



Meon Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116222
LEA Portsmouth LEA
Inspection number 279774
Inspection dates 20 June 2006 to 21 June 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Thrussell AI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Shelford Road
School category	Community		Southsea
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Portsmouth PO4 8NT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392732844
Number on roll	288	Fax number	02392 825351
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Mark Sperring
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2004	Headteacher	Mrs L Linscott

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Meon is a larger than average junior school, which, with other local schools, has a falling role. The intake is mixed in terms of deprivation and prosperity and has an increasing number of pupils with social and behavioural needs. A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The majority of pupils have White British heritage; a small proportion come from minority ethnic backgrounds with a few at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

At the previous inspection, the school was judged to be underachieving. The inspection agrees with the school's own judgement that this is now a satisfactory school with some good features, which provides satisfactory value for money. Pupils now make satisfactory progress from a high starting point in Year 3, and by Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their good behaviour contributes to their success. They are well cared for and supported in their learning, drawing on the full support of parents and other agencies. They feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Teaching and learning, although improving, are satisfactory. Lessons are well prepared and managed, but teachers do not make enough use of their own day-to-day assessments to fully identify what pupils need to learn next. Pupils know their individual targets well and use them to improve their work. The curriculum is good and well enriched to provide further interesting and enjoyable activities. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their range of skills, particularly writing, at an appropriate level in subjects across the curriculum, so inhibiting the development of these skills.

Leadership and management overall are satisfactory. The headteacher provides strong leadership and sets a clear direction for the work of the school. Given its satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, the school is sufficiently well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

andmiddot; Ensure that teachers fully assess pupils' progress in lessons in order to plan the next steps in their learning.andmiddot; Ensure that all subjects fully contribute to the use and development of writing skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When pupils enter the school in Year 3, their attainment in English and mathematics is above average. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress in meeting the challenging targets set for them in these subjects. In Year 6, in 2005, performance in national tests improved; standards in English, mathematics and science were significantly above average. The latest teacher assessments in English and mathematics indicate that these standards are likely to be maintained in the current year. Within English, writing is the weaker element.

Pupils in Year 6, including those who are more able, make good progress. This is due to well focused support in English and mathematics, with small groups of similar ability pupils being taught in mathematics as well as booster lessons taking place in both subjects. Pupils have a good understanding of the levels they are aiming for and a determination to reach them. In other year groups, particularly Years 4 and 5, progress

is variable in writing and mathematics as teachers are not fully assessing pupils' progress in order to plan the next steps in their learning. Progress in reading has improved with initiatives such as 'Early Bird' reading and better provision for guided reading. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress due to the effective support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The school is well aware of the importance of promoting pupils' spiritual, social, cultural and moral development, which results in a high degree of self-awareness amongst pupils and a tolerant understanding of differences. Social development is well supported through 'paired discussions', group work in lessons and well attended extra-curricular activities.

Pupils feel safe and enjoy school. Their attendance is average and slowly improving. Contrary to the views of a minority of parents, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, and are very polite and courteous. They state that where occasional unpleasant incidents arise the school acts effectively. One pupil said, 'This is a very friendly school that has improved many things'. Pupils are well aware of healthy lifestyles; they drink water regularly to aid concentration and benefit from the various good sporting activities on offer. A good range of opportunities exists for pupils to actively participate in school life and decision making. They are eager to be involved and consequently develop self confidence and a sense of responsibility. Pupils also make a good contribution to the wider community. Year 5 pupils enjoy showing parents of incoming pupils around the school, and events are organised where the elderly are entertained by the orchestra and choir. Good standards in mathematics and English, together with their improved understanding of information and communication technology (ICT), help prepare pupils well for later life. Their awareness of economic well-being is promoted through such activities as the budgeting and running of the healthy tuck shop.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Regular monitoring has improved teaching and learning, which overall are satisfactory. Where teaching is better, lessons are livelier and planning reflects high expectations. This was seen in Year 3 literacy lessons, where pupils enthusiastically called out words and pointed in the air to show their understanding of pronouns. In the majority of lessons, pupils settle quickly to work and, because learning intentions are made clear to them, know what is expected of them. Good preparation and organisation allows pupils to make the most of the time available.

Occasionally the pace of lessons drops because pupils spend too much time listening passively to the teacher. Not all teachers assess accurately enough as the lesson

progresses and consequently work is not adapted to the individual needs of the pupils, so inhibiting their progress.

Teachers' assessment and marking of work in literacy is good. It allows the pupils to see how well they are doing and gives clear pointers for improvement. However this good practice is not sufficiently replicated in other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a wide and varied curriculum which is enhanced by specialist teaching in ICT, art and sport. The curriculum is well planned to take into account the wide variety of needs and abilities of pupils, including intervention programmes for targeted pupils, such as Springboard in mathematics. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. Gifted and talented pupils have opportunities to take part in specially provided activities. The school has focused strongly on developing literacy and numeracy skills in order to raise levels of achievement. However, it has not promoted the full use of these skills in other subjects sufficiently in order to raise standards, particularly in writing.

The programme for personal, social and health education is well thought out and makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and well being. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including residential trips, breakfast, lunchtime and after school clubs. Pupils' participation in these is high. Many attend before school to take part in spelling, reading and times table activities, so helping to improve these basic skills. Pupils have very good opportunities to make contributions to the local community, for example by working with other schools through the Portsmouth Arts Learning Community and taking part in sports tournaments. They are able to take an active part in the life and improvement of the school through the school council and School Improvement Days.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

These are good. The great majority of parents and pupils agree that this a very caring school. Pupils feel confident that the adults have their well-being as a priority. They talk of it being a friendly and safe environment, or as one pupil put it, 'You feel warm when you come into school'.

Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place and conscientiously observed. Child protection procedures are clear and widely understood and followed.

Pupils with learning, social and behavioural difficulties receive good, well managed support. Parents are quickly involved and a wide range of external agencies called upon to help ensure that pupils are supported, and are fully included in the life of the school.

Pupils have a good understanding of their literacy and numeracy targets and how they help guide their progress. They benefit well from the guidance provided by the

'Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation' approach to improving writing now used across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, ably assisted by her deputy, provides good leadership that focuses well on the care of pupils and their personal development. A strong commitment to raising standards has resulted in students making better progress overall. The school evaluates itself accurately and makes good use of information to plan its improvements. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Teaching has improved and overall is now satisfactory; further improvements in teaching have been hindered to an extent by a significant change of staff at the start of the current year. The provision for higher attaining pupils has improved, particularly in English where leadership is good.

Year group leaders effectively manage the smooth running of their years, particularly in the planning and preparation of lessons and the pastoral care of pupils. Initiatives taken in English have brought about improvements, particularly in reading. Initiatives to improve progress in mathematics have not been as effective. Regular assessments are carried out in English and mathematics, enabling pupils' progress to be tracked. These show variable rates of progress, with some underachievement not being identified soon enough through teachers' day-to-day evaluation of pupils' learning.

The work of the governing body is satisfactory. Governors know the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and are beginning to ask more searching questions about its work. In its budgeting and planning, the school is taking good account of its falling roll. The school keeps parents well informed of the progress their children are making and encourages involvement in their learning. It regularly seeks parents' views and acts appropriately on them, although a small minority feel that these are not taken sufficiently into account.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke to many of you during our visit and you were always interesting to talk to, polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. We think Meon is a satisfactory school that has some good features.

We liked these things the most:

- You behave well and enjoy school.
- You reach high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The school is very caring; pupils who need extra help are well supported.
- The school provides lots of interesting things for you to do. It was good to see so many of you keen to learn tables and spellings before school.
- You are keen to take on responsibilities. Well done for running the organic tuck shop!
- You understand the importance of eating the right things and taking plenty of exercise.
- Your head teacher does a good job.

We have asked the school to work on these things now:

- Look more closely at how well you do in lessons when planning what you each need to do next.
- Provide better opportunities for you to use your full writing skills when you are working at other subjects.

Thank you again

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector