

Fernhurst Junior School

Francis Avenue, Southsea, PO4 0AG

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher runs a tight ship. Robust monitoring of the school's work has ensured that, since the previous inspection, the achievement of all pupils has improved to good.
- Teaching is good and so pupils are making good progress. Pupils are now catching up rapidly to where they need to be in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school provides exciting learning opportunities which develop pupils socially and culturally.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their enthusiasm in lessons are good. Pupils behave well and feel safe in school.
- The senior leadership team is well supported and challenged by the governing body in the school's drive to provide pupils with a good education. Parents think that school leaders are doing a good job.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some lessons are not as well taught as others. Activities planned do not always match well enough to pupils' abilities and so there is less challenge in what pupils are learning.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because pupils in some lessons are at times less focused on the content of the lesson and so miss the opportunity to do as well as they can.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day’s notice. Inspectors observed 18 lessons, involving 12 different teachers. Four lesson observations and the feedback to those teachers were also observed alongside the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. Inspectors observed behaviour at playtimes and around the school.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons. The lead inspector had meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors held meetings with school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors took account of 46 responses to the on-line Parent View survey, a letter from a parent and 29 responses to the staff questionnaire in planning and undertaking the inspection. An inspector spoke to a number of parents bringing their children to school.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school’s view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.
- The inspection team scrutinised pupils’ past and present work in English, mathematics and in other subjects. Pupils from Year 3 read their reading books to one of the inspectors. The team looked at a number of documents, including national data and the school’s own data of pupils’ progress over time. Inspectors looked at planning and monitoring, and arrangements for setting targets for teachers, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jane Neech, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Michael Jude

Additional Inspector

Stephanie Matthews

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Fernhurst Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is above average. There are 25 different languages spoken at the school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action (pupils who need extra help) is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The pupils' needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties, speech and language, physical and behaviour difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is higher than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care or from service families. There are two service family pupils, but no looked after pupils currently in the school.
- Pupils start school in the September after their seventh birthday in one of the three Year 3 classes. The proportion of pupils joining classes at times other than the start of a school year is above average. Pupils are taught in single-age classes. There are three classes in each year group. Mathematics lessons are arranged by ability groups.
- There have been significant staff changes at senior leadership level over the last few years.
- A breakfast club is available to pupils on the neighbouring infant school site and is separately run and not part of this inspection. Fernhurst Junior School runs a variety of after-school clubs.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the sharp focus on improving teaching and learning so that, in all lessons, activities planned and teachers' expectations:
 - match even more accurately to the abilities of both boys and girls, particularly in writing and mathematics
 - routinely challenge pupils to learn and apply something new
 - enable all pupils to do as well as they can and concentrate on their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils usually start school with attainment that is similar to the national average. During their time at the school, their progress is good. Historical data show that this has not always been the case. The change has been brought about by the school's focus on checking that all pupils achieve well. At the time of the inspection, only half way through the academic year, pupils in all year groups had already made, or exceeded, expected progress in English and mathematics. This impressive transformation in progress is because teachers are demanding more from pupils. Half of the pupils in Year 5 have already made more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress in mathematics in Year 4 is similarly rapid.
- The improved progress is now pushing up the levels pupils attain in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who took the most recent National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 reached expected levels, including those who needed extra help. Higher achieving boys and girls exceeded expected levels in English. The school's own tracking and progress information shows that this positive picture is set to improve further.
- Those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are catching up to where they need to be, as a result of extra help in reading, writing and mathematics funded by the pupil premium. The average point scores at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics have improved for these pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Some of these pupils arrive at school part way through an academic year. Some individuals make excellent progress, as much as three National Curriculum levels in a relatively short time. The gaps between these groups of pupils and pupils nationally are closing.
- In lessons observed during the inspection pupils made good or better progress. The best work seen in books was in Years 5 and 6 where teachers had consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Parents praise the school for encouraging their children to do well and think that pupils are well prepared for secondary education.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because there are a few inconsistencies in the progress of some groups of pupils. Some boys do not achieve as well as others in writing. The school has correctly identified that, while progress in mathematics is good overall, a few girls in some year groups do not always make as much progress as they could.
- Teachers have a good understanding of using data to make sure pupils are making at least good progress in English and mathematics. Sharply focused extra help, for example in writing and mathematics, for pupils who need additional support is quickly put in place and ensures that these pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Pupils are clear about the levels they are working at. They routinely refer to the target sheets in their English and mathematics books to see how well they are doing, and what they have to do to move up to the next level.
- Pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, communicate confidently to one another, such as in group discussions. In a Year 4 science lesson pupils talked knowledgeably about what a liquid is and what a solid is. They used scientific language appropriately, such as viscosity, because it had been modelled well by the teacher.
- Pupils enjoy reading and their progress in this area is a strength. The headteacher is tenacious in her expectations that all pupils should read regularly at school and at home, and they do. Pupils talk about their favourite authors and their preferences for reading, such as fiction or non fiction.

