

Meon Junior School

Shelford Road, Southsea, Portsmouth, PO4 8NT

Inspection dates 9–10 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is at least good across the school, enabling all groups of pupils to make good and often faster progress. Pupils attain above national averages in English and mathematics by the time they leave.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and plan activities which engage pupils' interest because they are accurately matched to their needs and abilities.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. The pupils are cared for extremely well and they respond by being exceptionally caring towards each other, showing total respect for all adults and always doing their best in lessons.
- Leaders use rigorous systems to check on the quality of teaching and identify how improvements can be made, resulting in a culture where everyone wants to get better.
- Parents, staff and pupils are very proud of the school and very supportive of the school's leadership. This results in everyone pulling in the same direction within a harmonious school community.
- The combination of specialist subject teachers and knowledgeable subject leaders results in a curriculum which is demanding in terms of both content and in how it deepens pupils' learning. Pupils therefore enjoy school and are always interested in what they are learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not trained well enough in how to find things out for themselves and are sometimes too heavily dependent on the teacher, which sometimes slows down their learning.
- Pupils do not learn as much as they could from the teachers' marking because they are not always given enough time to respond to it.
- Governors do not get involved enough in the school's work and so do not have a deep enough understanding of its overall effectiveness. As a consequence, they do not have a significant strategic role in formulating plans that would move the school to outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, of which six were joint observations with the headteacher and other senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons. They also looked at pupils' books and observed other aspects of the school's work.
- Meetings were held with six governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and teachers. Pupils took inspectors on a tour of the school. The inspectors also listened to and spoke to pupils about their reading. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), spoke to parents and carers at the school gate and considered one letter from a parent. Inspectors reviewed 37 questionnaire responses from staff.
- A number of documents were looked at, including the school's own information relating to pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation summary and school development plan, planning documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and checks on teaching, policy documents and documents relating to safeguarding. The inspectors also looked at the school's website.

Inspection team

Martin Marsh, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Linda Rowley	Additional inspector
Veronica Young	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- A quarter of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding which supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked-after children or children of service families). In this school, the eligible pupils are entitled to free school meals or come from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- One in eight pupils belong to ethnic groups other than White British and most speak English as their first language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The longstanding headteacher is a local leader in education (LLE), supporting schools in Portsmouth. The school has recently become a lead school for the teaching of computer science. The headteacher is retiring at the end of the spring term 2014.
- In the last eighteen months the whole governing body has changed personnel.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement so that a greater proportion of pupils make outstanding progress by:
 - training pupils to be more resourceful by giving them more opportunities to find things out for themselves
 - giving all pupils more time to respond to teachers' marking.
- Increase the involvement of governors in the school's work so that they have a deeper understanding of all aspects of the school's effectiveness and can contribute more to formulating plans for the future.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make consistently good and often better progress in English and mathematics throughout their time in school. By the time they leave, they reach above national averages in English, and well above national averages in mathematics. They are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Rigorous and regular checks on progress for all pupils ensure that additional support is quickly given to those who are falling behind. As a consequence, all groups of pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs and those from ethnic groups other than White British, make similarly good progress. The small number of pupils whose first language is not English make rapid progress because of the focus the school puts on developing pupils' speaking skills.
- The attainment of those pupils eligible for pupil premium in 2013 end-of-Year 6 statutory assessments was similar to that of other pupils in mathematics, but six months behind in reading and writing. The gap in attainment is mostly due to lower starting points on entry to the school and for these pupils they make faster progress than their peers. The school has increased the support for eligible pupils this year in English and evidence seen during the inspection indicates that current progress is even faster. The school uses the funding to provide additional teacher-led small-group sessions for pupils, intensive support for reading in Years 3 and 4 and additional training for all staff so support can be more effective in lessons.
- By the time they leave the school, pupils are confident readers and have developed a real love for books. One pupil told inspectors how much he enjoyed 'relaxing with a good book'. The school's system by which pupils can gain points by answering a quiz at the end of each book motivates them really well to achieve their reading targets. Pupils who are not fluent readers are given good support with furthering their understanding of their letters and the sounds they make (phonics). The school is very successful in providing equality of learning for all.
- The most able pupils are given additional support in lessons to enable them to learn more difficult content. Good support for an able group of pupils in a Year 6 English lesson enabled them to understand how to use the passive voice and to be able to explain how it improved their writing. An above-average proportion of pupils achieve Level 6 in mathematics because they are taught the harder content and have plenty of opportunity to practice higher-level skills.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because not enough teaching is outstanding to enable an even greater proportion of pupils to make rapid progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is at least good in all year groups. In all lessons excellent relationships exist between teachers and pupils. As a result pupils listen very attentively to the teacher and each other, answer questions enthusiastically because they know what they say is going to be valued, and take great care in ensuring their work is well presented and the best they can do.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and can therefore plan varied and interesting lessons that interest and motivate the pupils. In a Year 6 science lesson on solids, liquids and gases the excellent use of scientific vocabulary by the teacher ensured the pupils were able to describe the reactions they observed in an experiment using the correct words, and they made outstanding progress in their scientific understanding.
- Marking is very thorough and gives pupils detailed feedback as to how well they are doing and how their work can be improved. In some classes, teachers set questions to pupils as part of the marking but there are times when pupils are not given sufficient time to answer them or to respond to the comments made on their work.
- Additional adults are well trained and provide good support in lessons to enable all pupils, especially those who are disabled or have special educational needs, to access the lesson and

make good progress. In addition, they provide good additional support for pupils outside of lessons to enable them to catch up or to stop them falling behind.

- Pupils are typically set work that matches their needs and abilities. Teachers and other adults provide excellent support to targeted groups of pupils through carefully planned small-group sessions which are highly effective in helping pupils to deepen their understanding or challenge their thinking. The start of lessons is occasionally not appropriate for the full range of ability and so progress slows. An excellent example of where this was not the case was in a Year 4 mathematics lesson on interpreting graphs. After a short mental mathematics session the most able pupils were sent away to work out for themselves what a variety of different types of graphs were about and answer questions related to them. This freed the teacher to work with a group who were less confident. This resulted in all pupils making outstanding progress.
- In a few lessons pupils rely too much on the teacher and they are not taught how to find things out for themselves. This leads to pupils sometimes becoming too dependent on the adult and not developing resilience and perseverance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils love coming to school and are highly enthusiastic learners. They are extremely well mannered and very proud of their school, and talked in glowing terms about how much they enjoyed being there. Around the school and in lessons their behaviour is impeccable. The high level of care and respect they are shown by adults is mirrored in the way they treat each other and the respect they show towards all adults.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Parents and carers who responded on Parent View or who were spoken to at the school gate, all believe their children are safe, and the vast majority told inspectors that their children are happy and well looked after. Despite the cramped conditions during playtime, children respect the zones and play very sensibly so that there are few accidents. Rigorous systems ensure that the school site is secure.
- Pupils understand about different types of bullying and can talk about how to stay safe on the internet and what cyber bullying is and how to prevent it. Incidents of bullying are very rare. Even minor incidents of poor behaviour are recorded and the school has zero tolerance for any hint of racist or other prejudice-based comments by pupils. The management of pupils' behaviour by all adults, regardless of their role in the school, is exemplary.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in the school, whether serving on the school council, running the school tuck shop, helping serve lunches or organising fund raising events for various charities. However, it is in the small things that pupils show true responsibility. Inspectors observed children comforting other children who were upset, ensuring that everyone took turns in a group activity and helping each other when they had difficulties in lessons.
- Pupils have a highly developed understanding of right and wrong and respect each others' cultures, faiths and differences. The school is very successful in fostering good relationships and tackling discrimination, resulting in a very harmonious school community.
- Participation in sports is high despite the school not having any onsite playing fields because children understand that exercise is important to stay healthy. The school's investment in a specialist sports teacher ensures they get access to high-quality physical education teaching. The extra government funding is being used to pay for access to sports festivals and tournaments, provide a street dance club, replace worn-out resources and increase the range of onsite sports that are available to the pupils.
- Attendance is above average and pupils typically arrive for school on time. Children who were a few minutes late were seen running to their classes in the mornings during the inspection.

The leadership and management are good

- The passion and drive of the longstanding headteacher and her two deputies ensure the school is continuously striving to improve. All staff totally support the school senior leadership, and other leaders value the opportunity to take responsibility for important areas of the school's work. As a result, the school has strong capacity to improve further.
- Processes and systems to check on the performance of pupils and teachers ensure that nothing less than good progress and good teaching is acceptable. Performance management systems are rigorous and all teachers know what they need to do to improve and value the opportunities they are given for training both from external agencies and within the school.
- Middle leaders play a significant role in developing aspects of the school's work. Subject leaders are very knowledgeable and supportive of colleagues who are less confident in their subject, helping them to plan good lessons and so enabling pupils to make good progress in a wide range of subjects. Pupils in a Year 6 art lesson were able to contrast the work of Roy Lichtenstein with that of Andy Warhol despite their teacher not being an art specialist. Year leaders and the special needs coordinator provide excellent pastoral support, contributing significantly to the high level of care shown in particular to those pupils whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is well served by the school's curriculum, which makes a significant contribution to their outstanding behaviour. Recent developments designed to improve boys' writing, such as having an alien spaceship crash into the school, with the police in attendance, have been extremely effective. Events such as these together with 'terrestrial' visitors to school and a wide variety of trips make significant contributions to pupils' motivation and enjoyment of learning.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this good school; they spoke highly of the headteacher's work with other schools in her role as a local leader in education.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection all the governors at the time have left and there is nobody with more than eighteen months experience of serving. As such they are very inexperienced but they are doing everything they can by attending training to develop their knowledge and skills. Governors know what the quality of teaching is and understand how well the school is doing when compared to other schools. However, they do not visit the school often enough and rely too heavily on information they are provided by senior leaders rather than having first-hand and deeper understanding of aspects of the school's work. This makes it difficult for them to provide strategic leadership in planning for improvements that will make the school's overall effectiveness outstanding. Financial resources are managed effectively and governors are aware of how sports funding is being spent and how the pupil premium funding is being used and its impact on pupils' progress. The governors understand the close link between teachers' pay and the progress pupils make. They give good support to the school in meeting safeguarding responsibilities, including those in relation to recruitment. The school's systems for safeguarding meet statutory 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	116222
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	431435

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Hamilton
Headteacher	Louise Linscott
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 April 2009
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