



Hook Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116228
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290463
Inspection date 2 March 2007
Reporting inspector John Earish

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Church View
School category	Community		Hook
Age range of pupils	4-7		RG27 9NR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01256 764487
Number on roll (school)	276	Fax number	01256 761046
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs A Collier
		Headteacher	Mrs S A Willshire
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This large infant school admits pupils from a variety of social backgrounds, and the proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. It is very popular and has very recently acquired two temporary classrooms to provide additional places. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a small number from a variety of minority ethnic groups. When children start school, their skills and abilities are similar to those expected of four year olds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above that found nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Throughout the school, all members of the staff team are committed to maximising the intellectual, personal, social, physical and aesthetic development of all the pupils. This is acknowledged by the parents who are overwhelmingly positive in their support of the school. One parent wrote, 'The school provides an excellent learning programme supported by kind and approachable staff'. Another adds that 'It is a fantastic school where children enjoy learning in an environment of mutual respect between teachers, pupils and parents'.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The foundations of the school's success are built upon a rigorous appraisal of every aspect of its work and the accuracy of its judgements. Governors play a leading role in evaluating performance and providing effective support and challenge for the school. High standards have been sustained for several years and boys and girls of all backgrounds and abilities make excellent progress. Outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage helps young children settle quickly and effortlessly into school life. This provides an excellent preparation for their future life and learning.

This high achievement stems from the outstanding quality of the teaching and the excellent range of interesting and challenging learning tasks which motivates and inspires children to work hard. Teachers are very skilful at using assessment information to set tasks that are well matched to the pupils' varying needs and abilities, including those who have learning difficulties or are identified as higher attainers. Pupils are very clear about what they are to learn because teachers explain it very carefully to them. Adults are also very good at helping pupils assess for themselves how well they have achieved their tasks and exploring ways of improving their work. In addition, teachers use a very good range of learning styles with many opportunities for pupils to work individually or cooperatively. Pupils enthusiastically solve problems in mathematics although these skills are not used as widely in other subjects.

Personal development is outstanding. Pupils are very proud of their school and enjoy everything it has to offer. They behave extremely well, respect each other and quickly become confident, independent learners. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school's development. For example, the school council is seeking the pupils' views about behaviour, healthy eating and how well the teachers support them in school. This is helping the adults gain a greater insight into school life and to identify areas for improvement. This is contributing to maintaining the outstanding level of care and support given to pupils throughout the school. Parents are overwhelmingly confident that pupils are safe and well cared for while in school.

The school's track record at sustaining high achievement and their very clear view of what needs to be done next means that they have excellent capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Capitalise on pupils' skills at problem solving in mathematics and develop them in other subjects and activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. Children start school with skills and abilities that are broadly similar to those expected of four-year-olds. They make very good progress in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum and by the end of the Reception year most have achieved and exceeded the standards expected for their age.

Taken overall, standards at the end of Year 2 are high and have been significantly above the national average since 2000. Although standards in writing and mathematics were well above average in 2006, they were not quite as high as previous years. This was due to an unusually higher number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and did not represent any fall in pupils' excellent achievement. Challenging targets are set and often exceeded. Pupils are helped to make very good progress regardless of background or ability. There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils and more able pupils attain the higher level in national tests as a result of outstanding teaching and high expectations. However, there is no complacency. For example, the recent focus upon improving pupils' numeracy skills has successfully extended the range and quality of pupils' problem solving. This has resulted in a further increase in the numbers likely to achieve the higher levels in 2007.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils behave extremely well and show remarkable care and courtesy. They attend school very well, which is further evidence of their exceptionally positive attitudes towards their school. Relationships throughout the school are excellent, and pupils greatly value having extra responsibility and helping others. For example, members of the school council act as playground buddies and help those who find it difficult to make friends or are feeling unhappy. Pupils are also eager to participate in a very good number of extra-curricular activities. This is further evidence that they are happy and content. They are very well informed about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and staying safe. One child told the inspector 'He should stop drinking coffee or it will make him really hyper!' They speak enthusiastically about healthy eating and are very aware of the importance of drinking plenty of water and taking regular exercise. This has been recognised through the recent 'Enhanced Healthy Schools' accreditation. Pupils rapidly acquire literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills (ICT) that will equip them well for later life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The high achievement of pupils reflects the high quality of teaching and learning at the school. Teachers have extremely good relationships with pupils and high expectations of what they should achieve. They plan effectively to meet the needs of all learners and work very closely with teaching assistants. Consequently, pupils of all abilities have very positive attitudes to learning and achieve extremely well. Pupils are often given challenging activities which help them to develop their thinking and express their ideas, particularly those who are identified as higher attainers. In a Year 1 numeracy lesson, for example, pupils were engaged in lively discussions about the different combinations of ice-cream you could have, given a choice of three or four flavours. Pupils are always involved in assessing their own learning and teachers give them good written and verbal feedback on what they need to do to improve. Pupils were adamant that teachers made a big difference to their enjoyment of school and were really helpful. One said, 'They will always explain where you have gone wrong.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum that motivates the pupils and promotes their enjoyment of learning. The activities provide extremely well for the needs of all pupils, ranging from those with learning difficulties and disabilities to those who are high attainers. There is very good provision for learning the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Although there are many opportunities to solve problems in mathematics, problem solving is not used as extensively in other subjects. There is a very good balance in the Foundation Stage between the work chosen by the teacher and activities selected by the children. As a result, they grow in confidence and quickly become competent learners.

Pupils' personal development is very well planned through the school's personal, social and health education programme which effectively raises pupils' awareness of staying safe and keeping healthy. Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developing well and are used very well to extend their skills in other subjects. Interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to enliven classroom discussions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school gives its pupils outstanding care, guidance and support, a view endorsed by the overwhelming majority of parents. The pupils like their teachers and rightly appreciate their efforts to help them feel safe in and out of school. A close check is kept on their well-being and the pupils are taught how to take care of themselves and how to make healthy and safe choices. There are very effective methods for keeping track of pupils' progress. Pupils aim for personal targets based on these assessments.

Pupils find these particularly helpful as they help them assess their own progress and understand what they need to do to improve. There are very well developed systems to identify any individual pupils who are not making as much progress as they should, and immediate and effective action is taken to address underachievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher is a very effective leader and she is ably supported by her deputy and senior management team. They have very high expectations of what can be achieved, and show a strong determination to ensure that all pupils reach their potential. A clear and shared vision for improvement is based on rigorous self-evaluation, although on occasions high expectations mean some of the team's judgments are modest. This is translated into a comprehensive improvement plan which is reviewed regularly. The school has maintained the many strong features identified at the time of the last inspection and has continued to seek improvement. The governors steer the work of the school very effectively. They work successfully with the headteacher and act as an effective 'critical friend'. Statutory requirements are fully met and the school is exceptionally well placed to improve further.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
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?	1
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?	1
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	1
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	1
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

Thank you for welcoming me and being so helpful when I came to inspect your school. I am writing to you to tell you what I think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn.

Here are some of the things I liked most about your school:

- You make excellent progress in your work because you are thoughtful and work very hard in lessons.
- You are able to learn in a very friendly and caring school. You behave extremely well and help and support each other in all that you do.
- You listen very carefully to what your teachers have to say and try very hard in your lessons. You work very well on your own and also in groups.
- Your teachers spend a lot of time looking at what you have done in class and working out how to help you to make your work even better.

I think that your school is outstanding. By the time you leave at the end of Year 2 your work is much better than in most other schools. You should be proud of this.

You are very good at problem solving in mathematics. I have asked your teachers to find even more ways for you to use these skills in other subjects and activities. I'm sure that you are ready for this challenge!

I know that you will continue to work hard and I am sure that you will help your teachers to make your school even better. I hope that you have great success in the future.

Best wishes,

John Earish,

Lead Inspector.