



Cove Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116140
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290432
Inspection dates 15–16 November 2006
Reporting inspector George Rayner

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Fernhill Road
School category	Community		Cove
Age range of pupils	7–11		Farnborough GU14 9SA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01252542941
Number on roll (school)	289	Fax number	01252516644
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Caroline Pickup
		Headteacher	Mrs Hannah Dunn
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
7–11	15–16 November 2006	290432

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than most junior schools and is situated on the outskirts of Farnborough. Standards on entry can vary, but are average in most years. There is some variation in pupils' socio-economic circumstances, but for most these are advantaged. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with few at an early stage of speaking English. However, recently the proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds has risen. The school has Investors in People and Healthy Schools Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Its success in helping pupils to make good academic and personal progress is illustrated in the comment of one parent, who said, 'Since joining the school my child has gained confidence socially and intellectually.' The school's good care ensures that pupils act responsibly and feel safe and happy. Pupils eagerly take up the many opportunities that they have to play games and learn sports. The curriculum provides a variety of stimulating activities and teachers plan interesting lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy school. They respond well to the strong encouragement to be involved in school life and activities within the wider community. The recent increase in the number of pupils learning English as an additional language has presented the school with a new set of challenges. Whilst it is working with specialist agencies to meet these, the school is not yet fully effective in providing well for these pupils' personal and learning needs.

Good teaching and a good curriculum ensure that pupils achieve well and reach above average standards. Over recent years, achievement has been consistently very good in English and standards well above average. The school is now succeeding in raising standards in mathematics and science, so that these are securely above average. It has done this by improving the range and quality of its curriculum, the consistency with which pupils benefit from good teaching and the effectiveness of assessment in monitoring and supporting their progress. Although more able pupils are challenged very well in many lessons, this is not fully consistent across the school.

The very good leadership of the headteacher has provided the guidance the school has needed to make these improvements. She has worked very effectively to make the school one with a high degree of shared commitment by involving staff, making them feel that they have a valuable role to play and ensuring that they have the support that they need to carry out their work. As a result this is a school that knows itself well, has succeeded in securing good improvement and is clear about what it needs to do next. This shows that it has a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more able pupils are consistently challenged across the school.
- Improve provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well to reach above average standards by Year 6. They show their well above average English standards by writing with depth and imagination in a range of styles and situations. The 2005 Year 6 National Assessment results showed that standards were lower in mathematics and science, although on the threshold of being above average. The 2006 results for both subjects are significantly improved and are now securely above average. Pupils do not use their numeracy skills in real life situations

as well as they use their literacy skills. However, the school is helping them to improve this through activities such as analysing their test results. This work shows that pupils are also becoming good at assessing their own progress.

The school succeeds in ensuring that different groups of pupils usually achieve as well as each other. Careful tracking of the progress of pupils with learning difficulties makes sure that they achieve well. More able pupils make very good progress in many lessons, due to very good challenge, but this is not fully consistent in all lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development and well-being provide them with a firm foundation for the next phase in their education. Pupils show their enjoyment of school by attending very regularly. They often demonstrate their good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. For example, the school council recently efficiently judged a caption competition about healthy eating. Pupils take their responsibilities around the school very seriously. Elections to school and class council posts are closely fought. This is good preparation for pupils' future lives and the good training that the councillors have for carrying out their roles further enhances this. Pupils feel that this is a school in which, as one put it, '... children do the thinking, not just the teachers!'

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Although occasional incidents of poor behaviour occur, pupils feel safe in the school which they recognise encourages them to behave well and do their best. Pupils say they really like the way in which clubs give them many opportunities to learn new skills. They show this by enthusiastically joining in. Pupils develop an understanding and appreciation of the needs of others who are different from themselves. As they say, 'We need to be aware of diversity as when we go out and get jobs, we are going to be working with all sorts of different people'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan well and use a range of resources successfully to stimulate pupils' enthusiasm and interest. This helps pupils to develop good attitudes to work and results in good progress. Teachers question pupils well. Questions often encourage pupils to reflect on how to improve their work. Teachers use marking well to give pupils challenging, but realistic, targets for moving forward. This works particularly well in English, where each pupil has a writing pyramid. This identifies aspects of successful writing and pupils, with the help of their teachers, choose an aspect to target. Because this happens regularly and naturally during lessons, pupils develop good habits for assessing how well they are making progress. Research projects, such as a recent one on the Second World War, encourage pupils to learn

independently and provide a good opportunity for the more able ones to show what they can really do. This level of challenge is not fully consistent in all lessons, however.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Several issues, raised by the last inspection, have been addressed well. The time of the school day has been extended, so that pupils now spend the recommended time learning. All subjects now have a fair share of this. Teachers build opportunities for assessing pupils' progress into planning. This has improved the regularity with which they are able to monitor progress and helps pupils to be involved. Resources and planning for information and communication technology and for learning about other cultures have been significantly improved, so that pupils now make good progress in these. The school employs well-qualified specialists in music, art and sports to teach classes when their regular teachers have their weekly planning time. This means that these subjects make a strong contribution to the strength of the curriculum. The quality and range of trips, visits and well attended clubs provide very good enrichment. The school is working effectively to provide more cross-curricular activities for pupils to bring together what they learn in different subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for and guides its pupils well. Staff ensure that procedures for protecting children are robust and effective. Parents commented on how well this boosts their children's confidence and sense of security. The school understands how important to pupils' progress is the effective use of assessment information for guiding and supporting them. It has greatly improved the way it does this since the last inspection, so that it is now a significant strength. Consequently, teachers are able to identify quickly areas where pupils may need extra help. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good and involves pupils well in monitoring their own progress. They make good progress as a result.

Until recently, the school had limited experience of educating bilingual pupils. As a result, provision for pupils at early stages of learning English as an additional language has been reliant on the limited support available from specialist agencies. The school has identified this as a weaker area and has arranged for additional training for staff, as well as working with other local schools to improve the provision they make for such pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have paved the way for the school to move forward from being satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, to one that is now good and continuing to improve. The school has evaluated its performance accurately and

critically, so that it is clear about where it needs to improve. A key factor has been the way in which the school has involved staff by sharing responsibility and helping them to develop the capability and confidence to carry out their roles effectively. The result has been a high level of shared commitment and teamwork. At the time of the last inspection, subject leaders were insufficiently involved in monitoring and developing their areas of responsibility. Now they are well involved and work together as an effective team. The school has clear ideas about how it can further improve the contribution of middle leadership by developing a similarly strong pastoral team. Governors are well informed and support the school's leadership well, while willing to question and challenge it when necessary.

The school has used the requirement to give every teacher time away from the classroom to improve the quality and consistency of teaching. Teachers now have good opportunities to work together to share ideas and plan lessons. The impact has been all the greater because good training has given staff the confidence to try things out. This has resulted in teaching that is often imaginative and stimulating and a curriculum, which was satisfactory at the last inspection, but now has considerable strengths. Consequently, achievement, which was static for the first few years after the last inspection, is now showing significant 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 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	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?	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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	2
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 us to your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit. We could see that yours is a good school. Some of your parents told us that the school is good at helping you to learn and also to grow up well. We could see that they are right. Your parents help by making sure you come to school regularly and you help by being well behaved and very willing to work hard and join in. Some of you told us that this is because the teachers make lessons interesting and that the clubs and other activities are so enjoyable. Some of you told me that you really like the way they work hard to make lessons fun. You show this by behaving well and working hard. This helps your teachers a lot.

Because of your good teachers and your own very good efforts, you do well in all of your subjects. You do very well indeed in English. We thought that some of your writing was among the best we have ever seen. It was clear that you enjoyed doing it and we enjoyed reading it. In the past, pupils have not done quite so well in their Year 6 assessments in mathematics and science. It was good to see that you are catching up well in both of these though. If you continue to do this, you will be very good in all three subjects.

Your headteacher has made sure that your school has improved well in the last few years. All of the other adults help her well and they told me that they feel that they are able to take part in this, because the headteacher listens to their ideas. We have asked the school to make two more improvements. We saw the most able pupils being really stretched by their work in some lessons and we have asked the school to make sure it is as good in all lessons. We would also like the school to become better at helping pupils who learned another language before they learned English.

Very well done to you all.

George RaynerLead inspector