



Locks Heath Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115989
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 296534
Inspection dates 26–27 September 2006
Reporting inspector Hilary Bonser

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Warsash Road
School category	Community		Locks Heath
Age range of pupils	4–7		Southampton SO31 9NZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01489584180
Number on roll (school)	340	Fax number	01489581406
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Sally McGrath
		Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Butcher
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2003		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 26–27 September 2006	Inspection number 296534
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most infant schools. Most pupils come from relatively advantaged backgrounds. About half of them come from beyond the immediate neighbourhood. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is about average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average and none is at an early stage of learning English. Standards on entry to the school are broadly average.

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 with several outstanding features where pupils of all abilities achieve well. Parents and pupils justifiably hold the school in high regard. It has responded effectively to the issues from the last inspection. In addition, standards in reading and writing have improved further and personal development and pupils' well-being are now excellent. However, there is no sense of complacency. As one governor commented, 'We've got good standards but want to get even better!' This very clear commitment, shared by all staff and governors, together with the improvements already made show that the school is well placed to make further progress. The school identifies its strengths, its areas for development and what is needed to remedy them very accurately. It is very aware that standards are not yet as high in writing and mathematics as in reading and is currently focusing attention on this.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has resulted in effective school action to ensure continuing improvement in standards and personal development. She has been very successful in promoting very strong team work among all staff which results in a consistently good quality of education in all year groups. Children receive a good start to their education in the Reception classes and make good progress throughout the school, reaching above average standards by the end of Year 2. Good teaching and rigorous assessment and tracking of pupils' progress contribute to this success. A particular strength is the way information is used to set half-termly challenging targets for each pupil and to provide wide ranging additional support where needed. Teachers are particularly good at keeping pupils focused on their targets and helping them to know how well they are meeting them. 'They help us to know what to get better at,' as a pupil explained.

Pupils enjoy an interesting, relevant curriculum that has been successfully adjusted to promote their creativity and problem solving skills across all subjects. The range and number of additional and extra-curricular activities is excellent. They add considerably to pupils' learning and enthusiasm for school. The school provides an outstanding level of care, guidance and support for pupils, which reflects the value it places on each child and the importance of fostering their confidence as learners. These are hallmarks of the school. As a result, pupils form very effective relationships, behave exceptionally well and really enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in the above average rate of attendance. The excellent partnership with parents, and other schools and agencies underpin this and support pupils' very positive attitudes. As one pupil put it, 'Lessons are a chance to do our best.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in writing and mathematics to match those in reading.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children do well in the reception classes and achievement throughout the school is good. Most reach and many exceed the learning goals expected by the end of their Reception year. A secure environment, very good induction arrangements and well taught lessons contribute to this. In Years 1 and 2, boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds continue to make good progress as a result of good teaching and attention to individual needs.

Standards are above average. They have improved further in reading and writing over the last two years and been sustained in mathematics, even though the number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities has increased. Standards are strongest in reading as a result of a whole school focus on this area and girls and boys of all abilities achieve well. Extending the range of writing opportunities and effectively involving the pupils in the assessment of their own work have helped raised standards in writing. As in mathematics, they are not yet as high as in reading where more pupils reach the higher levels. The school identifies pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities at an early stage and comprehensive provision helps them to achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are excellent and contribute significantly to their good achievement. They have great regard for their own and others' safety, for example when playing in the playground. Pupils develop an excellent awareness of the needs of others, for instance, raising significant amounts for charities to help those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and there are outstanding elements in their moral and social education. The school has successfully addressed weaknesses in pupils' understanding of the diversity of life in modern Britain and around the world.

Most pupils work very well independently and with others. Many contribute actively to the community as monitors, play leaders or representatives on the school council. Pupils' views and suggestions, such as how to improve the tidiness of the hall at lunch-time, are valued and acted upon. Above average standards in literacy and numeracy, together with pupils' growing independence and self-confidence, prepare them well for their future economic well-being. Pupils take full advantage of 'huff and puff' activities and a wide range of organised playtime games as they are very aware of the need to keep fit. They eat and drink healthily, and know why they choose fruit as a snack.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. In many lessons there are strong elements to the teaching, which are helping pupils of all abilities to make good progress. Teachers make clear to the pupils what they are expected to learn, and set varied, well matched tasks that engage and motivate them and usually keep up a brisk pace. This helps pupils to respond well to teachers' high expectations of concentration. The frequent use of paired or small group discussion helps pupils effectively to shape and express their ideas more easily. This also increases their confidence and skills in writing. Teachers plan and work closely with the learning support assistants. This enables them to help pupils very effectively, especially as they are used flexibly to give their skilled help to pupils who most need it. Teachers use their meticulous monitoring of individual progress to adjust what they teach to support and move pupils on in their learning. In some lessons in writing and mathematics, opportunities are missed to challenge some higher attaining pupils sufficiently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good, stimulating curriculum that meets all requirements. It takes good account of pupils' needs, although the provision for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage is limited. The curriculum is enhanced by the provision of specialist teaching in sports (especially swimming), French, design and technology and art. The programme for personal, health, social and citizenship education is very well thought out. It makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development, especially through its emphasis on extending pupils' self awareness and thinking skills. Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language and for those with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Gifted and talented pupils are supported well. The very good range and variety of visits, visitors and special events make a very strong contribution to pupils' social development as well as to their enjoyment and learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school places the highest priority on caring for pupils and promoting all aspects of their academic and personal well-being. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are thorough and all adults are vigilant in their implementation. From their earliest days in school, pupils are helped to develop secure, trusting relationships with all adults. Pupils know that adults are there 'to help us', to encourage them to work hard and do their best, and to support them if they have any problems. As a result, the school is a happy, secure and safe community where pupils thrive academically and where personal development is outstanding.

The school has excellent systems to track pupils' progress and to set targets for learning. These are reviewed regularly and shared with parents as well as pupils. Consequently, pupils know how to improve their work. The 'two stars and a wish' system introduced last year involves pupils very well in assessing their own progress in writing and is already increasing pupils' rate of progress. The school plans to build on the success of the scheme in other subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She has a very clear sense of direction that is fully focused on raising standards and achievement in all areas of pupils' learning. She has enthused and empowered all staff to contribute effectively to this through a strong and successful emphasis on staff development and supportive teamwork that is underpinned by comprehensive and rigorous monitoring and evaluation. This results in pupils achieving well and is reflected in the improvements in both personal development and standards since the last inspection

The deputy headteacher, year and subject leaders have made an increasingly effective contribution to school improvement as their roles have developed. They monitor pupils' learning and progress in detail to identify areas for improvement and are very aware of the need now to challenge more pupils to reach higher levels in writing and mathematics. The very rigorous and accurate process of self evaluation takes full account the views of staff, governors, parents and pupils. Governors are well informed through their monitoring activities and are instrumental in ensuring the school provides good value for money. They question, contribute to and support the work of the school effectively.

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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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	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?	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	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	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

I am writing to let you know what we found out when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We really enjoyed seeing you at work and at playtimes and liked talking to you. There are lots of things we like about your good school.

We liked these things the most

- You behave extremely well, work hard, enjoy school very much and get on together very well.
- Your headteacher runs the school very well indeed.
- The school looks after you really well and, as some of you said, the adults are always there to help you.
- The school provides many interesting and exciting things for you to do.
- You understand the importance of eating the right things and taking plenty of exercise.
- The school listens to you when you suggest how things could get even better.
- We agree with you that your teachers are good at helping you to improve your work and do your best.

We have asked your teachers to help some of you get even better at writing and mathematics.

Thank you again.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Bonser

Lead Inspector