

Freegrounds Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116000
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357861
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roberta Smith MBE
Headteacher	Malcolm Barrett
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2008
School address	Hobb Lane Southampton SO30 0GG
Telephone number	01489782295
Fax number	01489790282
Email address	admin@freegrounds-jun.hants.sch.uk

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2011
Inspection number	357861

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 30 lessons or parts of lessons, seeing 13 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. A sample of parents and carers were spoken to at the start of the day. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's own evaluation of its work, reports from the School Improvement Partner and the school improvement plan. They looked at school policies, including those relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also looked at records on pupils' attainment and progress and documents relating to those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 241 parents and carers were analysed.

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

- The achievement of gifted and talented pupils to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging, especially in mathematics.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to determine if their needs are being met.
- The use of assessment information to judge school performance and set challenging targets.
- The role of middle managers in supporting school improvement.
- The effectiveness of school self-evaluation.

Information about the school

Freegrounds Junior School is much larger than most primary schools. It serves the immediate locality, but around 60% of pupils come from the wider area. The vast majority of pupils are White British with only a few from minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language with none at an early stage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average and no pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Fewer pupils than average leave or enter the school other than at the normal time of admission. Since the last inspection there have been significant changes of staff and some absence at senior management level.

The school holds the Leading Aspect award for the curriculum, Activemark and Healthy School status.

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

Freegrounds Junior School provides a satisfactory education. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. There was a significant dip in achievement after the last inspection, but achievement has improved over the last 18 months. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress and attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Nevertheless, there remain inconsistencies in teaching that are slowing the rate of improvement. Although teaching is satisfactory, and sometimes good, there is too little consistently good teaching to improve progress and raise attainment further. Lessons do not always challenge pupils well enough because work set for pupils is not matched closely enough to their assessed needs. When this is the case some pupils find the work too easy and some find it too hard. The curriculum is satisfactory, with strengths and weaknesses. It is rich and broad and makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development. However, too few high quality opportunities are taken to develop pupils' English and mathematics skills through other subjects of the curriculum.

The school's undoubted strengths lie in the way it enables pupils to feel extremely safe and secure. The school engages effectively with parents and carers who are extremely positive about all aspects of its work. Pupils' outstanding social and moral development and excellent behaviour help make the school an extremely harmonious place to learn in. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community and have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and keep fit. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Community cohesion is good and strong partnerships with external agencies provide valuable additional support for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

The school has a reasonably accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Information gained is used satisfactorily to identify key areas for school development. As a result, appropriate strategies to improve the quality of teaching have been introduced, but the impact of these is not monitored effectively enough. Lesson observations by senior leaders have been interrupted by absence this year and subject leaders and other middle managers have only limited involvement in this process. Performance data are analysed with growing confidence, and targets set. However, the analysis of data has not been sufficiently probing to give leaders and managers at all levels an in-depth understanding of overall school performance. As a result, members of the governing body have a limited understanding of information obtained from this data. Strengths of the last inspection in personal development, pastoral care and certain aspects of the curriculum have been maintained. All the most important areas for improvement have been identified in the school development plan, and action to address most of them has already started. Impact is evident in improvements to achievement after the dip. These factors indicate a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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

Up to 40% of the 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching by July 2012 so that a large majority is good or better by:
 - ensuring that information on how well pupils are doing is used more consistently to plan lessons that are matched closely to the individual needs of pupils
 - provide more systematic, high quality opportunities to develop English and mathematics skills through other subjects of the curriculum
 - improving the pace of lessons so that pupils spend less time listening to teachers at the beginning of the lesson
 - improve the quality of marking so pupils understand clearly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- By December 2011, improve the way in which information on pupils' attainment and progress is analysed so that:
 - leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, have a sharp understanding of what data show about overall school performance compared to other schools
 - subject leaders have a clearer view of overall group and cohort attainment and progress and how this relates to overall school performance.
- Ensure that by July 2012 the monitoring of teaching and learning is systematic and rigorous by:
 - embedding a schedule of regular monitoring of lessons that focuses on how well pupils are learning
 - involving subject leaders and other middle managers more in the process.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are keen to learn. Detailed assessments carried out at the end of each year show that progress throughout the school is broadly satisfactory for all groups of pupils, although progress of the most able is sometimes slower in lessons.

