



Poulner Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116031
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290401
Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Thrussell

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	North Poulner Road
School category	Community		Ringwood
Age range of pupils	4–7		BH24 3LA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01425472338
Number on roll (school)	213	Fax number	01425483277
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Andrea Blower
		Headteacher	Miss Angela Walkiden
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–7	18–19 October 2006	290401

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Poulner is an average sized infant school which serves a wide catchment area with little deprivation. The majority of pupils are from British White heritage. 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: 2

Poulner Infant School provides a good standard of education for its pupils with some outstanding features. This reflects the very clear vision and hard work of the headteacher and senior leadership team, which promotes excellent personal development and good academic success. They are supported by a very effective governing body. Pupils achieve well to reach above average standards.

From the time they start in Reception and throughout the school, pupils thoroughly enjoy their days. This is down to the excellent relationships established between staff and pupils. Children thrive and quickly develop the confidence to become independent learners. Enthusiasm and very positive attitudes to learning are promoted through a well planned and enriched curriculum. Pupils particularly enjoy physical education, music and French sessions taken by specialist staff. They talked very enthusiastically about the 'Bird Box Project', where a webcam enabled them to watch spellbound as birds hatched. Pupils value the fact that they are fully involved in the life of the school. Excellent work done by the school council led to the appointment of Playground Buddies and more playtime activities. This has contributed to pupils' exemplary behaviour both in and around school. They are encouraged to be involved in their own learning. Pupils mostly know their individual targets and understand how these help them to improve their work. Where pupils have particular needs, whether personal, social or academic, the school provides an extremely high level of well focused care and support. This effectively draws on the strong links with parents and other schools and agencies. A parent of a statemented child writes, 'Poulner Infants have been supportive to us as a family and to our son. He is very happy and progressing well at his own level and valued as an individual'. An extremely strong focus on pupils' personal development, including a very good understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles, contributes well to pupils' academic success and excellent preparation for later life.

When children enter Reception they have average skills. Parents of Reception children recognise that 'the school does a fantastic job in helping them to settle well'. Through well organised and stimulating activities, which provide opportunities for personal choice and exploration, children make good progress. This good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 due to continuing good teaching. This teaching is characterised by the good use of assessment information when planning the next steps in pupils' learning, teamwork within year groups and the full involvement of learning support assistants. Pupils take every opportunity to talk about their work amongst themselves and classrooms often buzz with work. However, when addressing the whole class, teachers do not always provide pupils with the level of questioning and discussion that helps them to clarify their ideas and understanding further. The school is already working on this, particularly as a way of further improving pupils' writing. Effective leadership has ensured that standards in mathematics have risen significantly since the last inspection and that girls now perform as well as boys. The school continues to do very well in reading and recognises that writing remains an area for further improvement. Focused support, particularly for higher attaining pupils, has already started to bear fruit in this area.

