

Denmead Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116043
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	379190
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Ken Bush

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	286
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Caswell
Headteacher	Jacqui Bradshaw (executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons taught by 12 teachers and, in addition, visited a number of shorter learning sessions. Meetings were held with senior leaders, including the executive headteacher, head of school, subject leaders and members of the governing body, including the Chair. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at planning and self-evaluation documentation, assessment information, examples of pupils' work and a range of policy documents. The team analysed 81 questionnaires received from parents and carers, together with 96 from pupils and 12 from school staff.

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

- Whether the learning and progress of all groups of pupils are consistent across the school in all subjects and likely to sustain rising levels of attainment.
- Whether the school's self-evaluation and analysis of its effectiveness are accurate.
- The quality and consistency of teaching and learning and the use of assessment and whether they are sufficiently strong to sustain improvements in achievement for all groups.
- The impact of school leaders at all levels, including the governing body, in securing at least adequate improvement since the previous inspection.

Information about the school

Denmead is similar in size to most junior schools, consisting of a total of 11 classes. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a very small proportion of pupils from a range of other minority ethnic groups. Only a very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, but rising gradually. The school has received a number of national awards in recent years, including Enhanced Healthy Schools status. There is a privately run after-school club on the infant school site, which is not managed by the governing body and, therefore, was not within the remit of this inspection.

The executive headteacher took up post in September 2011 when the school was federated with the nearby infant school, where she is headteacher. A new head of school, who has day-to-day responsibility for the junior school, joined at the same time. The previous headteacher left the school at the end of the summer term. Since the start of this term, there is a single governing body in place for the federation.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to leadership and management.

Although the school continues to provide a satisfactory standard of education, it has failed to maintain an adequate rate of improvement since the previous inspection and has declined in a number of key areas. Teaching, the curriculum and behaviour, for example, all previously judged as good, are now satisfactory. Most significantly, key aspects of leadership and management, notably the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, are not fit for purpose. Consequently, class teachers do not all make regular or consistently effective use of assessment information in their planning of lessons, to ensure work is carefully matched to pupils' needs. Moreover, leaders at all levels and the governing body lack the necessary high quality and accurate information about pupils' progress with which to discharge their monitoring and evaluation functions with sufficient rigour. Allied to this, the quality of self-evaluation has in recent years been poorly focused and inaccurate, so staff, leaders and the governing body have had too generous a view of the school's performance. Very recent improvements directed by the new senior leaders have had only a minimal impact, and planning still does not consistently address the chief areas of weakness with enough rigour or urgency. The governing body has taken sound early steps to secure long-term improvement through its decision to create a federation. However, the effectiveness of the governing body is judged to be inadequate. This is because it has not challenged the school enough, and insufficient improvement has been made in remedying the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is therefore inadequate.

Outcomes for pupils are at least satisfactory in all aspects, and in some are good; attendance is high, showing pupils' generally positive disposition towards learning. Achievement remains satisfactory as at the previous inspection, and there has been no significant improvement in the performance of different groups, including for the more able. Attainment is broadly average overall, but there is considerable variation from year to year and in different subjects. In the 2011 national tests, standards in English were notably higher than in mathematics and more-able pupils attained much less well in both subjects than was the case in the previous year. Progress is satisfactory but also fluctuates significantly over time and in different year groups.

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Weaknesses in the accuracy of teacher assessment, and its inconsistent use in matching tasks closely to pupils' needs and abilities, contribute to unevenness in rates of progress.

There has been a decline in the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and of assessment since the previous inspection. This is partly due to the inconsistencies in the capacity of middle leaders as well as a lack of effective coordination of monitoring and evaluation strategies by senior leaders. Teaching, as with all aspects of provision, is typically satisfactory which in most lessons promotes satisfactory progress. However, examples of good teaching were rarely seen during the inspection and none was seen which was exceptional; this limits the opportunities for pupils to progress at a faster than satisfactory rate. This is especially the case for the more-able who are not encouraged enough to develop higher-level thinking skills or exercise independence in their learning, as lessons are often too teacher-directed. Where teaching fails to fully engage pupils, as it does in a minority of lessons, low-level disruptive behaviour or pupils going 'off-task' prevents them from achieving as well as they might. Marking is satisfactory in most cases, but does not consistently ensure that pupils are clear about how well they are doing or how to improve their work. This was also identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - quickly putting in robust systems to ensure that accurate information about pupils' progress can be generated, shared and readily understood by all users
 - ensuring that target-setting is realistic, challenging, widely used and drives improvement across the school
 - improving the quality and accuracy of self-evaluation and improvement planning
 - ensuring that all leaders are aware of what is expected of them in their roles and that lines of accountability are clear
 - ensuring that monitoring and evaluation is undertaken more rigorously by all leaders and the governing body.

- Raise levels of achievement of all pupils, especially in mathematics and for the more able, by:
 - ensuring that accurate assessment information is used effectively to match teaching to pupils' needs, abilities and interests
 - providing a greater level of challenge in lessons and more opportunities to develop higher-level thinking skills and independence
 - securing greater pupil engagement to reduce instances of behaviour that does not support good learning
 - ensuring that marking consistently informs pupils of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Despite experiencing very little teaching which is inspiring, most pupils report that they enjoy their learning, especially when given opportunities to be active participants. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, for example, pupils enthusiastically devised an information booklet about Denmead Juniors for pupils in their partner school in Mexico. Their acquisition of knowledge and development of understanding in the classroom is satisfactory. It is more variable in mathematics where progress typically is slower than in English. Basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) are sound, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their wider key skills in all aspects of the curriculum. Consequently, despite high levels of attendance, pupils are only adequately prepared for the next stage of their education, a view endorsed by a higher than average proportion of parents and carers. From broadly average starting points, the progress made by all groups of pupils, including by those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those few from minority ethnic groups, is closely in line with that of their peers. Boys and girls also achieve at a comparable rate over time. Progress, however, is not improving for any groups.

A very large majority of pupils affirm that they feel safe and show good appreciation of how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school. Behaviour around the school site is generally sensible and pupils are characteristically polite and considerate to visitors, staff and to each other. However, behaviour in a minority of lessons when pupils are not fully engaged is more variable and does not always support good learning, a view expressed by almost one in three pupils in their responses to the questionnaire. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle. Most eat healthy lunches and the majority participate in the extra-curricular sporting activities offered. The school council gives pupils a strong voice. There are an increasing number of initiatives that enable school council members to exercise leadership and show responsibility, including beyond the school gates, through links with the church and other community groups. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and development are clearly evident in lessons, assemblies and interactions with members of the community, including governors. Their cultural development is well nurtured through a successful link with a school in Mexico and opportunities to visit places of worship, such as a mosque in Southampton.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	3

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Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
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	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have mostly secure subject knowledge and, in the best lessons seen during the inspection they set varied and interesting tasks with clear learning objectives that promoted good progress. In the large majority of lessons where teaching was more typically satisfactory, the teacher explained work effectively but tended to speak for too long or restricted pupils' opportunities to be independent or work collaboratively with others on challenging tasks. In a Year 5 ICT lesson, for example, pupils were given very clear and well-explained instructions in how to use graphical modelling, but then not encouraged enough to use these practical skills creatively or in conjunction with high-level thinking skills. Marking, although inconsistent across the school, remains satisfactory. The school is taking secure early steps to develop pupils' capacity for self- and peer-assessment, through some effective use of resources such as individual whiteboards.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and is adequately matched to pupils' needs and aspirations, including for literacy and numeracy. Topics are securely integrated across subjects, but some opportunities to provide inspirational teaching are missed because there is sometimes too much focus on covering content rather than addressing the underpinning skills explicitly. Trips and visits make a useful contribution to pupils' studies, and during the inspection, Year 4 pupils went to see the 'Mary Rose' in Portsmouth, following up their visit the next day in class. Strong links with the local sports partnership enable the wide range of extra-curricular provision to be a relative strength of the curriculum.

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory, as at the previous inspection. Pupils whose circumstances render them vulnerable are given useful support, including by the school's specialist staff, and as a consequence, they make

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

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progress at a similar rate to that of their peers and achieve satisfactory or better outcomes. Transition from the infants’ school is improving rapidly, reflecting the closer formal links afforded by the federation, but some parents and carers do not feel that their children are as well prepared for the transition to secondary education as they could be.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Responses to the questionnaire indicate that staff feel that the new senior leaders have begun to give the school a clearer sense of direction. They also feel they are starting to become more involved in helping to shape the school’s future. However, school leaders and the governing body have not tackled areas of underperformance with sufficient clarity and detail in order to move the school forward rapidly. Target setting is weak and has not been instrumental in raising standards in the recent past nor is it routinely established as a strategy for improving pupils’ outcomes in each classroom. The effectiveness of middle leaders is variable and is further hampered because lines of accountability between subject leaders and year leaders are not clear enough. The governing body has not had sufficient impact on the progress made by the school.

Procedures for ensuring that pupils are effectively safeguarded are good. The school has well developed quality assurance systems and undertakes risk assessments appropriately and proportionately. Training of staff and governors is of good quality and regularly updated and links with outside agencies are well established. Most, but not all, aspects of high quality best practice are adopted. The school’s promotion of equal opportunities is inadequate. Though all groups of pupils are achieving at a similar level, outcomes are not improving for any groups and the school’s inadequate tracking systems do not allow insight into the progress of different groups. Consequently, despite instances of discrimination being extremely rare, the school does not promote equality of opportunity adequately. The school’s good contribution to community cohesion is apparent in the growing range of activities in which both pupils and community groups are involved, some of which are brokered through the very close links with the infant school. Plans are underway to secure further involvement of parents and carers in initiatives that their children currently benefit from, such as the trips to the mosque. The school is rightly planning to extend pupils’ exposure to cultural and social diversity within the United Kingdom.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
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

The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are supportive of the school's work, and several drew attention to the difference they perceive is being made by the new senior leaders. One parent/carer commented, 'Communication with staff is better and it is nice to see the new 'heads' in person around the school, especially their involvement/support on the Year 6 trip.'

However, a small minority indicated through their responses that they are not satisfied with all aspects of what the school provides. A few criticisms were expressed about a range of different topics, including progress, behaviour and communication. During this inspection, inspectors found that progress is satisfactory overall, but variable across year groups and from year-to-year. They found behaviour satisfactory, but more variable when teaching was not so interesting. Inspectors also concluded that, while appropriate and improving systems are in place to promote effective communication between home and school, parents and carers are not yet fully engaged as partners. Consequently, this aspect of the school's work is judged to be satisfactory, but improving as there is evidence of effective consultation having taken place in setting up the federation in the previous academic year.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Denmead 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 inspector received 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 286 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	41	42	52	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	53	35	43	0	0	2	2
The school informs me about my child’s progress	14	17	48	59	13	16	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	27	43	53	7	9	4	5
The teaching is good at this school	26	32	42	52	10	12	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	16	20	48	59	10	12	3	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	27	51	63	6	7	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)	22	27	37	46	9	11	5	6
The school meets my child’s particular needs	11	14	52	64	10	12	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	21	44	54	8	10	5	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	14	49	60	12	15	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	28	41	51	2	2	4	5
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	26	32	44	54	7	9	3	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



6 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Denmead Junior School, Waterlooville PO7 6PH

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently.

We have found that standards are average and you make satisfactory progress. You achieve better in English than in mathematics. In addition: your attendance is high; most of you feel very safe; you have good knowledge and understanding about how to lead a healthy lifestyle and you make a good contribution to the school and local communities. Overall, we have judged that, although your school provides a satisfactory standard of education, compared to when inspectors visited the school two and a half years ago, the school has not made as much progress as it should have done. For example, teaching, the curriculum and behaviour, which were all previously judged as good, are now satisfactory. For this reason, we have given the school a notice to improve. This means that it is expected to improve much faster now and will be visited again by inspectors next year to check on the progress being made.

In order to speed up the rate of school improvement, we have asked the senior leaders and governors to do the following.

- Raise your achievement, especially in mathematics.
- For those of you who tend to find work easy, to make sure that work is neither too hard nor too simple, by giving you more challenging activities to develop your thinking skills.
- Make sure that lessons are more interesting so that some pupils behave better and make sure marking helps you to see how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve.
- Make sure that they track much more carefully how well you are doing and how well the school is improving.

All of you can play your part by continuing to attend regularly and trying as hard as possible in all lessons.

Yours sincerely

Ken Bush
Lead inspector

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