

Ringwood Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115943
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312116
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Alan Jarvis

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	365
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carol Hazell
Headteacher	Mrs Sally-Ann Evans
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	Hightown Road Ringwood BH24 1NH
Telephone number	01425 473 554
Fax number	01425 471 215

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ringwood Junior is a larger than average school. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities or statements of special educational need is below that typically found. The school has received several national awards including Investors in People, Healthy Schools (Enhanced Status) and the Naecemark for ICT. The headteacher took up post in April 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ringwood Junior is a good school with some outstanding features. Parents hold the school in warm regard with many saying, 'My children are really happy at school and do well.' The recently appointed headteacher has quickly made her mark, supported by an able senior leadership team and an active team of governors. Her ambitious vision for the future has been agreed and developed. This is integral to the carefully prioritised plan for improvement that is quickly helping to move the school forward.

The school is especially good in caring for its pupils and helping them mature. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, is first class. Excellent pastoral care and enrichment of the curriculum underpins this. Pupils relish coming to school. Many benefit from participating in the exciting range of clubs, sporting activities, visitors to the school and visits on offer. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are great ambassadors for the school and take great pride in their accomplishments. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community through the work of the school council, various fund raising activities and links with a South African school. Music, French and information and communication technology (ICT) feature well in the curriculum. Very strong links with other agencies, close links with parents and carefully tailored support helps vulnerable pupils very well. This complements the good provision and support provided for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities who achieve well.

Some recent initiatives have borne fruit. Results for Year 6 pupils in the 2007 tests showed a marked improvement on previous years. Standards were well above average with the English results being particularly impressive. This represents good achievement from their starting points. This was a result of good teaching, a strengthening of the curriculum and better use of assessment data in planning which added bite to learning. Standards are a little lower this year but still above average. The work of current pupils shows that the good improvement of 2007 is being maintained. Swift follow up of absences has ensured a rise in attendance to an above average level.

Decisive action is being taken to remedy a small number of areas that need improvement. Senior leaders have correctly identified that standards in mathematics, whilst still above average, are not as high as in English and science. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, progress in lessons, whilst rapid in Year 6, has been satisfactory rather than good in some classes in Years 3, 4 and 5. Secondly, whilst boys are keen to participate and achieve well, a small minority of girls are not as involved and lack confidence especially in calculations. Whilst there are clear signs of pupils in more classes making good progress, the full impact of initiatives is yet to be realised throughout the school. Leaders are also rightly keen to build on the good learning and provide more activities across the curriculum that develop independence. Additionally, they are aware of inconsistencies in how well teachers help pupils identify how well they are doing and what they need to do to get better.

The school's partnership with outside agencies, other schools and local businesses is very well developed. The headteacher and governors are keen to strengthen the already good partnership with parents. The school has a good capacity to improve because self-evaluation involves staff at all levels and developments have a clear and successful focus on raising standards and achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics to the higher level obtained in English and science and ensure achievement is good in all classes, particularly for girls.
- Ensure all teachers enable pupils to assess their own work well and plan their next steps in learning.
- Provide more opportunities for independent learning across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards have been steadily rising. Following a dip in 2006 standards rose significantly in 2007 and were well above average. This represents good achievement, including that for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, from a broadly above average starting point at the start of Year 3. The main success was in English. Here standards were very high. This resulted from good teaching, particularly in Year 6, and the high priority given to reading, handwriting, spelling and creative writing. The very strong focus on practical work has ensured standards in science have been consistently above average for several years. Boys do well in mathematics. However, this was the least improved subject because of the slower progress in a few classes in Years 3, 4 and 5 by a small minority of girls who lacked confidence in calculations. Current standards are above average, again with English being particularly strong. This reflects good progress from a lower starting point in Year 3. Many more pupils are now making good progress in mathematics and senior leaders have pinpointed where improvement is needed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Parental support of the school's values and expectations underpins this. The very effective school council also play their part and say, 'We have recently renegotiated the golden rules and expect all pupils to follow these'. Pupils support each other very well by acting as buddies or play rangers who befriend anyone who looks lonely. They are well prepared for life in a multicultural society. The way in which they welcome and value children who have joined from schools in Europe exemplifies this well. Pupils show a high level of spirituality in their responses in assembly and writing in art, music and English. Their support of many local charities and concern for the environment reflects their high moral values and awareness of the importance of supporting the community.

