

Orchard Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115977
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312129
Inspection date	13 November 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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carolyn Millar
Headteacher	Mrs Julia Pillon
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2003
School address	Water Lane Dibden Purlieu Southampton SO45 4SB
Telephone number	02380 843705
Fax number	02380 840922

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: Achievement and standards, teaching and learning, curriculum, leadership and management. Evidence was collected from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, curriculum and planning documents, observation of the school at work, interviews with staff, the chair of governors, discussions with pupils and analysis of parents questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the this report.

Description of the school

Orchard Infants is a larger than average infant school. Most pupils have favourable social and economic backgrounds. Few pupils come from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils with learning difficulties, disabilities or a statement of special educational need is below average. The head teacher took up post in January 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Orchard Infants is an outstanding school. From the time they start at the school to the time they leave, pupils at Orchard Infants have fun and learn. The school has maintained a high level of performance and quality of provision since the last inspection. It works well with its partners including parents. Many parents echoed the ones that wrote: 'Orchard...is a very well run school that always provides a positive and fun learning environment' and; 'the school has a lovely atmosphere. I wouldn't want to send my children anywhere else'. The school works very hard to ensure pupils have a smooth transition between the contributory pre-schools and the neighbouring junior schools.

The jewel in the school's crown is its outstanding curriculum. It is integrated, relevant and varied but most of all, first-hand and fun. The school has developed a rich seam of fundamental values, which drive the learning activities. They encourage all pupils to develop their 'emotional intelligence, independence, thinking skills, interdependence, personal intelligence and creativity'. As a parent said, 'the school offers a fantastic, exciting curriculum'. The clear expectations of staff are very apparent in the creative planning. A range of themes are planned to excite and capture pupils imaginations in order to develop their social, emotional and basic skills. Year 2 pupils were investigating parachutes. To do this they were using high-level literacy, numeracy and scientific skills to identify the best materials for a parachute which would safely support the fall of a visiting Martian. Children in Reception were experiencing the delights of feeling flour and different types of beans in sauces. They were also developing their writing skills by drafting shopping lists to visit the local supermarket. These highly effective practical activities enable pupils to be highly engaged in their learning. It effectively supports the good progress pupils make throughout the school. The school has an exciting approach in its provision for music, art and physical education and French. Pupils also enjoy a range of stimulating visits to support their learning including going to local shops and museums.

Personal Development and Well-being is outstanding. There are strong relationships with each other and adults. As a result, pupils' social development is a strength. There is little bullying and early signs of any are tackled effectively. Pupils say they feel safe and know who to go to if they are upset. A pupil told the inspector 'teachers look after you....they help you'. Another said 'I love my teachers'. School encourages pupils to be very healthy through a strong focus on healthy food, achieving the Healthy Schools Standard, and developing their sports skills both in lessons; and in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils really enjoy coming to school. Attendance is high and the school has efficient systems in place to monitor this. A parent wrote 'our children can't wait to come to school...that speaks volumes'. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding because of the high level of engagement in their learning, practical activities and good relationships.

High level of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills support outstanding development of pupils' economic well-being. Pupils approached the deputy headteacher to become involved in a charity to provide shoes for people in Africa. They plan events and make an extensive positive contribution to community. The school encourages a very good understanding of different cultures, religions and traditions by introducing pupils to activities that involve food and celebrations. The practical and engaging curriculum uses the religious education syllabus well to support this.

Leadership and management are outstanding, it is seen at all levels within the school and staff are aware of what the school's strengths and areas for improvement are. They work together as a cohesive and efficient team for the enjoyment of the pupils. They all have a deeply embedded understanding of what the school needs to do to continue to improve. The very effective and active governing body support this. They have a clear, strategic and sensitive approach and are not complacent. The leadership team ably led by the recently appointed headteacher have a clear focus on developing the exciting, innovative and practical curriculum without losing sight of maintaining the high standards of pupils' attainment. Their own effective self-evaluation has highlighted the need to increase the proportion of pupils attaining above average results at the end of Key Stage 1. As a result, the school has outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

The systems for safeguarding pupils are very robust and well organised. The school goes to great lengths to ensure pupils' health and safety. The school site is safe, well maintained and secure. A parent commented that their child 'loves coming to school and always feels safe'. The school informs parents very well about pupils' progress and a high proportion recognised this in the parental questionnaires. The school has put into place highly effective early intervention strategies to support pupils who need extra help. The school is effectively developing its provision for more able pupils to increase the proportion of pupils that are capable of attaining above average results at the end of the Year 2.

The school's long-standing track record for ensuring an above average proportion of pupils attaining high standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics has been maintained. This is because the school has provided clear and practical support for individual pupils' progress whilst encouraging the very best of the school's curriculum to continue to flourish. The high standards have been a strong feature of the school over a long period of time. This is because of the good teaching they receive and, recently because the curriculum has become even more interesting and stimulating. There is good provision and support for the more able. The school recognises that the proportion of pupils who could attain above average results in reading writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 1 could be even higher.

Teachers work hard to create stimulating learning environments in all the classes. Teachers and teaching assistants plan well together to produce effective plans that match the different learning needs of pupils. This ensures that pupils receive consistent and high quality lessons across and between the year groups. Classrooms are packed with stimulating displays including rockets, aquariums and shops. Pupils' learning is inspired and enthused by the high quality activities on offer. Teachers employ practical, first hand experiences for all pupils. As a result pupils are challenged to think and work hard. This practical approach to learning allied to robust assessment systems supports pupils in making good progress. A parent wrote that their child 'is progressing well and I feel that this is due to the great teaching staff at this school and the way in which they teach the children'. Teachers recognise there is still some work to do in providing challenge for some of the more able pupils in order to support higher levels of above average attainment.

Parents' views about the school are extremely positive and supportive. They feel involved in their child's learning and the life of the school: as one said 'Parents are offered lots of opportunities to be involved in their children's learning'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The provision is outstanding because of the extremely good leadership. This encourages children to develop high levels of independence and they are able to access the well-managed resources. Children are happy and keen to come to school. Their laughter is heard throughout the setting. They have fun and become absorbed in their learning both in and out of doors. The exemplary practice and teamwork ensures that recording and reporting systems are highly consistent and based on regular and accurate observations. This enables children to make good progress throughout all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- To increase the proportion of pupils who attain results that are higher than the national average in reading writing and mathematics.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

26 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Orchard Infant School, Southampton, SO45 4SB

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I came to visit your school. I really enjoyed visiting your classes and talking with you about your learning. I would like to tell you what I found out about your school.

I think that Orchard Infants is an outstanding school. You are very lucky to go to a school where everybody cares for each other, where you feel very safe and all the adults work hard to make your school look so bright, colourful and exciting. By doing this, you learn a lot and make good progress. You behave very well and really enjoy coming to school.

You told me how much you loved the adults who worked with you and who help you to learn. Very many of you do well in your reading writing and mathematics and know what your targets are to learn even more. Your teachers have worked hard to plan very exciting lessons. I really enjoyed watching the children in reception getting their hands messy in the flour and beans! I hope that the parachute tests were finally successful and you were able to work out how help Martin the Martian slow down his falls. I think that your teachers could help some of you get even higher reading, writing and mathematics results at the end of Year 2 and I know they are already planning how to help you do this soon.

I hope that you continue to work hard and keep enjoying school. Thank you once again for letting me see your school.

Yours Sincerely

John Seal

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools