

Siskin Junior School

Nimrod Drive, Rowner, Gosport, Hampshire, PO13 8AA

Inspection dates 19–20 June 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

- Pupils, including the high proportions who are disabled or have special educational needs, and the very high proportion who are eligible for extra support through pupil premium funding make at least good progress in all year groups.
- Teaching is consistently at least good and has clearly been so for more than the last two years. Teachers make effective use of information from assessing how well pupils are doing to ensure work is well suited to their needs.
- Considerable improvement since the last inspection has resulted in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning being good.
- The headteacher's drive and ambition for the school are outstanding. She is well supported by staff and governors in leading and managing the school very well.
- Support for those who are disabled or have special educational needs, and links with outside agencies, are particularly well managed.
- The school's track record of success in supporting pupils academically, as well as emotionally, shows real strength in its capacity for even further improvement.
- This is a happy school where pupils, many of whom are particularly disadvantaged, are extremely well cared for.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough of the teaching is outstanding. Occasionally, introductions to lessons are too long and pupils do not get to be active in their learning soon enough.
- Too few pupils reach above average levels. This is more obvious in reading and in girls' performance in mathematics.
- Attendance rates are below average because of the persistent absence of a very small minority of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons taught by six different teachers. Two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- He met with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, members of staff and a representative of the local authority. He also visited the breakfast club.
- He looked at pupils' work and heard 10% of pupils in Years 3 and 6 read.
- The number of responses to Ofsted's on-line Parent View survey was very low and could not be used to gauge parental opinion. The inspector took note of the school's own survey of parents' views.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, including data on pupils' progress, evidence of self-evaluation and monitoring records.
- The inspector analysed the 13 questionnaire responses from staff.

Inspection team

Michael Burghart, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized junior school.
- Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is extremely low.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or whose parents are in the armed services, and so are entitled to extra support provided by additional government funding known as the pupil premium, is extremely high. This level of need is consistent with the top 20% of all primary schools nationally.
- The proportions of pupils who are supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are all well above average.
- The school narrowly missed the government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in 2012.
- The school has recently completed its federation with Siskin Infant and Nursery School on the same site. The two schools now share an executive headteacher and have the same governing body. Considerable new building work that brings the two schools into what is effectively one building is nearing completion. Part of this was only opened in the days just before this inspection.
- When it was inspected in 2009, the school was found to be in need of special measures. Following three positive monitoring visits, the school was inspected again in 2011 and judged as satisfactory, no longer being in need of special measures.
- Since the last inspection, six out of the ten teachers, including the headteacher, are new to the school.
- The school does not manage any alternative provision for its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the existing good quality and better teaching to move the profile to more consistently outstanding by:
 - ensuring that introductions to lessons are not too long and that pupils can become more active in their learning sooner.
- Raise standards, making sure that the proportion of pupils reaching at least average levels more closely matches the national average by:
 - ensuring that pupils become even more skilled in reading fluently, understanding what they read and in sounding out unfamiliar words, and that they improve their handwriting by sitting correctly and holding pencils and pens in the right way.
 - involving girls more actively in problem solving in mathematics
 - ensuring that pupils who are more able more consistently reach above average levels.
- Raise attendance rates, consolidating the success of the past year to further reduce absence of the very small minority of pupils who do not attend regularly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good, and, in the case of some pupils who may be disabled or have special educational needs, very good progress from significantly below average starting points. Considering considerable deficiencies in what they know, understand and can do when they join Year 3, pupils achieve well and, in many cases, very well in all classes. Despite this, although there has been a consistently rising trend over the last three years, attainment is low when pupils leave Year 6.
- School and local authority data confirm the findings of this inspection, that improvements to progress and attainment continue. Assessments for pupils nearing the end of Year 6 show all will have reached at least the expected two National Curriculum levels since the start of Year 3 in mathematics, and very nearly all in writing. To the school's credit, the percentage of pupils making more than expected progress in English and mathematics has risen year on year and is now more than twice the national average.
- In reading, a small minority of the least able pupils will have made less than the expected progress this year and an increased focus on how to attack unfamiliar words and how to read accurately for understanding is already in hand. The school's push to improve the content, sentence construction and creativity of pupils' writing has paid dividends, but weaknesses in some pupils' handwriting remain. These are often the result of pupils sitting incorrectly and holding pens or pencils badly.
- Predictions for attainment at the end of Year 6 this year are that it will continue to have improved year on year for three years. In mathematics, the profile matches the national average, although girls are likely not to have done as well as boys in problem solving. In English, attainment is likely to be below average as a result of too few pupils reaching above average levels; nevertheless, it is on track to be nearly 10% up on 2012. There is convincing evidence that the school will exceed government floor targets for attainment and progress this year.
- The very high proportion of pupils (over three quarters of the school) supported by the pupil premium are doing better in terms of the value the school adds to their progress than the national average in mathematics and in line with the average in English. When comparing the pupils in this group with others in the school of the same age, by average point scores at the end of Year 6, there is evidence that gaps are being closed.

