



Ferrars Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109540
Local Authority LUTON
Inspection number 288420
Inspection dates 21–22 February 2007
Reporting inspector Michael Milton

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Lewsey Road
School category	Community		Luton
Age range of pupils	7–11		Bedfordshire LU4 0ES
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01582 574933
Number on roll (school)	318	Fax number	01582 560518
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr J McMulkin
		Headteacher	Mrs A McCarthy
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002		

Age group 7–11	Inspection dates 21–22 February 2007	Inspection number 288420
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ferrars Junior School is above average in size with three classes in each year group. About half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds with the other half from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Pupils join the school with average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. About one fifth of the pupils are at an early stage of learning English language. A significant number of pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds. An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Above average numbers of pupils join or leave the school at other than the normal times.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Ferrars Junior is a satisfactory school with some good features as well as clear aspects for improvement. The school is improving under the good leadership and management of the headteacher, who is supported by a staff team that is committed to improving pupils' achievement and standards. As one parent wrote, 'I am particularly pleased with the improvements to teaching and learning since the advent of the new headteacher'. Since last September, a good range of improvements has been introduced. There has not been enough time for many of these improvements to become an integral part of the school's everyday work but they have started to raise pupils' standards.

Pupils make steady progress as a result of satisfactory teaching, and reach average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6, although boys' standards in writing are significantly lower than those in reading. Pupils from different groups, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those at an early stage of English language acquisition, generally make satisfactory progress. Also, pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities generally make satisfactory progress. Almost without exception, pupils enjoy school.

Strengths of the teaching include careful lesson planning, good class management and the sharing of learning objectives with pupils. Weak aspects are a lack of challenge to more able pupils, a slow pace and marking that does not help pupils to understand how to improve their work.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and are self-confident and keen to learn. They make a good contribution to the school community, and older pupils take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils feel safe and know how to avoid dangers in a variety of out-of-school situations. The good curriculum and pupils' take up of lunches provided by the award-winning kitchen, help them to live healthy lives. All pupils learn French and a high proportion are involved in the wide range of successful sports clubs. The quality of care, guidance and support is good, especially for pupils experiencing difficulties with their behaviour or learning. The school has a thorough system for tracking pupils' termly progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and a start has been made to using this information systematically to help improve pupils' achievement. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion because all groups of pupils are fully integrated into the school's life and make similar levels of progress.

The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate and frank, and this information is used to identify the correct priorities for improvement. Effective steps are being taken to address the school's weaknesses. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well led and managed. Consequently, the school has a good capacity for further improvement. The work of year and subject leaders is improving but is not yet having its full impact on raising standards. The governing body is satisfactory and the organisation of its work has recently improved. It receives good levels of relevant information but is not sufficiently involved in holding

the school to account for its provision and pupils' achievement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' standards in English (especially in boys' writing), mathematics, and science
- Develop the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good throughout the school
- Develop the work of the governing body so that it challenges and supports the school more effectively
- Develop the effectiveness of the year and subject leaders in evaluating and improving the school's provision and pupils' achievement

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' standards on entry are average, but there are weaknesses in the quality of boys' writing. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory because teaching is usually satisfactory and, by the end of Year 6, they reach average standards in English, mathematics and science, although boys' writing standards are significantly lower than those for girls. The school has made a number of improvements to raise writing standards, especially for boys. Consequently, standards are starting to rise in pupils' use of a wide range of vocabulary and their different types of writing, although weaknesses persist in the quality of spelling and grammar. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make similar progress to other pupils. Those pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition generally make satisfactory progress, with some making good progress as a result of special provision matched to their particular needs. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities generally make satisfactory progress, with some making good or very good progress for particular subjects, because their provision is well planned and based on thorough assessment. The Year 6 pupils met their targets for the national tests for English and mathematics in 2006, and the targets set for Year 6 in 2007 are challenging

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, are good. Their attendance rates are satisfactory. Pupils cooperate and work in teams in various activities, clubs and community events. As a result they leave the school as mature and sensible pupils, with a satisfactory grasp of the key skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils have a good understanding of the need to stay healthy. Pupils have adults in school to turn to if they face difficulties. They contribute to the school community as peer mentors, playground friends, prefects and monitors. 'We help the children, just like teachers do', said one peer mentor. Pupils contribute to the development of the

school through the school council, for example, by getting cool water provided, starting a wild garden club and fundraising for charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and usually meet the differing learning needs of pupils. A common strength of lessons is that teachers share learning objectives with pupils and make sure that they know what they need to do in order to achieve the objectives successfully. Activities to conclude lessons are usually planned carefully. Teaching assistants teach small groups well and are usually effective in helping pupils learn throughout lessons. However, there are a number of weaknesses in teaching. In some lessons, the work does not challenge more able pupils sufficiently and the pace of learning slows as, for example, resources are distributed or pupils complete a task quickly. Marking is frequent and includes personal comments about the pupils' work but there are many occasions when these do not refer to the learning objectives or help pupils to understand how to improve their work. In outstanding lessons, teaching is clear and concise, pupils know what they have to learn, and they respond very well to challenging work that is well matched to their differing learning needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum includes recently developed, strong links between subjects and the adaptation of national guidelines so that learning is more relevant to the needs and interests of all groups of pupils. There is a better balance of time given to the different subjects than at the last inspection, although there are insufficient opportunities for longer pieces of writing. Special projects and weeks enrich pupils' learning and enjoyment, such as French and science days and a book week. There is a good range of well attended lunchtime and after-school activities that give pupils opportunities to extend their sporting, musical and other skills and interests. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, and this is in the process of being developed to improve pupils' emotional learning. All pupils learn French, and the school provides two residential courses and a good range of day trips.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and help a significant number of pupils to overcome barriers to learning. Teachers know their pupils well, and there are very good relationships between staff and pupils. The needs of pupils are well safeguarded because effective procedures are in place to cover health, safety and child protection issues. Mentors give very good support to pupils who are vulnerable or who experience difficulties with their learning, behaviour or attendance. There are good procedures

to encourage pupils' attendance but some families still take holidays during term time. The school liaises well with other agencies to provide pupils with specialist support, for example, for those with dyslexia or language difficulties. A good start has been made with the system for tracking the progress of pupils towards their end-of-year National Curriculum level targets. Pupils are aware of their targets in literacy and mathematics. 'I am OK for the Level 4 but have to get a 5', said one very determined pupil. The school effectively identifies pupils who need extra help with their learning and supports them well to reach these targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory but is improving rapidly under the strong and effective leadership of the current headteacher. The new headteacher has had a very positive impact on the school and the staff are committed to improving the school's provision and raising standards for all pupils. Since last September, some improvements have been made to the buildings and site that have helped create a more attractive learning environment, and more are planned. The senior leadership team has been restructured and is developing its role in school improvement and its skills of self-evaluation. There is a well planned, thorough programme of self-evaluation that includes all main stakeholders. The work of year leaders is developing well and includes monitoring the progress of pupils within their year groups. Subject leaders have started analysing assessment information and then adapting the curriculum to help address pupils' learning weaknesses. They carry out a sound range of monitoring and evaluation but this does not focus sufficiently on pupils' progress. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. There are good links with a range of organisations and professionals that benefit pupils' care and learning. The links with the Excellence in Cities Action Zone are particularly beneficial.

Recently, the work of the governing body has improved a great deal. For example, specific governors monitor the progress being made with the school development plan's priorities. However, the governing body has not been sufficiently involved in holding the school to account and monitoring the progress that pupils make with their learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

23 February 2007

Dear Pupils

Ferrars Junior School, Lewsey Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU4 0ES

Mrs Arora, Mr Timms and I really enjoyed visiting your school this week and meeting you, Mrs McCarthy, the staff and some of the governors. Thank you for making us so welcome. We enjoyed our healthy lunches with you. You are right to be so proud of your learning logs as you work so hard and thoughtfully on the challenging tasks at home. We have never seen pupils making a radio programme before and hope that the boys' hard work does get broadcast. It was interesting to hear from you that you enjoy school, feel safe and secure, like being in the successful sports teams, and enjoy the fun things in assembly such as the visit of the recycling robot. You told us that teachers will always help you and they often make learning fun.

You behave well and are keen to do your best work. You make satisfactory progress because teaching is usually satisfactory although some lessons are really good and help you to learn a great deal. You reach average standards in English, mathematics and science but Mrs McCarthy and the staff are working hard to help you reach even higher standards. The school provides good activities to help you learn, including special days such as the French and science days, and the good opportunities to join sports teams. The staff work hard to take good care of you, and help you when you face difficulties. Year and subject leaders have identified some improvements that will help you improve your standards and these are starting to work.

The main things to do to make the school even better are to:

- raise your standards even higher in English, mathematics and science
- develop teaching so that lessons are always good throughout the school
- help the governing body know how good lessons are and how much progress you are making, so that governors can ask Mrs McCarthy and the staff questions that make them think hard about the school's work
- help the year and subject leaders to pinpoint more improvements that will help you to learn more

You can help the school to get even better by continuing to behave well and to do your best work, and by thinking carefully about how to improve your standards.

With best wishes for the rest of the school year

Mike Milton

Lead inspector