

Hook Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116045
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290407
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Sue Rogers

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	370
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Robson
Headteacher	Mrs J Southern
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	Church View Hook RG27 9NR
Telephone number	01256 762468
Fax number	01256 762141

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2007
Inspection number	290407

© 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

This is a larger-than-average junior school which serves a large village community. The number of pupils at the school is increasing as the village expands. The area is relatively affluent as it is an area of high employment. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average, but increasing. Standards of attainment on entry are above average and recruitment problems have created considerable turbulence in staffing and in leadership and management since the previous headteacher left in 2004. Although she took up post in 2005, the current headteacher did not effectively take over until April 2006. The school is without a substantive deputy headteacher. An appointment has been made for next term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school offers its pupils an acceptable standard of education. However, the school is not as effective as it should be, because leadership and management are inadequate. This arises partly because of the absence of key staff and difficulties in recruitment. It is also because the current leaders are not giving sufficient direction to help the school to improve further. Consequently, middle managers are not effective and a high proportion of parents have lost confidence in the leadership and management of the school. In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005 HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to leadership and management.

The quality of teaching and the pupils' achievement are satisfactory. However, the school is not taking the necessary steps to become a good school again. It is not moving forward because it is not being driven sufficiently by senior managers. For instance, although school leaders recognise that there are weaknesses in teaching, these have not been tackled robustly enough to effect improvement. This is because monitoring, evaluation and planning for improvement are all weak.

Communication with parents, pupils and the wider community is not good enough. The headteacher and the governing body do not work well together. A large proportion of parents who expressed views said that they have little confidence in how the school is led and managed. The pupils are not formally asked what they think other than when they leave the school. The leaders' vision for the school and the rationale for actions taken are not shared well enough with staff, governors or parents.

Pupils attain standards that are above average. Given their starting points this reflects average achievement overall. However, this masks considerable variations within subjects and pupils' progress has been variable from year to year. Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, there is too little good teaching and actions are not being taken to bring more consistency. Teachers organise their classes well, but assessment is not yet used well enough to inform planning accurately. As a result pupils are not sufficiently challenged or adequately involved in their learning. This is a caring school but academic guidance for pupils is only satisfactory because assessment is not good enough to support the setting of targets for individual pupils.

Parents feel strongly that there is bad behaviour and too much bullying. Although there are clearly a few pupils whose behaviour is challenging, the inspectors' findings did not substantiate these views. Personal development is a strength of the school. The pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall and they are generally very polite. Attendance is good and the pupils feel very safe because they are well cared for. They have good knowledge about being healthy. A satisfactory curriculum ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve as well as other pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve leadership and management, in particular the quality of self-evaluation, planning for improvement and monitoring.
- Strengthen partnerships and communication between school leaders and governors, parents, staff and pupils.

- Improve the quality of teaching by making better use of assessment to challenge and involve all pupils and ensure that they all make consistently good progress.
- Ensure that middle managers have sufficient support and guidance to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' progress through the school varies. This is because the school does not disseminate its good practice in teaching and senior managers do not provide effective support and challenge to help remove the inconsistencies in teaching that exist in several classes. Consequently, some pupils do not do as well as they should and the school does not always meet its targets for English and mathematics. There are differences between classes and between subjects that are not being addressed. In some classes, the pupils do better in English and in others they do better in mathematics. Progress in science is generally good, particularly for the most able. Pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties achieve at least as well as others.

In some classes, progress is slower than it should be and Year 6 teachers work very hard to help the pupils to catch up, such that in 2006 pupils' progress overall was good. However, lesson observations, work in books and school assessment information show that overall progress is currently only satisfactory. Action has been taken to raise standards in English, especially writing, but there is not yet any evidence of sustained improvement. The many changes in staff over the last few years have also adversely affected pupils' progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The pupils generally enjoy productive relationships with each other and they have a good sense of right and wrong. They behave well at play and around school. Their behaviour in class is no better than satisfactory, however, particularly when teachers allow disruptive chat to go unchallenged. The pupils say that bullying is rare and that it is satisfactorily dealt with when it does occur. They feel safe in school and have the confidence to tell staff if there is a problem. The pupils' attitudes are satisfactory and their attendance levels are above average.

Spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. The pupils behave very respectfully as they thoughtfully join in prayers on themes, such as 'Doing your best', in assembly. Their understanding of cultural diversity is developing well. This was exemplified by one pupil saying: 'It's fun to see how other people live'. The pupils are enthusiastic about their involvement in physical activity in lessons, at break times, through after-school clubs and by cycling to school. They have good knowledge about making healthy choices in eating. Unfortunately the contents of their lunchboxes does not always reflect their knowledge.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school through an effective school council, the 'playground pals' scheme and through helping to run clubs for younger pupils. Their good standards in basic skills mean that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but the quality of teaching is not improving fast enough. There is not enough good teaching to ensure that the pupils make consistently good progress. The school recognises that some teaching is inadequate, but insufficient steps have been taken to deal with this.

The pupils respond well and make reasonable progress because they have good relationships with their teachers. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are effectively supported. Good lessons are characterised by enthusiastic teaching, high expectations and a fast pace, but these features are too often missing in most of the lessons. Expectations are not always high enough because assessment information is not used well. Teachers do not keep day-to-day assessment records to inform the planning of the next lesson. Marking is inconsistent and is not sufficiently informative.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is adequately broad and balanced. It has been modified suitably to take into account national recommendations from the Excellence and Enjoyment initiative. It is well designed to ensure that all pupils are fully included and that personal development is good. There have been useful modifications to develop thinking skills in mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) were judged to be too low at the last inspection. There has been some improvement in provision since then but this has not been sufficient to ensure that pupils in Year 6 do as well as they should in ICT. This is partly because necessary building works have consumed funding that would have supported the purchase of ICT hardware. Pupil's work in the foundation subjects is not yet planned well enough because assessment in the foundation subjects is inadequate. This is because subject leaders do not have enough guidance from senior leaders. Planning for lessons across the curriculum is sometimes too pedestrian, but curriculum enrichment outside lessons is good. There is a particularly good range of sporting clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pupils are well cared for. Pupils at risk are swiftly identified and their needs are adequately met. The school complies with requirements to safeguard the pupils and all risk assessments are satisfactorily carried out.

Academic guidance is still developing. The setting and sharing of targets with pupils is in its infancy. Pupils have targets to aim for in English and some classes are experimenting with simple targets in mathematics. However, the pupils do not fully understand what they mean. The school's partnership with parents is not sufficiently developed to support pupils as well as it should.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The work of the school's leaders has not yet had enough impact on the quality of provision. Personal development is good but other areas have deteriorated since the previous inspection. There is a lack of direction and because of this middle managers are ineffective. The school's development plan does not identify the right priorities and is not sufficiently focussed on raising standards. Monitoring procedures are not explained in enough detail to ensure that staff know how and when to monitor. Monitoring that does occur is unsystematic and monitoring records are not used effectively to set targets or to inform self-evaluation. The school's self-evaluation is disorganised and inaccurate.

A significant number of parents rightly lack confidence in how the school is led and managed. They also feel that communication is poor and say that their enquiries or complaints are not followed up, that the headteacher is inaccessible and that the school's office is unwelcoming. The school's lack of improvement is partly because there has been a high turnover in staff. There is now relative stability, but continuing tensions between the headteacher and members of the governing body are hindering effective management. Some members of the governing body have recognised the problem. They have already begun working with the local authority to remedy the situation. However, there is insufficient impact at this stage and capacity to improve is inadequate.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	3
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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	2

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

4 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hook Junior School, Church View, Hook, RG27 9NR

Thank you for helping the inspectors when we came to your school. We enjoyed talking to you. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school. We were very impressed to see how polite and friendly you all were. We liked the way that you care for each other and the way that older pupils help to run clubs. We were pleased to see that you generally behave well and that you work hard in lessons – although some of you chatter a little too much while you are working. You told us that you feel safe at school and that there is little bullying. Your parents think that there is a lot of bullying and bad behaviour, so it would be helpful if you could tell them what you told us. You have some good clubs, especially for sport and so learn how to be healthy. You also know a lot about healthy food and could help yourselves to be even more healthy by being more sensible about what you choose to eat.

We think that you do reasonably well in your lessons but that you could make better progress. Teaching in the school varies too much in quality. You have had a lot of changes of headteacher over the last few years but we agree with your parents that the school leaders could have done more to make sure that teaching is good all the time.

We have asked the school to make sure that:

- school leaders work better to make sure that everyone in the school knows exactly what needs changing so that you can do as well as you should
- pupils, staff, parents and governors all work better together so that everyone is asked what they think and everyone knows exactly what they have to do
- teachers make better use of information about what you can already do to plan work that stretches you and to help them talk to you more about your learning
- teachers in charge of different subjects are helped to do a better job of making sure that those subjects are taught well

We are sure that if these things happen your school will quickly start to improve. Some inspectors will make a further visit to the school in a few months to check how well you are doing.

With best wishes to you all.

Sue Rogers, Lead inspector