Given the school's very good monitoring and evaluation procedures, and its effective action, it currently has a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils are involved in questioning and discussion in order to develop their ideas and understanding, particularly as a tool for improving their writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall standards are above average and achievement is good. Children make good progress in Reception and when they enter Year 1 the majority have achieved the learning goals expected at this age, with a significant proportion exceeding them. Pupils continue to make good progress and by Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress due to the very high quality of support they are given. Reading is a particular strength due to the systematic teaching of phonics, well planned guided reading sessions, an impressive library that pupils are proud to use, and the involvement of parents. A review of planning, with an emphasis on challenge and problem solving, has helped to raise standards in mathematics. The end of Year 2 assessments for 2006 and predictions for 2007 show the success of action to improve the writing of higher attaining pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well being are outstanding. From Reception onwards, the school provides a wealth of opportunities for developing the 'whole child', enabling pupils to become confident, independent learners. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time in school, reflected in their good attendance. They are very polite and look out for ways in which they can help others both in lessons and at playtimes. Pupils take their responsibilities as council members, Playground Buddies and librarians very seriously. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Much praise and the celebration of achievement ensure that pupils highly value themselves and each other. Discussions with pupils indicate that they have a very good understanding of how to keep safe and stay healthy. One pupil commented, 'vegetables and fruit are good for your health but you can have crisps and chocolates sometimes as a treat'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. They use their subject knowledge and their understanding of the differing needs of children well to plan lessons. Excellent relationships ensure that pupils pay full attention, quickly settle to work and are keen to do their best. Teachers in Reception classes use various strategies and a wide range of resources to make learning meaningful and enjoyable for young children, enabling them to achieve well in all areas of learning, especially in their personal and social development. Practical lessons add interest and challenge to learning. In a numeracy lesson, Year 2 pupils greatly enjoyed looking for body parts with similar lengths and using pieces of string to check their observations. Throughout the school, group work is well supported with learning support assistants working confidently alongside class teachers. When lessons are being initially introduced and later summarised, the level and quality of questioning and discussion is not always sufficient to effectively develop thinking skills and further the knowledge of all pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Personal development is promoted in all that the school sets out to do. This ensures that pupils take a full and enjoyable part in school life, appreciate cultural differences and are well on the way to adopting healthy and safe lifestyles. In Reception, the curriculum is focused on how young children learn, giving them very good opportunities to follow their interests as well as develop their basic skills. Opportunities to 'plan, do and review' enable children to take responsibility for their own learning from a very early age. The school has identified that links between subjects have yet to be fully developed so that pupils can use and consolidate their different skills, including computer skills, in a more creative and purposeful way. The use of specialist staff helps pupils to develop their special interests and talents. Organised events, themed days and well supported school clubs and activities add an extra dimension to children's learning. Visits and visitors provide good first hand learning experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are excellent. The school provides an extremely high quality of guidance and support for pupils' academic and personal development. This helps all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, to be fully included in the life of the school, to know how well they are doing and to make good progress. An outstanding feature is the way the school uses different strategies, such as the Jigsaw Project, to help pupils deal with their feelings, concerns and experiences so

that they become confident learners. One parent commented, 'the special environment of Poulner Infants has helped my son, who was very shy and timid, to develop into quite a confident young boy'. The school fully ensures pupils safety and welfare through regular health and safety checks, risk assessments and child protection procedures.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school very carefully monitors its work and accurately evaluates this, identifying appropriate areas for action. The school improvement plan is well structured but does not always show how action taken will be measured and evaluated. The very careful monitoring of standards and achievement enables the school to provide well focused support where pupils are not achieving as well as they might. Regular classroom observations provide teachers with areas for improvement, but do not sufficiently focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress within lessons. Through good performance management procedures, staff are encouraged to further improve their performance in line with actions that the school is taking. Good opportunities are provided for professional development. Governors are extremely supportive of the work of the school and have a very good understanding of its performance. They don't just rely on what the headteacher tells them, wanting as much to find out things for themselves, often by asking searching questions. The school has very good links with parents which are established even before children start school. They are encouraged to take a full part in their children's learning.

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?	1
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	2
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	1

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

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, extremely polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. Poulner Infant School is a good school with some outstanding features.

We liked these things the most:

- You behave extremely well, work hard and enjoy your lessons and playtimes.
- The school is extremely caring; pupils who need extra help are well supported.
- The school provides you with many interesting things to do; I know you enjoyed the Bird Box Project and I was impressed that you could tell me your names in French.
- You understand the importance of eating the right things and taking plenty of exercise.
- The school listens to you when you suggest how things could get even better.
- You value being given responsibilities; your work as librarians and Playground Buddies is impressive.
- Your parents are keen to help you and give very good support to all that the school does.
- Your headteacher does a very good job and is very well supported by the staff and governors.

We have asked the school to work on this now:

- Give every one of you more opportunities in lessons to answer questions and to talk about what you are doing; this will especially help you to think more about your writing, what you want to say and the words that will help you.

Thank you again

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector