensure a close match of appropriate tasks to different groups of pupils
  - making sure that the pace of learning in lessons is always good, in order to sustain pupils' interest and motivation
  - making sure that marking regularly gives pupils clearer feedback about how to improve their work
  - improving the impact of target-setting in order to ensure that pupils understand more precisely what they need to do to reach higher levels of attainment
- Heighten pupils' awareness of community cohesion, and extend their cultural development, through a wider range of contacts in order to promote their understanding of the diversity of other communities, nationally and internationally.
- Develop more consistently good engagement with parents and carers by taking steps to ensure that:
  - any concerns raised are effectively addressed
  - information about their children's progress at school is better communicated
  - better help is provided to support them with their children's learning. better help is provided to support them with their children's learning.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>3</b>
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Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. When pupils enter the school, their attainment is typically broadly average. In the last two years, attainment in English and mathematics has been broadly average by the end of Year 6. Although girls' attainment has been higher than that of boys, recent action taken by the school is narrowing the gap in performance. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils.

In a very successful lesson in mathematics in Year 3, pupils made good progress in learning to understand digital times. In the effective introduction, the teacher gauged pupils' good understanding accurately, and therefore adopted a more rapid pace. There was a good match of activities for pupils of different levels of ability, including word problems for the most able so that they had to apply their understanding of their learning. However, not all teaching is so well judged. For instance, in an English lesson about planning for writing, there was little difference in the expectations for higher attainers by comparison with those for other pupils. In addition, the long explanation about what was

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expected resulted in a loss of pace and time to complete the tasks. The pupils therefore made only satisfactory progress.

Pupils are well behaved because of their secure relationships with teaching and support staff. Their attentiveness in lessons contributes well to their learning. Adults' good care means that pupils feel safe at school. Although some bullying occurs, pupils believe that playground buddies are helpful and adults can be trusted to deal fairly with any problems. Furthermore, pupils have a good understanding of issues such as internet safety and 'stranger danger'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Their moral and social development is good because of their positive attitudes to school and their well-developed skills in making relationships with others. However, pupils' spiritual development is restricted by the limited opportunities for contact with other religions, and not enough is done to broaden their multicultural understanding.

Pupils show a good understanding of the importance of staying healthy through a balanced diet and regular participation in physical activities. The Activemark and Healthy Schools awards provide good support for healthy lifestyles. Pupils make positive contributions to the school, for example through roles such as playleaders and librarians. The school council has had an impact, for example in planning the new playground developments and the nature trail. Pupils are involved in reading with pupils from the adjoining infant school, but other opportunities to contribute more widely in the local community are limited. Learning activities, such as 'talk partners', and using problem-solving approaches, for instance in mathematics, enable pupils to develop satisfactory workplace skills. Together with their satisfactory skills in literacy and numeracy, pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Good features in all teaching include the strong relationships with pupils and the consistent use of learning objectives and success criteria. Lesson planning regularly includes attention to pupils' tasks. However, in some lessons, there is not always a close match of tasks to the learning needs of different groups of pupils and there is also sometimes a lack of pace. In lessons, teachers often make good use of questioning to assess the extent of pupils' understanding. When they mark pupils' books, teachers do not consistently give advice about how to improve the quality of work, although they often offer encouragement. There are arrangements to set curricular targets in mathematics and writing, but teachers do not use target setting consistently well to involve pupils in understanding the next steps in learning that they need to take.

The curriculum is satisfactory, and has good features. It is appropriately broad and balanced, and has been carefully designed to explore interesting themes and topics that are relevant and motivating for pupils. Although the curriculum has been developed to provide for the progressive learning of skills in literacy and numeracy, this has not yet resulted in higher attainment. The programme for information and communication technology (ICT) equips pupils with a satisfactory range of relevant skills. Science and personal, social and health education offer good support for pupils' understanding of issues of safety and health. In addition, the strong accent on art and music promotes pupils' personal development well. The sports partnership extends satisfactorily the

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school's provision for physical activities. Curriculum enhancement includes a good range of visitors and day visits, as well as annual residential visits in Years 4 and 5, and experience in France for pupils in Year 6. The broad range of well-subscribed extra-curricular clubs offers a stimulating variety of sporting and leisure activities.

The commitment of leaders and staff to the inclusive ethos leads to the well-organised arrangements for the care of pupils. Good procedures bring about a smooth induction into Year 3, and the transition to secondary education. Well-directed help is given to pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, for example by the emotional literacy support assistants. The nurture group also offers a welcoming environment that develops the self-esteem of some of these pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit, where necessary, from a range of additional programmes to support their learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership communicates a strong ambition to improve the school further. The school's development planning clearly indicates appropriate priorities for such improvement. The impact of more effective self-evaluation, especially improvements in tracking pupils' performance, and in monitoring the quality of teaching, is reflected in pupils' better progress in this school year. Members of the governing body work closely with the leadership team, and are committed to the school, resulting in a clear understanding of its current strengths and weaknesses. They ensure compliance with statutory requirements and provide satisfactory challenge for improvement.

Inspection evidence indicates that the school leadership team does much to communicate and engage with parents and carers. For example, the headteacher and deputy headteacher regularly greet pupils and their parents and carers as they arrive at school. The half-termly newsletters are informative. Termly parents' meetings are held. Annual reports to parents and carers provide information about their children's attainment and effort. Nevertheless, for a small minority of parents and carers, the school does not always take sufficient account of concerns that they have raised.

Leaders are keen to ensure equal opportunities and tackle discrimination and they regularly evaluate the performance of different groups of pupils. There is satisfactory improvement in areas where the school has targeted its actions, for example in closing the gap in attainment between boys and girls. The school's systems and procedures meet all the requirements for safeguarding. Policies for child protection and health and safety safeguard pupils very effectively. Risk assessments for a range of circumstances are



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rigorous and are regularly updated. The school has audited its provision and has a plan of action to improve community cohesion. The inclusive ethos and satisfactory links with the neighbourhood ensure effective contributions are made at the level of the school and the locality. However, the school acknowledges that pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to reflect on life elsewhere in the United Kingdom and in different societies in the world, though a link with a school in Thailand is being established.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

The rate of return of completed questionnaires was below that for similar schools. Most parents and carers feel that the school keeps their children safe and promotes a healthy lifestyle. Most also believe that the quality of teaching is good and a large majority think that their children are making enough progress. Inspectors found that although some teaching is good, overall it is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. The great majority of parents and carers think that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour and inspectors endorse this view. A small minority express reservations as to whether some concerns raised have been addressed sufficiently effectively. Whereas a majority of parents and carers feel that their concerns are successfully addressed, there is a small minority who do not feel sufficiently informed about their children's progress, or sufficiently supported in helping with their children's learning. A minority of parents and carers consider that the school is well led and managed but a smaller minority disagree. Inspectors judge that the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bitterne Park Junior 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 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 350 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	28	55	56	11	11	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	41	42	50	51	5	5	2	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	18	57	58	16	16	5	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	23	41	42	21	21	10	10
The teaching is good at this school	26	27	53	54	12	12	5	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	15	51	52	23	23	8	8
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	24	59	60	10	10	2	2
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)	21	21	54	55	11	11	3	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	20	27	48	18	18	9	9
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	16	49	50	15	15	5	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	14	43	44	17	17	12	12
The school is led and managed effectively	15	15	33	34	24	20	20	19
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	19	35	40	30	31	4	4

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 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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



20 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Bitterne Park Junior School, Southampton SO18 1NX**

We would like to thank all of you for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you at playtimes and lunchtimes. We especially thank those of you who filled in the pupils' questionnaire. Inspectors judge that you go to a satisfactory school.

These are the main things that we found out about your school.

- Your school is welcoming and sets a positive climate for your learning.
- You enjoy school, and your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- You have good relationships with the adults who take good care of you.
- You feel very safe in school and have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- You make satisfactory contributions within your school, but your opportunities to contribute to the wider community are limited.
- The teaching and the curriculum in your school are satisfactory.
- A majority of your parents and carers are happy with your experience at school.
- Your attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Progress across the school has been satisfactory, but is improving.

We have asked your school to make some improvements:

- Improve your progress by ensuring that all teachers set you work that is suitably challenging and that they keep you interested by getting through the work more quickly. Make sure that marking tells you how to improve your work and that your targets tell you what to do to reach a higher level.
- Give you more opportunities for contact with other people, not just in your local area but also elsewhere in the country and in different parts of the world.
- Improve the contact with some of your parents and carers by ensuring that the school deals with any concerns they raise, tells them more about your progress at school and gives them more help to support your school learning at home.

You can help too by working hard and taking advantage of the improvements that your school will be making. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Grove Lead Inspector

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