

Solent Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116193
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	290452
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI

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	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jonathan Stead
Headteacher	Mrs Julia Knowles
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2001
School address	Solent Road Drayton Portsmouth PO6 1HJ
Telephone number	023 9237 5459
Fax number	023 9220 0163

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Solent is a larger than average junior school with three forms of entry. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is below average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is slightly above average. The school runs 'out of school care sessions', which are for children aged 4 to 11 years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Solent Junior is a good school. Pupils enjoy their learning, behave well, make good progress and are safe and happy. As a parent said 'Solent is without doubt a happy, friendly and positive environment'.

Pupils' achievement is good overall. They usually enter the school with standards of attainment that are broadly in line with those expected nationally. The school has had a good track record of above average results at the end of Key Stage 2. In the 2006 Year 6 tests, the proportion of pupils attaining national expectations was not quite as high as usual. However, results were still higher than average in science but broadly in line with the national average in English and mathematics. The school has already recognised the need to support pupils earlier in making good progress in order to reach higher standards of attainment. As a result all pupils are now making better than average progress including those with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) and the more able.

The quality of teaching and learning overall is good. Pupils have access to a good range of interesting learning activities. Most teachers plan well and use good practical and stimulating activities to motivate pupils which support good progress. In some lessons teachers provide activities which are less challenging and this hinders the rate of progress.

Personal development and well-being are good. Relationships are friendly and collaborative. Pupils' behaviour is good. They take an active and interested role in lessons. They have developed good attitudes to being healthy and safe. As a result the school has been awarded the Healthy Schools Award and the Silver Sportsmark Award. Care guidance and support is good. Pupils enjoy their time at school. Their progress is monitored effectively and they have challenging targets which are met. The school has established good relationships with parents.

The curriculum is good. It is rich and relevant providing a wide range of experiences and activities for pupils to take part in. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils went on a field trip to investigate rivers. Year 6 were taking part in practical music led by a visiting music teacher in preparation for their 'arts week'. Modern foreign languages are taught across the school. Pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are developed and teachers plan to use these skills well within other subjects. As a result, the school achieved the Basic Skills Award.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and leadership team have established a strong collaborative approach to improving pupils' progress. This is improving achievement across the whole school. The school has a committed and reflective group of governors who support and challenge the school effectively.

The school has strong links with the community including extended services. Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed effectively and the school is well placed to continue improving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the good practice in raising standards and improving rates of progress in English and mathematics is maintained.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. When the pupils start at the school their standards are usually in line with those expected nationally but this varies. Until 2006, pupils' attainment in the tests for English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 were above the national average. In 2006 pupils continued to attain above average standards in science. However, attainment in mathematics and English was in line with national expectations. Higher attaining pupils did not attain as well as usual. The school has put in place effective strategies that give earlier support for pupils' needing to make more progress. As a result, the school's systems are able to accurately identify and support all pupils who are at risk of underachieving. This ensures that pupils make good progress across the school. Pupil progress is good because of the effective and rigorous tracking systems based on 'I can' statements. Pupils and teachers follow these to ensure that progress is consistent between and across each year group. The school sets challenging targets for all pupils, which are being met. These targets are based on secure teacher assessments which are effectively monitored and evaluated by the leadership team. This process supports a good rate of progress for all pupils, including the more able and those with LDD.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is well supported and their behaviour is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A good example of this is that the pupils know right from wrong and are able to support each other in developing positive relationships, for example using the 'friendship benches' at playtimes. Pupils enjoy their time at school and their attendance is above average. Pupils feel safe and the few incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively through strategies such as the 'bully-box'. Pupils have good knowledge of how to live healthy lifestyles and are keen to take part in the wide range of sporting activities provided by the school. Pupils are developing good group working skills and there are effective strategies to promote pupil's economic well-being. These include pupils being involved in creating bids for the development of the outdoor classroom.

The school effectively encourages pupils to take on responsibilities to support the smooth running of the school. Pupils' contribution to the community is good. For example, the school council is heavily involved in the improvements to lunchtime organisation and the school's environmental area. Pupils raise funds for a wide range of charities and Year 6 pupils organised the summer fair.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are keen to learn and actively engage in lessons because of the interesting activities most teachers plan for them. Lessons are directed at a good pace. Pupils have good collaborative skills working well in pairs and groups. For instance in a mathematics lesson, pupils were sharing data about their favourite food. In an English lesson, pupils were busily working together writing play scripts and acting them out.

Pupils make good progress in lessons and over time because of good teaching. Assessment information is used effectively in lessons by teachers. As a result, in books seen, teachers'

marking and written feedback to pupils identifies clearly how to improve their work. Pupils are involved in their learning because teachers use effectively the 'I can' statements. As a result, they know how to improve and what they need to do next. Most teachers have high expectations and encourage pupils to do their best. However, in a minority of lessons, pupils' progress is not quite as good as activities are not matched well to their needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils are given opportunities to contribute to the school and local community. There are residential trips for each year group and many local visits which are effectively linked to areas of learning. These make a significant contribution to the development of pupils' confidence and self esteem.

The success of the school's development of the creative arts is evident in the recent award of the Silver Artsmark for work in art, music, dance and drama. Pupils take part in the annual school production and benefit from a specialist music teacher. A high proportion of pupils take instrumental lessons. The school encourages pupils to become actively involved in projects such as environmental work leading to the Sustainable Business Award. There are a wide range of language opportunities available to all pupils. These include French for all year groups and German in Year 6. The pupils have access to a range of well-attended clubs. The school has a good programme for maintaining an effective and up-to date learning environment. This includes a well equipped ICT suite, recently built classrooms and exciting plans for a new music suite.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's care guidance and support of pupils is good. They say they know who to go to if they have a problem. The few cases of bullying are tackled effectively and pupils use the 'bully-box' as one means of communicating any worries. Child protection procedures are rigorous. There are effective systems for reporting and recording pupils' progress which identify pupils who are in need of additional support to maintain good progress. Pupils enjoy school because of the positive climate for learning. The school has robust risk assessment procedures which are efficient and effective. Pupils' health and safety is paramount and is catered for well both at school and for the wide variety of field trips.

The school has established and effective reporting and assessment links with the local infant and secondary schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and leadership team work together well. They have put into place effective strategies which have an impact on the progress of all pupils.

The recent restructuring of the leadership team ensures effective consistency across and between year groups. The team's good monitoring and evaluation of subject leadership enables teachers to be well supported in using a common approach towards the assessment of pupils' progress. The work of the governing body is good. They are actively involved with all initiatives.

They play a key role in the monitoring of the effectiveness of the impact of the recent re-structuring. They are kept informed and challenge when necessary. The school has good links with parents who are well-informed and included in their children's education. They consider the school to be an important part of the community. There are good links with outside agencies, and as a result, vulnerable pupils are well supported.

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Annex A

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	3
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.

Annex A

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

29 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Solent Junior School, Portsmouth, PO6 1HJ

Thank you for giving us such a good welcome during our visit. We really enjoyed seeing you in lessons and talking about your school. You told us you that your school is a good school and we agree.

You make good progress because your teachers work very hard to make your lessons interesting. I enjoyed watching the pupils in Year 6 practising their music for arts week and hope that Year 5 enjoyed their field trip.

You have a good headteacher and teachers who help her lead the school. They know what the school needs to do to become even better. You can help them by carrying on working hard and learning even more about English and mathematics.

The adults in your school do a good job of looking after you and you know how to eat healthily and stay fit through all your sporting activities. You also know how to look after each other by helping to make friends, using your friendship benches in the playground and staying safe.

To help the school to become even better, your headteacher, teachers and governors are already working on ways to help you carry on making good progress, especially in English and mathematics. I have asked them to keep on doing this so even more of you can reach higher standards.

We hope you all continue to be very happy in your school and learn as much as you can.

Best wishes to you all for the future.

John Seal Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools