

# Siskin Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116172
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	301276
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Sanderson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	142
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Susan Barton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Sean Connor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 September 2005
<b>School address</b>	Nimrod Drive Gosport PO13 8AA
<b>Telephone number</b>	02392 583029
<b>Fax number</b>	02392 501713

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Siskin Junior school has declined in size in recent years and is now smaller than average. The school serves an area in which there are high levels of social disadvantage. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above that found in most schools. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the number of pupils whose first language is not English is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The school runs a range of extended services including an after school club, a breakfast club and a variety of adult learning courses. It also manages the Rowner Sports Park.

When the school was last inspected two years ago it was placed in special measures.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Siskin Junior School provides pupils with a satisfactory education. The school has been through a turbulent period during the past two years with a number of staff changes. The headteacher has led the school effectively during this time. He has been well supported by other senior teachers, who work well as a team. The issues raised at the previous inspection have been addressed. A major priority for the school has been to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Robust systems for monitoring and sharing good practice combined with some new good teaching appointments have ensured that teaching and learning have improved. The overall quality is now satisfactory with some good practice in the school. In good lessons teachers make effective use of assessment information to set work that is appropriate for all abilities of pupils in the mixed age classes. However, this is not always the case and some lessons lack sufficient challenge for more able pupils or do not provide enough support for those pupils who find the work difficult.

Targets set for pupils are now suitably challenging and these have raised their level of expectation. The headteacher has led the development of a new pupil assessment and tracking system well. This enables school leaders to track the progress of pupils against their targets. If any pupils are identified as not making sufficient progress then appropriate support is provided for them. These improvements are beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards. Current Years 6 pupils have just received their Key Stage 2 test results. These indicate that standards have improved in English, mathematics and science since last year. However, the standards attained by boys in writing are significantly lower than that achieved by girls. Although overall standards are still exceptionally low, given the attainment of pupils when they enter the school achievement is now satisfactory.

A new and effective behaviour management system has been introduced by the deputy headteacher. The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is now satisfactory. Pupils say that they like the calmer, more friendly atmosphere within the school. They feel safe and enjoy school. The leadership team have developed a number of strategies to improve attendance. These again are having a positive impact and attendance is improving. However, attendance remains well below the national average and this is still having a negative impact on pupil achievement. The school cares for pupils well particularly vulnerable pupils. The curriculum has been improved and now satisfactorily meets the needs and interests of pupils.

The school has been on a journey of improvement over the past two years. Teaching and learning, the curriculum, behaviour and attendance have all improved. These improvements are impacting positively on the progress made by pupils. The leadership team are well aware of the issues that they still need to address and the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the percentage of good lessons by ensuring that all teachers match work more closely to the abilities of all pupils.
- Raise standards particularly in boys' writing.
- Improve attendance.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below the national average. Standards at the end of year 6 have been exceptionally low for a number of years. However, the progress made by pupils and the standards attained have been increasing during the last year. This is due to improved teaching and the development of effective systems to track pupil progress and provide support to those pupils who are underachieving. Recently received Year 6 national test results indicate that there has been a large rise in standards this year although they remain exceptionally low. Given the pupils' attainment on entry to the school they are now making satisfactory progress.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are similar. However, fewer Year 6 pupils achieved the higher levels in mathematics than in English and science. The standards achieved by boys in English are below those achieved by girls. This is particularly true in writing. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and all other groups of pupils is satisfactory.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They have a satisfactory understanding about living in a diverse community. One pupil said when talking about other pupils with different beliefs 'We take them for who they are'. Behaviour has improved a great deal since the last inspection and is now satisfactory both in lessons and around the school. Most pupils behave well because there are clear strategies to encourage pupils to behave sensibly. The staff manage well the few pupils who find it hard to conform. The number of exclusions has declined significantly. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and any incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils feel they are well cared for and enjoy school. Attendance has improved but it is still well below the national average. The school has instigated systems to encourage pupils to come to school regularly, for example, the 'I love learning at Siskin Junior School' pencils which are awarded for good attendance. Their adoption of healthy lifestyles is satisfactory because of participation in a range of physical activities, drinking water regularly and by understanding what constitutes a good diet. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community by taking on responsibility for jobs around the school, participating in the school council and by being play leaders at the local infant school. Although pupils' personal skills are satisfactory, their literacy, numeracy and other basic skills are not and so preparation for their future economic well-being is inadequate.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. Lesson objectives and success criteria are routinely shared with pupils and are visible at the front of the class. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to good effect to plan lessons well. They make good use of interactive whiteboards to capture pupils' attention and