The quality of teaching is good

- A key strength, in the typically good teaching, is the way teachers use questions to extend pupils' thinking. In a Year 5 religious education lesson, thought provoking questions encouraged pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the purpose of religious symbols. Teachers use well

thought out explanations to check how well pupils, including those who need extra help, understand the tasks set. Learning objectives are shared in different ways in pupil-friendly language. In a middle ability Year 5 mathematics lesson, the language of probability was explained well by the teacher so all pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, clearly understood and made good progress.

- In the best lessons challenge is high. Teachers set the focus on the pupils learning a new skill or encouraging pupils to apply what they already know to solving problems. In a Year 5 higher ability mathematics lesson, pupils used what they had learnt about measuring angles, using a protractor, to work out the degrees of angles within different triangles.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because some activities in writing and mathematics do not always match well enough to the abilities of all pupils. In some lessons teachers spend too long talking and going over what pupils already know, activities lack challenge and do not give pupils the chance to learn something new.
- Pupils at risk of underachieving receive good support. Extra help in small group work is tailored to match pupils' needs. Skilled teaching assistants provide support to ensure that those who find learning more difficult, those who at an early stage in speaking English or those whose needs are complex enjoy their learning and achieve well.
- The displays for literacy and numeracy help pupils to find out things for themselves, such as the prompts for writing the resolution to an event in a story display in Year 4. Classes all have 'working walls' which show work in progress and are referred to by pupils in English and mathematics lessons.
- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly. In the most effective lessons observed during the inspection, teachers made time for pupils to read and respond to their comments and improve their work. Teachers' expectations are high and so where pupils' work required no improvements teachers set new challenges for pupils to complete.
- Relationships in lessons are exceptionally positive. There is a strong emphasis on speaking and listening skills. Pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, explain their ideas to a partner well, and this helps them to organise their thoughts for writing. Parents are pleased with how well their children are doing. Parents of pupils who join classes at times other than the start of a school year say they are delighted with how quickly their children become confident to try activities new to them, such as in drama and sport.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Inspectors endorsed the view of parents and staff that behaviour was typically good. During the inspection, inspectors observed examples of exceptionally good behaviour. In an inspirational Year 3 art lesson all pupils, without exception, concentrated very well, were tremendously proud of their work and achieved well.
- The school fosters strong relationships by making effective use of the cultural diversity of its families to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a good understanding of the dangers of different forms of bullying, including through the internet, racism and homophobic bullying. They say everyone gets on well in lessons and in the playground. Pupils are keen to make friends with those who join their classes during the year. They also show impressive empathy with pupils who are at the early stages of speaking English and say it is important to help these pupils in lessons.
- The headteacher gives very clear messages to staff and parents about setting high expectations of behaviour. Consequently, class teachers make their expectations of behaviour clear to pupils. As a result, over the course of time lessons are rarely interrupted by pupils not behaving well. Pupils are very polite and respectful. The whole-school system for behaviour is followed conscientiously and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' good achievement.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because in some lessons, and in some mathematics and writing activities, where tasks are less challenging or have less engaging content, pupils do not stay on task, need to be reminded about their behaviour and put less effort into completing their work.

For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils lost interest in using tape measures in a practical activity because the challenge set was not high enough.

- The headteacher is resolute about all pupils attending school regularly and arriving on time. Attendance is average and improving. Where isolated incidents of exclusions or internal exclusions occur, the school carefully considers what is best for pupils, and in some cases makes arrangements for pupils to stay in school and work away from their classes. Records show there are clear procedures for working with parents and arrangements in place to support pupils when they return to school or their classes.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is leading the school with steadfast determination to turn around any past underachievement, ensure all pupils receive a good education, and move beyond this point to become an outstanding school. Since the previous inspection, together with the leadership team, she has improved teaching and learning, and this has brought about the considerable changes to pupils' outcomes. All areas identified for improvement have been addressed. The energy which runs through the school's work is bringing about sustainable improvement. This is achieved by robust monitoring and action planning which ensure no pupil is discriminated against.
- Setting targets for teachers link the impact of teaching to the pupils' achievement and are used well to raise expectations. Leaders make sure everyone has an equal chance to do well. They have prudently planned this year's additional funds, provided through extra government money (pupil premium), to match the needs of those pupils eligible for support. The money is being spent on extra sessions for pupils in danger of not achieving their potential, teaching assistant support over and above that normally provided, subsidising the cost of educational and residential visits and one-to-one tuition. Money has been put aside to fund extra tuition for pupils new to the school and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Leadership at all levels is good. Subject leaders for English and mathematics are using the skills they have learnt through in-house training and that delivered by the local authority to support their colleagues and they lead their subjects well. This has resulted in pupils' good achievement in literacy and numeracy.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because while the most recent information about pupils' achievement shows that all year groups are now making better than expected progress and achieving well, as a result of the good teaching, this recently improved performance has yet to be sustained over time.
- The school works well with parents who like the range of activities that the school offers, through different topics and clubs. There are good links between subjects such as work in art which inspires pupils to write about their 'mood' compositions using inventive vocabulary. The school choir is well supported and gives pupils musical opportunities to perform to wider audiences. Pupils visit places of cultural and historical interest. Displays of pupils' high quality art work inspired by these visits represent the importance placed on developing pupils' understanding of Portsmouth's local heritage and beyond.
- The local authority knows the school well. This is achieved through challenging conversations with the headteacher, together with the Chair of the Governing Body, about comparing pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics in the school with national expectations. The challenge from the local authority representative makes sure the school reflects on why some boys and girls are not always making as much progress as others in writing and mathematics, and what actions leaders need to put in place. Additional funding has been provided by the local authority and this has supported actions to raise achievement. The local authority has provided effective training which meets the needs of the school. Training for English and mathematics subject leaders has contributed to improving school performance and the good progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics. Training provided for governors has increased their understanding of holding the school to account in all areas of school performance, including financial decisions relating to spending extra government funding. Over time, however, the support from the local authority has been mixed. More recently, there has been a much greater

consistency of support, and constructive and productive challenge. This has made a strong contribution to improving school performance.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body supports and challenges the school with a focus on ensuring every pupil has an equal chance to succeed. Governors are routinely involved in reviewing the areas for improvement. They use the information they receive, such as the headteacher’s reports and feedback on the monitoring of teaching and learning, to measure the improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection. Governors use the training they have received from the local authority to interpret national data and refine their skills in challenging the school to maintain and further improve pupils’ progress. The governing body sets ambitious targets for the headteacher and rigorously checks how well these are being met. Members of the governing body ensure that teachers’ salaries match their responsibilities and effectiveness. The governing body has put plans in place for succession planning at senior leadership level during a time of staff changes. This has given more teachers the chance to step up to leadership roles, secured stability and has contributed well to improving school performance. Governors hold the headteacher to account for efficient financial management, including decisions on spending additional government funding. All relevant policies, including safeguarding, are up to date and meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116221
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	401575

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Lonsdale
Headteacher	Roberta Kirby
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2009
Telephone number	02392 735998
Fax number	02392 821207
Email address	office@fernhurst.portsmouth.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', 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.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 information 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'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

