



Hart Plain Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115966
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290380
Inspection date 18 September 2006
Reporting inspector George Rayner

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Hart Plain Avenue
School category	Community		Cowplain
Age range of pupils	4-7		Waterlooville PO8 8RZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392262511
Number on roll (school)	222	Fax number	02392230609
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Brian Vince
		Headteacher	Mrs Beverley Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school is of an average size. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average, although there was a larger group of these pupils in the Year 2 cohort that took the national tests in 2006. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities is low and few are at an early stage of speaking English. Several children from a local Christian group called the Brethren community attend and the school values the way in which they enrich its community. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools Standard and Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good with some outstanding features. Parents showed, in their positive questionnaire responses, that they share this opinion of the school. The headteacher's strong leadership provides a very clear vision that the personal and emotional development of pupils is vital for them to flourish. She is very well supported in this by all members of the leadership team and by the governing body.

The school provides outstanding care for its pupils including an innovative approach that ensures learning in all areas caters for pupils' emotional and intellectual development as well as their subject knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being is excellent. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the very clear and highly effective guidance that they receive. They explain confidently why they need to eat healthily, take exercise and be careful in certain situations. They respond very enthusiastically to the many opportunities to contribute to the work of the school and to the wider community.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress and most achieve the learning goals expected of five year olds. Effective opportunities for children to learn through play and exploration ensure that their social skills and ability to communicate with each other develop quickly. As a result of good teaching and occasional outstanding lessons pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well and reach above average standards in the national tests for seven year olds. The teachers' good understanding of the needs of their pupils is reflected in well planned and productive lessons where children work hard and do their best. The very positive relationships and willing response of the pupils supports good learning. However, some teachers are not always swift enough to identify those occasions when pupils need additional time to reflect on their answers, or when additional questioning could extend pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding.

Important changes to the ways that reading and writing are taught have ensured that standards have improved since the last inspection. In particular there has been considerable improvement in the standard of writing because more pupils are achieving the expected levels. However, there is still scope to improve further the performance of the brightest pupils, particularly the boys, so that more of them achieve the higher levels.

The school's effective self-evaluation has given it an accurate view of its strengths and the areas in which it could be even better. The very good arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress underpin this process and have been used successfully to secure good improvement in standards since the last inspection and outstanding improvement in personal development and care. The school has clearly good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Find ways of improving and extending the writing skills of the most able pupils, particularly boys.
- Ensure that all teachers refine their questioning techniques so that, whenever possible, they extend pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When pupils enter Reception class they have broadly average skills, though the overall profile varies slightly from year-to-year. They achieve well because most reach, and a few exceed the expected learning goals.

The general pattern of results shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Standards are normally above average but in 2006 fell to below average because there was a higher proportion of pupils than usual with learning difficulties. However, when examining the assessment data that shows their starting points in Year 1 it is clear that most of these pupils made good gains in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because the school effectively identifies their needs and teachers and support staff work together very well to provide the help that they need. Boys make as good progress as girls in all respects, except in writing at the higher levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The happiness, well-being and personal development of its pupils are central to the school's vision. One parent commented on how well 'the teachers know not only the ability of our child but her personality as well.' Pupils happily explained how activities such as massage and brain gym get them ready, 'to enjoy our lessons'. They know that reflection and asking questions are key parts of their learning and these contribute to their spiritual development.

