



Potters Gate CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125161
LEA Surrey LEA
Inspection number 284349
Inspection dates 27 March 2006 to 28 March 2006
Reporting inspector Tina Herring

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Potters Gate
School category	Voluntary controlled		Farnham
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		GU9 7BB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01252 715619
Number on roll	192	Fax number	01252 718165
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Ben Linscott
Date of previous inspection	10 May 2004	Headteacher	Mrs Jane Whittington

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspector's and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Potters Gate is a CofE controlled Primary School. It is situated on a pleasant site in the centre of Farnham, with a good access to local amenities and resources. The accommodation is spacious and classrooms are housed in a mixture of Victorian and modern buildings. The school has good links with the local church and diocese and a strong friends association. A well established after school club is shared with a local infant school.

Most of the 192 pupils reside locally. The school serves a mainly white British community which is becoming more socially mixed. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals has increased and is slightly above average and the number of pupils with additional learning and social needs is higher than average. Approximately 10% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and small proportion speaks English as an additional language. One class of 30 pupils may be admitted into each year group up to Year 3 and after this the admission number rises to 45 pupils. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are taught in mixed age classes. The current number on roll is well below capacity.

The school was judged to require special measures in May 2004. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post since September 2005 and after a period of many changes in staffing, all of the teachers are permanent and appropriately qualified.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures because it is providing a satisfactory standard of education. The school has made significant improvement to redress weaknesses and maintained its strengths.

Pupils are mature, confident and polite. Their personal development and well-being are good. They have positive relationships with each other and the staff and enjoy coming to school. Achievement is satisfactory overall and standards are broadly in line with the national picture. However, as a result of previous underachievement, standards and achievement remain lower than they ought to be. In lessons, pupils make satisfactory and often better progress and this is directly related to the quality of teaching they receive. When progress is only satisfactory, it is because tasks are not fully matched to pupils' abilities and time is not used well enough to provide challenge throughout lessons. Assessment for English and mathematics is good but rigorous assessment has only been introduced recently into science and assessment is weak in the foundation subjects. As a result, planning in these subjects is not sufficiently focussed on meeting the needs of groups and individuals. Provision in the Reception class has improved and is satisfactory with some good features; consequently most children reach the standards expected by children of a similar age. All pupils receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum. There are effective support and intervention programmes for pupils with learning and social difficulties; they make satisfactory progress. Music provision is a growing strength and pupils benefit from twice weekly visits from specialist staff.

Leadership and management, including governance, are effective. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide a very clear direction for the school. Self- evaluation is comprehensive and the school accurately judges itself to be satisfactory. There are well targeted plans for the future which demonstrate very good understanding about the challenges still facing the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money and its capacity for improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

* Raise standards and achievement by ensuring that the quality of all teaching is good more consistently * Improve assessment in science and the foundation subjects and use the information to plan appropriately challenging tasks for pupils in all lessons* Maximise the use of time so that all pupils are challenged at each stage of the lesson

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The 2005 national test results for Year 6 pupils were much better than in 2003. Standards overall were broadly in line with the national picture, but were better in English than mathematics. At Year 2, standards in writing were slightly better than

those typically found at age seven but standards in reading and mathematics were slightly lower. Achievement is satisfactory overall. There was significant improvement between Years 2 to 6, especially in English and science. This is partly the result of consistently good teaching in Year 6. Despite this, when compared to English and mathematics, fewer able pupils achieved as highly in science in Year 6 as they did when they were in Year 2.

Because of previous weaknesses in provision and the legacy of underachievement, many older pupils fail to reach their potential. Gaps in their previous learning lower the standard of their work. For example, even able writers make basic errors in grammar and spelling and, in mathematics, pupils regularly miscalculate simple sums. Nevertheless, progress in lessons has improved; it is satisfactory overall and often good or better. The school has set challenging targets and they are beginning to be met. During the inspection pupils moved forward because they were given suitably challenging work but on a minority of occasions progress was hindered because tasks were too easy or too difficult.

The school is addressing gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding and the results are positive. Recent assessments indicate that attainment in mathematics, which was identified as a weakness in the 2005 national tests, is rapidly improving. Younger pupils are demonstrating their true capacity as writers. For example, in Year 1, as a result of consistently effective teaching, one 'average' 5 year old wrote with style and fluency 'the problem was the cat was right outside the door...the mouse tiptoed past'. These achievements and standards bode well for the future.

On entry to school, children's attainment is wide- ranging and broadly in line with the national picture. Reception class includes very able children and some with special needs. They enjoy school and their achievements are satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school judges this to be good and inspectors agree. From reception class onwards, pupils are helped to know what is expected of them and as a result they are mature, confident and polite. Relationships are positive and pupils appreciate the help they are given. Pupils enjoy school. One commented that 'teachers are friendly and make learning fun.' In lessons, pupils are considerate of others and happily listen and engage in conversations with their 'talking partner'. Around the school they show good attitudes and behaviour and maintain good friendships. Older pupils care for younger ones and gain a good understanding of their responsibilities towards others. Attendance, although satisfactory, could be better and punctuality is of some concern as a minority of pupils arrive at school late.

The school council enables some pupils to learn a good range of enterprise and management skills, for example, participating in a working party to devise the school's anti-bullying policy. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and about healthy eating choices at lunchtimes. They show maturity when they discuss spiritual and moral issues raised in assemblies and lessons. Pupils make good progress in their cultural development, especially in their appreciation of music and joyous

singing in assemblies. Artwork is representative of different cultures and traditions and enhances spiritual and cultural development. Pupils demonstrate good personal and social skills and these are developed well through a good range of educational visits.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good and outstanding lessons observed. Recent changes have had a positive impact on progress in lessons. Assessment data is used very effectively to plan challenging tasks in most English and mathematics lessons. All teachers employ a range of useful teaching strategies to gain and maintain the pupils' attention. Pupils know what is expected of them and teachers routinely make links to their prior learning. This helps the pupils to focus and to assimilate new knowledge and skills. Pupil's speaking, listening and thinking skills are improved by opportunities to work in pairs and small groups and by some teachers' skilled questioning. Visual and practical resources help pupils to understand new ideas and concepts. Information and communication technology (ICT) is increasingly used effectively to enhance teaching and learning. Learning is regularly evaluated and teaching is adjusted to take account of pupils' needs.

There are occasions when progress in lessons is only adequate because a minority of pupils could achieve more. This is because activities are too easy, too difficult or not well enough supervised; tasks are different rather than differentiated according to need and teachers' questions do not stretch all pupils. This occurs when planning is too general as a result of weaknesses in assessment.

The school has introduced support and intervention programmes for pupils with learning and social difficulties and they make satisfactory progress. Teaching assistants, in all classes, usually provide good teaching support and help pupils to stay focussed and participate in lessons. There are firm plans to involve parents more in their children's learning and a home- school link worker has recently been employed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. Planning in the Foundation Stage is sound with a good emphasis on practical activities which enhance children's learning. Planning for mixed-age classes ensures that work provided for the pupils is appropriate for their age. Good planning for literacy and numeracy and, increasingly, ICT ensures that most pupils develop life-long learning skills. However, there is still more to do to maximise the use of time in lessons so that all pupils are challenged throughout every lesson. On one occasion, for example, pupils who were supposed to be learning spellings were simply copying words.

Across the school, good links are made between subjects to make the learning relevant and enjoyable. This is an area the school is developing further with increasing success. For example, Year 2's display of a 'fruit collage' links art and design well with science and older pupils' exploration of the Tudor period in history is enhanced by a good range of art and design in their 'Tudor Portraits'.

Pupils' learning is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and clubs and there are firm plans to extend the involvement of parents in pupils learning and expand the use of local resources for teaching and learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides satisfactory care and support for its pupils. Members of staff are committed to the needs of the pupils. This is evident in the way in which new pupils to the school are well supported and in the programmes for pupils with learning difficulties. The school is a happy and secure place and pupils appreciate that they are safe and well cared for. They have regard for their own and others' safety in lessons and at playtimes and supervision is diligent. Child protection procedures are securely in place. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are systematically carried out.

The school checks the progress of individual pupils using accurate and very detailed assessment information in English and mathematics. Pupils understand their individual targets. Marking has improved and pupils are helped to recognise how successful they have been in achieving the learning objective through teachers' comments in their books and by opportunities to assess their own progress in lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher's astute and well-targeted actions have begun to make a positive impact on achievement and standards. Teaching and learning are improving because of the new culture of high expectation and self-evaluation. The headteacher's measured style and decisive action have been well received by parents, governors and staff. She leads with confidence. Communication is effective with all members of the school community and their views have been sought on a number of matters. The headteacher's determination to ensure that all new initiatives are agreed and understood has paid dividends. Working together, the headteacher and deputy have secured the trust of staff. As a result their confidence and enthusiasm have grown. Subject coordination and leadership of the Foundation Stage have improved; coordinators accept greater responsibility for standards, achievement and improvement in their subject area. Several have observed lessons, scrutinised books and reviewed teachers' planning. Their comments are evaluative and their action plans are useful documents; all focus on improving achievement and assessment in order to improve teaching.

The governors make a satisfactory contribution to the school's work. They provide support and challenge and are actively involved in the life of the school. The governors provided stability through a period of constant change in leadership and now that the situation has stabilised they are sensibly reviewing their roles in order to ensure that their strategic and monitoring roles are given priority.

The school is well placed to improve. The development plan is ambitious. It is drawn from thorough and accurate monitoring and evaluation, including a deep understanding of pupil's performance. While resources are well deployed the school's budget is tight and pupil numbers are low. It is very appropriate that the Local Authority and diocese wisely intend to continue to provide additional support for the development of governance and teaching and learning.

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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?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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	3	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	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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

Children

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and visiting your lessons. You are friendly, mature, confident and polite and you made sure that for the two days we were with you we felt a part of your school. Thank you for sharing your work with us. We could see that you try hard to do your best and help each other. Well done! We think your school council does a good job and works hard to improve things for you. We were pleased to hear from many of you that you really appreciate the things that the staff do to help you and that you enjoy coming to school.

As you know I have been visiting your school each term to check that it is getting better. I am very pleased to tell you that it has improved. Your teachers, the headteacher and all the other adults work very hard to make sure that you are safe, that you do well with your work and enjoy it! It was good to see how well they and you got on together in lessons. We have asked Mrs Whittington, all the staff and governors to carry on improving the school. We want everyone to help you improve your writing, reading, mathematics and science by making sure that all your lessons are well taught. We want your school to check how well you are doing in all subjects so that they can help you to work hard throughout every lesson and make good progress.

We were a disappointed that some of you arrive at school late and miss the start of your lessons. Perhaps you can help your parents to get you to school on time by getting yourself ready in the mornings. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Yours sincerely

Tina Herring

HM Inspector of Schools