



Court Lane Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116185
Local Authority Portsmouth
Inspection number 290450
Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007
Reporting inspector Mike Thompson

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Hilary Avenue
School category	Community		Cosham
Age range of pupils	7–11		Portsmouth PO6 2PP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392 375444
Number on roll (school)	483	Fax number	02392 200709
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr B Greenwood
		Headteacher	Mrs S E Egglestone
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
7–11	13–14 February 2007	290450

© 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

Court Lane is a large, four-form entry school located in a residential area to the north-east of Portsmouth. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The school has achieved a number of awards, the most recent of which are the Gold Arts Mark, in recognition of its high level of provision in the arts, and the Becta Mark, for its provision in information and communication technology (ICT). Almost all pupils transfer from Court Lane Infant School, which shares the site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Court Lane Junior is a good school with many outstanding features.

The parents hold their school in high regard. Almost 200 returned the inspection questionnaires, and almost all of these were overwhelmingly positive. A number had written comments appended. One of which sums up the views expressed in many others when noting, 'This school is led by an extremely effective headteacher whose leadership style encourages a healthy learning environment for the pupils'.

The attainment of pupils on entry to the school at the start of Year 3 has risen in recent years. Assessments carried out in the adjacent infant school showed that the attainment of the pupils currently in Year 3 was well above average at the point of transfer. There are however, wide variations in the attainment of individual pupils when they start. The school successfully builds on this starting point. It is particularly good at broadening pupils' experiences, and ensures that they achieve well in all year groups. This is because they are taught well and the excellent curriculum provides them with a wide range of interesting and exciting activities. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards overall are well above the national average. The school's high expectations for all of its pupils in all areas of learning are evident, for example, in the quality of art work produced and the good standard of music seen in lessons.

The key to the school's success is the pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. The school develops its pupils as confident, caring, independent and thoughtful learners. This is borne out by the headteacher of the local secondary school, who commented, 'On induction day, pupils from Court Lane generally stand out as being smart, punctual, capable of organising themselves, and excited about learning'.

The pupils enjoy learning and appreciate their lessons. The teachers keep a close check on how well their pupils are doing. They are good at using what they know to ensure that their pupils make good gains in their learning. Although teaching is good overall, it varies from outstanding to satisfactory.

Court Lane is a truly inclusive school in which each child matters. All pupils are warmly welcomed and equally valued. They are exceptionally well cared for and feel safe and happy. The school provides excellent academic guidance for its pupils by setting clear and challenging targets for each of them to achieve. It is able to do this because it has developed comprehensive systems for checking on what individual pupils know and can do.

The driving force behind the school's success is its good leadership and management. In particular, the headteacher gives outstanding direction for the work of the school. She receives strong support from the committed and highly professional staff, and excellent governors. The school carefully monitors all aspects of its work. However, there are inconsistencies in the way in which the quality of teaching is monitored. These stem from variations in the skills of those carrying out the observations of teaching and learning. The school has made good progress since its last inspection,

and the way it has maintained high standards is a clear indication of its outstanding capacity for continuous improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning and the way in which it is monitored.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in sustaining high levels of performance. This stems from the positive culture for learning and the good teaching that are features in all classes.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because they are given good quality help in meeting their targets.

In 2006, standards in English were well above the national average, while standards in mathematics and science were above average. The school is working hard to close the gap between pupils' performance in English and mathematics. It is doing this by closely focusing on improving the attainment of those pupils who are currently just below the nationally expected level. The current group of pupils in Year 6 is on course to meet the challenging target set for its performance in English, but is unlikely to reach a similar target in mathematics. These targets reflect the school's very high expectations of its pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils talk enthusiastically about how much they enjoy school because, as they report, 'Teachers encourage us to work hard and do our best'. Attendance has been above average for several years. Pupils behave well because the school's code of conduct is clear and all adults work consistently to ensure that school rules are applied fairly.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because it is given a high priority across the school. For example an excellent assembly helped pupils reflect on their strengths and imperfections and how they might, through their own actions, take steps to improve. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They appreciate the needs of others less fortunate than themselves, and raise significant amounts for national and international charities through activities such as Red Nose Day. By the time they leave school they are confident and mature. Pupils' good skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, together with their independence and self-confidence, give them an excellent basis for the next phase of their education and for a future as life-long learners. Pupils take a pride in contributing to the day-to-day running of the school, for example through volunteering to be 'Court Lane Companions' and helping others in the playground whenever they are unhappy or need assistance.

Pupils know the importance of diet and exercise to healthy living and have a good awareness of how to stay safe.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching provides good challenges for pupils through the pace of lessons and range of interesting activities provided. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and most teachers manage their classes very well. Teaching assistants are largely deployed effectively, and the help they give pupils with learning difficulties enables them to make good progress. Teachers use regular checks on pupils' understanding very well when planning future learning. A particularly noteworthy feature is pupils' thoughtful assessment of their own learning and that of others. For example, having checked a classmate's writing about traffic congestion, one pupil wrote, 'Good. Next time try to use statistics e.g. traffic fumes contribute to 35% of global warming'. There are some inconsistencies in teachers' planning which have been identified by the school and are being addressed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is enhanced by good quality specialist teaching in French and music. Links between subjects are carefully planned, and help make learning interesting and enjoyable. There is very good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT, and computers are used well by teachers and pupils in many subjects. For example, pupils benefited from the interactive use of computers when revising their learning in a French lesson. There is a very wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities ranging from stamp collecting to many types of sport. Trips, residential visits, visitors to the school and special events such as Arts Week and Book Week provide extra dimensions to pupils' learning. Pupils regularly take part in local music festivals, community events and school productions. The recent award of a Gold Arts Mark acknowledges the school's excellence and expertise in the creative areas of music, dance, art and drama.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils. There are extremely clear procedures for ensuring their health, safety and welfare. The school works closely with parents and outside agencies, such as the local Community Improvement Partnership, to ensure that all pupils are extremely well looked after. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties are identified at an early stage, and very good measures are taken to meet their needs. Pupils feel secure in a safe, supportive environment in which they know they can seek help and advice whenever they need it. Teachers regularly monitor pupils' progress and set challenging targets

for their pupils, which help them to achieve well. Pupils know their individual targets and are fully aware of the next steps needed to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Through the headteacher's vision and dynamism, the school has an excellent team of teachers and is constantly seeking ways to improve through reflection and evaluation of all aspects of its practice. Management at all levels is effective. Those with management responsibilities are innovative and imaginative, for example in developing the excellent creative curriculum for which the school has received recognition from the local authority.

The senior managers of the school know its strengths and weaknesses well, and priorities for improvement are set out clearly in the school improvement plan. This thoughtfully reflects latest government initiatives, for example by linking developments in mathematics to pupils' future economic well-being. Senior managers regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning. However, these monitoring reports show that in some school observations the strengths and weakness noted in lessons are not reflected in the grades assigned.

The Governing Body makes an outstanding contribution to the work of the school. Governors act very effectively as 'critical friends' by asking searching questions. They scrutinise and monitor the school improvement plan very well, and help shape the direction of school development. Financial and other implications are rigorously analysed so that the school gets good value for money in all areas of its budget.

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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	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?	1
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	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	1
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

On behalf of the inspectors, I would like to thank you very much for being so helpful when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at some of your work.

We think that you go to a good school. There is so much we like about your school that I can't mention everything, so here is a list of what we think are the most important things:

- you do well in your work, and when you leave school at the end of Year 6 your results are better than those of most other schools; you should be very proud of this
- everyone in your school is friendly and welcoming; you behave well and get on really well with each other; we really like the way that you look after one another and think that the Court Lane Companions are doing a good job
- you learn a lot in lessons because the teaching is good; some lessons are excellent
- your teachers plan lots of interesting things for you to do; this is excellent
- all of the adults in your school make sure that you are really well looked after
- your headteacher does an excellent job and makes sure that you get a good education.

Even in a good school like yours there is always something that could be even better. So, we think that what needs to be done next is for the teachers to try to make more of their lessons excellent and for the school managers to improve the ways in which they check on how good your teaching is.

I am sure that you will continue to have great success in the future.

Mike Thompson

Lead Inspector