The quality of teaching is good

- The continual, and in some cases rapid, rise in pupil progress rates over the last three years and the good attitudes and behaviour of the overwhelming majority of pupils are strong indicators that the quality of teaching is typically good. Pupils and parents are rightly convinced that teaching is good.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work as a very good team to give pupils the support they need. This is very successful in helping the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs to be a part of class work and achieve well. Individual education plans for work and personal development are particularly well tailored to pupils' needs.
- Close relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils trust that they will be well cared for and listened to. High expectations are common to all classes, with work planned for different ability levels. As a result, there has been a steady increase in the number of pupils reaching above average standards, but the proportion of those who do so is still below average. This is most marked in terms of the performance of girls in mathematics and the school already has this as a priority for development, with particular emphasis on teachers providing greater opportunities and challenge for them in problem solving.
- A notable strength of teaching is in the very effective use of assessment information to set targets for what pupils need to do next. These are used very successfully in marking to indicate

how improvements can be made. Pupils show that they know their targets and are beginning to focus on them in terms of aspirations towards higher National Curriculum levels.

- Teaching the recently introduced International Primary Curriculum builds on strengths in the topic approach already established across the school. A very good example was in a Year 6 lesson where outstanding teaching linked mathematical data handling skills to geography, as well as being fun.
- Occasionally, lesson introductions go on too long and pupils do not get to tasks quick enough. In the past, according to staff and pupils, before the last inspection this frequently led to disruptive behaviour, but this is now not the case.
- As a result of greater emphasis since the last inspection, the teaching of writing has raised standards. However, this improvement has been more in terms of content than actual handwriting. Handwriting requires further attention.
- The teaching of reading has successfully encouraged pupils to appreciate reading as a tool as well as a source of enjoyment. The school has a system in place to teach pupils how to sound out letters and blends, but too many pupils have yet to master this fully and progress rates in reading have recently improved more slowly than in writing and mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils and staff agree that behaviour is considerably better than at the time of the last inspection and that it has been typically good for more than the last two years. Testament to this is the substantial decrease in the number of days pupils have been excluded for from over 93 in the autumn term of 2011 to less than one day in the current term.
- Behaviour in class, around the school and in the well-run breakfast club is good, despite occasional outbursts from those who can and sometimes do present problems. Good management and effective support from teaching assistants ensure that learning is very rarely disrupted, that all pupils are fully included in all activities, and that no one is discriminated against.
- Positive attitudes are typical even in the very small minority of lessons where work is not as stimulating. Pupils respond well to the good initiatives in the developing curriculum. Topic work is popular, especially when it involves visits, such as to the coastguard station for Year 3 or Portsmouth University for Year 6. The ability to work well with others as part of a team is a skill valued by pupils and, together with being taught how to study independently when needed, makes a very positive contribution to pupils' preparation for the next phase of education and life in general.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are convinced that although they say there is a small amount of low-level bullying, for example in name calling, staff are on hand and are successful in addressing it. Pupils know who to turn to if they have problems and are confident that they will get help.
- Absence rates in 2011 were well above average. Improvements due to an unwavering commitment to eradicating missed school days are proving very effective. Attendance in 2012 was much better. Current figures, adjusted to take account of persistent absentees that have now left the school, are broadly much closer to the national profile, although there is still room for improvement.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Her outstanding vision and ambition are communicated very effectively to staff and pupils. She is very well supported by the deputy and the assistant headteacher. The leadership team is skilled in accurate self-evaluation, setting priorities, creating action plans and monitoring the effect of initiatives. Prime examples of the

team's commitment to moving this school to 'outstanding' are in incisive monitoring of teaching and learning and in the way appointments have been made on the basis of quality.

- Weaknesses in middle management identified in the last report have been addressed, and teachers, as subject and phase leaders, make a good contribution to school development planning through their improvement plans. That leadership and management are not judged as outstanding is because standards are still not high enough and some middle leaders are relatively new to their responsibilities. Some initiatives, for example to further improve standards in reading, have not had time to be fully effective.
- The management of provision for the high proportion of pupils who may be disabled or have special educational needs and for those entitled to the pupil premium is a particular strength and is having a marked impact on progress.
- Leaders are making the most of the new-found opportunity within the federation to ensure that accurate information on pupils' attainment and progress is readily available to staff from both schools to further support target setting and pupils' achievement.
- That the school has the capacity to improve further is confirmed by its successful track record since the last inspection, notably in: radically improved behaviour; good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; introduction of the new curriculum; consistently good teaching; rising attendance; and the way in which the new building is being set up as a positive learning environment.
- The local authority provides good support for the school in the form of expertise and advice for the curriculum (especially literacy and numeracy) and for the school's leadership and management. Support has been particularly effective in the development of the new building, and training for governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective in promoting and supporting the junior school as part of the federation. Governors have developed their expertise through training and have an accurate view of the school's performance against all and similar schools nationally. They are aware which standards are below average, how attainment is rising over time, and of the relative weaker progress in reading compared to writing and mathematics. They have a clear view of action to be taken to improve the situation. Governors are successful in evaluating the impact of what they decide and what difference it makes to pupils' achievement. They monitor the quality of teaching and, in as far as is possible within the confines of the budget, seek to recognise effective staff through salary enhancement. They are well informed about the way performance management is used to bring about improvements to teaching. The governing body has a good understanding of how pupil premium funding is spent, for example to provide a mix of smaller classes, one-to-one and group work through extra teaching and support hours. Governors ensure that the school is a safe place, especially during building works, and that pupils are well cared for. All statutory requirements are met.

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	116172
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	400097
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Macdonald
Executive Headteacher	Sian Thornton
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 March 2011
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