Pupils' knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and healthy is extremely good and this has been recognised in the 2006 Teaching Awards, Healthy Schools category. The judges described the school as, 'an absolute jewel and a wonderful model of an all-round healthy lifestyle.' Pupils very readily contribute to the school community. Some proudly show the sashes that they wear during their time as 'helpers of the week' and they report that the school council gives them an effective voice. Regular activities in the local community include visits to sing at a local home for the elderly, donation of gift boxes for Romania and Albania and many charity fund-raising events. Support for future economic well-being begins early. Children in the Reception class very quickly learn the importance of rules through playing at being drivers and traffic policemen in the outside area.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. They show their excellent social and moral development through their behaviour, enthusiasm and willingness. They demonstrated very good cultural awareness when talking knowledgeably about the differences between their own lives and those of people in Eastern Europe and South Africa. The pupils from the local Brethren community fit in very well and are fully respected by the others. The school works very hard to improve its average attendance levels but meets with limited success because of the high absence rates of a very small group of pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are well planned and teachers manage activities well. Most lessons are characterised by a buzz of purposeful activity that brings good progress. Pupils work happily and willingly at tasks that interest them, co-operating well in pairs and small groups. They benefit from diligent and efficient individual guidance from teachers, teaching assistants, as well as the effective support of volunteers and governors, who often help in class. Pupils respond well in discussion and contribute thoughtfully. However, not all staff are yet skilled in posing additional questions that will deepen and extend pupils learning. Teachers use assessment well to help pupils to improve and to identify what they need to learn next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is carefully planned to provide good continuity of learning. Since the last inspection, the balance of time between subjects has been improved so that this is now good. Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) have been significantly improved, including an up-to-date computer suite. These make a good contribution to the curriculum. While the overall contribution of the curriculum to achievement is good, an excellent personal, social and health education (PSHE) course contributes very strongly to pupils' outstanding personal development. The development of pupils' understanding of rights, respect and responsibility is a particularly strong feature. Good, well attended, extra curricular clubs include a range of sporting, cultural and creative activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school has invested considerable resources and effort into ensuring that it is a pleasant, as well as secure, environment for its pupils. Adults are aware and alert to any signs that a child may be unhappy or at risk. They work extremely well with external agencies to ensure that pupils quickly receive high quality help when they need it. Records of each pupil's progress are compiled in a very accessible form that speedily

alerts staff to situations where individuals might be falling behind the standards that they are capable of. Regular reviews ensure that very effective help is given. Several parents of children with learning difficulties commented on how well the school had cared for them and met their needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

There is a high degree of shared commitment between the leaders, staff and governors. The headteacher balances very clear direction with allowing those with responsibilities the scope to develop these creatively. Governors contribute very effectively because they are knowledgeable and willing to question and challenge. Many are regular visitors to the school. This ensures that they know it well and teachers value governors' willingness to help in the classroom.

Effective evaluation of the school's provision and performance includes accurate use of statistics and well-organised monitoring of teaching and learning. The school also ensures that the views of pupils and parents are taken into account. This has led to outstanding improvement in personal development and care and good improvement in standards. Priorities and targets for these areas of improvement have been crystal clear. Those for the other areas, such as teaching, are not yet quite sharp enough to secure such a rapid rate of improvement.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	1

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Thank you for welcoming me to the school on my recent inspection visit. I enjoyed this very much. I was able to see that yours is a good school. Some things that it does for you are very good indeed.

You do well in almost all of your work. In the past, many pupils did not do as well as they could in writing. The school has worked very hard and successfully to make sure that this is no longer so for almost all of you. It knows that some of the most able ones, especially boys, still do not do quite as well as they could. It is working to make this better too.

Teaching and learning are good. I enjoyed going into lessons. This is because I always found a real buzz going on in your classrooms. You and all the adults at the school work very well together. You all looked as though you were enjoying yourselves too. The teachers give you interesting things to do and you make sure you learn well by being willing to join in and work hard. Other adults help the teachers very well. Teaching assistants are very important in this and I know that the staff really appreciate the way that parents and governors also help. They all make sure that you get the help that you need. Teachers often ask you good questions, but they need to become even better at choosing ones that will really make you think, no matter how clever you are.

I'm very pleased that your school has won the Teaching Award for Healthy Schools for your area. It is well deserved and you have helped tremendously by responding so well. Some of you showed me how well you know how to live healthily and stay safe. The school also cares for you extremely well. Some of your parents told me that their children, who have special needs, have done really well because of this.

Well done to you all

George Rayner

Lead inspector