Good learning takes place where tasks are matched well to pupils' assessed needs.

In an outstanding English lesson observed in Year 4 pupils made excellent progress as they carried out a wide range of new tasks based upon the assessment of their previous day's work. They worked at a rapid pace in the main part of the lesson and in the well-judged introduction. Pupils at every ability level suggested ways to improve their writing because excellent questioning enabled them to focus on small manageable steps. This quality of learning is not widespread, however, and more-able pupils are not always challenged enough especially, but not only, in mathematics. For example, in a satisfactory mathematics lesson observed in Year 5, many pupils had a good understanding of a simple ratio but all had to complete the same exercise filling a table that showed how a ratio of 1 to 3 was the same as 2 to 6 and so on up to 5 to 15. As a result, those pupils

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

who could complete the task quickly were kept waiting while others completed it. This slowed learning for a significant proportion of the class. In contrast, in a good lesson observed in Year 6, all pupils achieved well because after analysis of the previous day's lesson on problem solving, pupils were given new work matched closely to their needs. The structured approach meant that pupils were working on a task that challenged them effectively and built carefully upon the previous day's learning. Competent teaching assistants support the small number of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities well and keep them included in lessons to ensure equal access to the curriculum. This enables them to make the same progress as other pupils.

Pupils are polite, friendly and confident when talking to visitors to the school. They say there is almost no bullying in the school and they trust adults to deal effectively with any that might occur. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and show respect for themselves and others. They undertake a wide range of responsibilities, such as school council representatives or eco-helpers. Pupils particularly enjoy looking after the school's animals and tending the school garden. Their excellent understanding of how to keep fit and healthy can be seen in the high take up of sporting activities and the awards of Healthy School status and the Activemark. Pupils make many high quality contributions to the wider community, such as collecting for local charities, getting involved in activities with the Women's Institute or helping design a local playground. The wider personal skills pupils gain from these activities, together with their satisfactory literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills help prepare them satisfactorily for their future lives. Pupils have a good understanding of their own and other cultures through their links with other countries such as the Gambia. Pupils' understanding of the wide range of cultures in the United Kingdom is a comparative weakness.

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

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Teachers make good use of ICT to stimulate and motivate learning. Strategies to improve teaching and raise attainment include improved systems for using information on how pupils are learning in order to plan challenging lessons that focus on the next steps in learning, and individual target books for pupils. Nevertheless, the impact of these strategies is not consistent across the school. For example, all pupils now have a target book in which details of their individual targets are set out, but these are not yet used consistently. In one class almost all pupils, regardless of their ability, have identical targets. But, in another class, the vast majority of pupils have different targets each matched to their specific needs. This variation affects the quality of learning for pupils of all abilities from the most able to those who have additional learning needs. Teachers talk to pupils about what they have done and how to make it better, but marking in pupils' books does not always explain to pupils what they need to do in order to improve their work. Some introductions are overlong and do not always take into account the differing abilities of pupils. In too many lessons, while work is set at the right broad level for the class, further improvement to achievement is limited because work is often set for the whole class and not enough attention is given to the differing abilities of pupils. For example, in an English lesson planned around a stimulating theme of persuading pupils from another school to attend this one, the introduction and task were too challenging for around one third of the class. As a result, those pupils did not complete enough work in the first half of the lesson.

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

The curriculum makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development, as recognised by the recent award. Very good opportunities for sport with other schools and the many after-school sports clubs support pupils' understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Those pupils identified as gifted and talented are supported satisfactorily through links with other local schools. Visitors and visits including a residential trip broaden pupils' experiences well and, with the very stimulating school grounds, provide a wide range of opportunities for learning. Nevertheless, teachers are not yet making good enough use of these activities and different subjects to develop and extend basic numeracy and literacy skills. This limits the effectiveness of what is otherwise a well planned curriculum.

Pastoral care is very strong. Pupils have good opportunities to share their concerns and say that they value the support provided. Child protection procedures are detailed, well known to all staff and made readily available for temporary staff and visitors. Suitable tracking to check pupils' progress is in place and information gained is used to identify those pupils requiring extra support. Systems for monitoring the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and supporting their learning are being revised with more responsibility delegated to year group leaders. However, there is currently some inconsistency in this support as the revised systems and responsibilities take effect. This is limiting its effectiveness a little.

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?

A satisfactory ambition to improve the school and raise standards is shared by all staff. Staffing turbulence and absence have slowed down some of the improvements planned, particularly in teaching and learning. Some monitoring of teaching has taken place and has had some impact in improving it, but as yet not enough direct monitoring of learning is taking place. A regular schedule of monitoring of teaching and learning at all levels has not been fully embedded. As a result of these things, some inconsistencies in progress in lessons remain, and judgements about performance in the classroom are not making a full contribution to the evaluation of progress towards development plan targets.

While suitable priorities are set out in the school improvement plan, development is slowed because it not always clearly focused upon the few key priorities that are most important to improving pupils' achievement rapidly. Strategies for development have been correctly identified, but the precise detail of what will be done and by when is not clearly enough defined to make monitoring efficient. The system for recording information on pupils' attainment and progress contains good quality data that are useful on an individual pupil basis but are not systematically drawn together to give a full picture of overall school

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

performance. The understanding of how data at a strategic level can be used to promote and check on improvement is patchy at different levels of management. This also limits the effectiveness of the governing body in evaluating where the school is and so holding it sharply to account. Although there is a broad check on performance of groups, and the school is aware of the importance of targeting work in lessons, subject leaders do not routinely view and analyse data on the performance of different groups of pupils or different year groups. This prevents them from having a full perspective on how the performance in their particular area may impact upon overall school performance.

Governance is satisfactory despite some lack of sharpness in use of data. Regular training for staff and governors and close monitoring by the governing body ensure safeguarding requirements are met well. The supportive governing body has satisfactory procedures and strategies for obtaining the views of parents and carers.

The school takes suitable steps to ensure equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination. There is a good understanding of the backgrounds of pupils and the school has effective plans to develop their understanding of different communities. Very strong local partnerships, a highly cohesive school community, effective links with the international community and sound links with other areas reflect the good quality of work in this area of school life.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

An above average percentage of parents and carers completed questionnaires on the school. These are overwhelming supportive of the school. Many chose to add written comments. Typical of the majority of these is, 'My child really enjoys school and is provided with so many opportunities to experience new things in exciting ways.' Inspectors endorse many of the positive comments of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Freegrounds 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 241 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 358 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	186	77	51	21	4	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	203	84	37	15	0	0	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	154	64	82	34	4	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	155	64	77	32	8	3	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	179	74	59	24	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	150	62	85	35	3	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	165	68	74	31	1	0	0	0
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)	193	80	45	19	0	0	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	159	66	74	31	8	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	138	57	94	39	5	2	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	132	55	87	36	14	6	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	187	78	49	20	2	1	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	190	79	45	19	3	1	1	0

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).

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">■ 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.



18 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Freegrounds Junior School, Southampton SO30 0GG

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to visit you. We enjoyed talking with you about your school. Your behaviour is outstanding and you look after each other well.

Yours is a satisfactory school because you make satisfactory progress to attain standards similar to those found in most schools. Here are a few of things we liked about your school.

- The school looks after you well. It makes sure that you are very safe and have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and how to stay fit and healthy.
- There are good links with your parents and carers.
- You make an outstanding contribution to your school and the local community through all the things that you do.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to get on with one another, which makes your school a happy and enjoyable place in which to learn.

To help your school continue improving, we have asked the headteacher and the governing body to:

- ensure that teachers use what they know about you to plan work that is just right for you - not too hard and not too easy
- give you more opportunities to develop your literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons
- make sure marking tells you how well you are doing and how to improve
- make sure that leaders in the school make thorough and regular checks on how well you are being taught and are learning and how well the school is doing.

All of you can help by telling your teachers how hard or easy you find the work set for you and reading their marking carefully.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.