aid their explanations. In the better lessons a range of active strategies are used to engage students and involve them in their learning. Assessment data is also used well to match tasks to the range of abilities in the mixed age classes. However, this good practice is not yet consistent across the school and some lessons lack challenge for all pupils. These lessons also lack pace and so pupil learning is satisfactory rather than good. Learning support assistants provide effective support to those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities enabling them to make satisfactory progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is broad and balanced and subjects are being meaningfully linked so that pupils enjoy learning. Visits and visitors, like the Rainbow Theatre Group, increase pupils' enjoyment and offer them a richer experience of many subjects. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in lessons and assemblies through discussions in collaborative work and by posing and answering questions. The school has recently identified the need to develop its curriculum specifically to help boys to improve their writing. It is being adapted to include more visual materials, including video to provide stimulation for them. In order to improve literacy skills, the school has included provision for teaching phonics and guided reading more regularly. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is satisfactory and has recently been improved to address more accurately pupils' needs. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are learning French. The school recognises that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to investigate in science and is currently improving the science curriculum to make it more practical in nature. Whilst there are some clubs, the school is seeking to improve its provision so that pupils can develop their skills and interests after school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care is good, particularly with regard to vulnerable pupils who need help with dealing with their emotions and behaviour. Pupils who have attended the 'Rocking Rockets' nurture group have subsequently gained in confidence so that they can now work successfully alongside their fellow classmates. Families value the work of the home school link worker as an important point of liaison between them and school. The school has all the necessary safeguards in place to ensure pupils' health and safety. Academic guidance has improved and is now satisfactory. Pupils' progress is tracked so that any pupils who need some extra help are identified early and appropriate support provided. Some teachers mark pupils work well, giving guidance on how to improve, but this is not consistent throughout the school. As a consequence pupils are not always clear about how to improve the standard of their work. The school has put in place good transition arrangements to facilitate successful transfer from the local infant school and to local secondary schools.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has put in place effective strategies to address the issues raised at the previous inspection. He has been well supported by the leadership team. There has been a clear focus on improving teaching and learning. This is now paying dividends in terms of improved pupil behaviour and rising pupil achievement.

The systems of self evaluation are now satisfactory. An annual cycle of self evaluation has recently been developed providing the leadership team with a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The headteacher has re-established the system of performance management of teachers. The targets set for teachers within this process are now clearly linked to the school improvement plan. These systems are new and their full impact on pupil achievement has yet to be seen.

The role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and improving teaching and pupil progress in their subject areas is developing. There is some good practice, particularly in English and mathematics, however this is not yet the case in all subject areas.

The governing body has been strengthened since the previous inspection. It is now much more clearly aware of its roles and responsibilities. The headteacher provides the governors with detailed information about key indicators of school performance. This is helping the governing body develop its role of holding the school to account as well as giving it support.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

20 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Siskin Junior School, Gosport, PO13 8AA

Thank you for all your help when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons. Now that we have finished the inspection, I am writing to you to tell you of our findings.

You told us that you feel the school has improved a lot during the past two years. We agree with you. Your headteacher and other senior teachers in the school want the best for all of you. They are working well together to make the school even better.

You welcome the fact that behaviour has improved both in lessons and around the school. The school now has a calm, friendly atmosphere.

You told us you feel safe in school and that incidents of bullying are now rare. You also feel that teachers and support staff in the school look after you well.

Your teachers work hard to prepare some interesting lessons for you. As a result teaching in the school has improved and you are now making satisfactory progress in your learning.

All these improvements mean we have decided that your school no longer needs any extra help to get better. We have therefore removed your school from special measures. Which is very good news.

Although your school has improved there are some things that will make it even better and you can help with this. Although attendance has improved some of you do not attend as often as you should and this affects how well you do in your work. There are three ways in which we have asked the school to improve further:

- ensure that you receive good teaching in more of your lessons
- ensure that the standard of your work gets even better, especially boys' writing
- continue to work with you and your parents and carers to improve your attendance.

Thank you again and I wish you all good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Sanderson Her Majesty's Inspector