Pupils speak enthusiastically of the wide range of clubs, trips out, and residential visits on offer. These have considerably broadened their interests and developed their very good social skills. They have a good understanding of what is meant by a healthy lifestyle. Many benefit from the good range of physical activities and often seek out the healthy food provided. They show a good understanding of fire and road safety and the importance of following rules to ensure the safety of everyone. Pupils' good progress in their basic skills, including ICT, and their good collaboration means they are well prepared for their move to secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers throughout the school have good expectations of what pupils can do, pitch activities well and ensure these are well matched to needs of different pupils. Specialist teaching in French and music is very strong. The increased foci in mathematics on calculations and providing well-pitched activities are starting to pay off. More attention is being given this year to ensuring that girls as well as boys are fully involved in lessons. Good pace and a calm and effective climate for learning are evident in all classes. Pupils' excellent behaviour and clear classroom expectations support this. Day to day marking is good and helps focus learning, especially in English and science. Good opportunities for independent learning are a regular feature in some subject areas, such as in science and ICT but there are too few opportunities in other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

An excellent range of visits, visitors and additional activities enrich the curriculum especially in music, sport and French. This promotes pupils' personal development, enthusiasm for school and learning very effectively. There are particular strengths in the curriculum for English and science that contribute to pupils' good achievement. For example, very good use is made of opportunities in other subjects for pupils to extend their writing skills and scientific investigations feature highly. The school is currently reshaping the mathematics curriculum to ensure greater consistency in planning and a more active approach to learning. Planning takes good account of pupils' differing needs and abilities, including gifted and talented pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The high quality programme of personal, health and social education is recognised in its enhanced Healthy Schools' Award.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral provision is exceptionally caring and supportive. Teachers know pupils very well and are quick to help when needed. The very good deployment and expertise of support staff helps pupils learning difficulties and disabilities flourish and fully participate in school life. Very good procedures operate when pupils join or leave the school. These work particularly well for pupils who need that 'extra bit of support'.

Teachers make good use of assessment and other information to track and identify pupils' learning needs. Senior leaders are aware that some aspects of academic guidance are not fully in place. In particular, they are aware that some teachers are not confident in helping pupils assess their own work and plan their next steps in learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The recently appointed headteacher, and her able senior leadership team, have quickly created a shared vision and a clear sense of direction. This is continuing the drive to raise standards. Their good leadership and management is seen in sustained very high levels of personal care

and pupils' personal development together with a marked improvement in standards and achievement last year. A rigorous self-evaluation has enabled school leaders to celebrate the school's strengths and pinpoint accurately aspects of mathematics, developing independence in learning and improving pupil' self-assessment as key areas for improvement. These are deliberately small in number and prioritised so as not to dissipate teachers' energies in tackling too many areas at once. Staff say, 'Teamwork is very good and each of us knows exactly what to do to help drive up standards'. Subject leaders have good action plans to secure further improvement. The initiatives underway in mathematics are already starting to bear fruit and are a clear example of the good leadership and management in many subjects. Challenging targets are set which are constantly refined and are usually exceeded. An effective team of governors is working closely with 'staff partners' and is keen to improve communications with parents.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

15 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ringwood Junior School, Ringwood, BH24 1NH

This letter is to tell you about what we found out when we recently visited your school. Thank you all for making us feel so welcome, talking to us and showing us your work. You told us you really liked your school. We judge Ringwood Junior to be a good and improving school. We now know why. This is what we really liked.

- You make good progress in your academic work. In the national tests in Year 6 standards are above average. Well done!
- Staff care for you exceptionally well and your personal development is first class.
- Your behaviour is excellent. The way you conduct yourselves, help in school and support the local community is a credit to your parents and your school.
- You really enjoy your lessons and the school provides you with a first class range of clubs, visits, residential visits and visitors.
- You like your teachers; in turn, they teach you well and are working very hard to make your school even better.
- We were particularly pleased to see how well you welcome new pupils and how those in Year 3 or from abroad said they were helped by you to settle in.

This is what needs to be done to improve your school further.

- Help you reach higher standards in mathematics especially in calculations and particularly for the girls in Years, 3, 4 and 5. So work very hard in your maths lessons and listen carefully to what you have to do.
- Provide more opportunities for you to work independently across the curriculum. You must try to do your best when these are provided.
- Help you to think through how well you are doing and how to plan your next steps in learning. You can help by thinking about what you need to do in each subject to improve.

We wish you all the very best for the future. I hope you have a very happy Christmas and get the very best out of your time at Ringwood Junior.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Alan Jarvis

Lead inspector