

Orchard Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115988
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312134
Inspection date	12 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine Leonard
Headteacher	Mr Robert Carson
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
School address	Water Lane Dibden Purlieu Southampton SO45 4SB
Telephone number	02380 843162
Fax number	02380 207157

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, assessment information, documents, interviews and discussions. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: pupils' achievement, the impact of school's key priorities in teaching and learning and the school's care, support and guidance for its pupils. 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 this report.

Description of the school

Orchard is a larger than average junior school. Most pupils have favourable social and economic backgrounds. Few pupils come from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils with learning difficulties are below average and mainly include pupils with difficulties in specific learning (dyslexia) together with a few with moderate learning, behavioural, emotional and social and speech language and communication.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Orchard Junior is a good school. Standards are well above average and pupils make good progress. A high proportion of parents returned inspection questionnaires and their comments were overwhelmingly positive. Words such as 'Great!', 'Wonderful!', 'Fantastic!', 'Excellent!' and 'Fabulous!', frequently peppered their written views on the school. Parents highlighted the school's happy ethos and positive learning environment and the way it encourages the pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Most echoed the sentiments of one parent who wrote 'The staff have worked really hard to make the school a fun, stimulating place to learn - my son is due to leave at the end of term and we will miss a fantastic school.'

Standards over the past four years have been significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with specific learning difficulties and those who are gifted and talented make very good progress because teachers, with the support of learning assistants, are adept at setting tasks at levels that encourage creative thinking and an integrated approach to the curriculum. It has led, for example, to the enthusiastic involvement of a group of older pupils in establishing a conservation project, in partnership with the Prince's Trust, which includes the design of an outside classroom based on a decked platform overlooking the wildlife pond. The school recognises, however, that in the past year a small number of average attainers have fallen marginally short of their expected targets in English and mathematics. Systems for assessment and target setting are good but the school recognises that more frequent monitoring would help teachers to intervene much earlier, especially in Years 3 and 4, when pupils' achievements fall below their potential. The school has also set up 'catch-up' groups in Years 5 and 6 for those at risk of not making the expected progress especially in English and mathematics. The school recognises that more frequent monitoring and assessment of progress is necessary for these pupils. However, the school is currently on course to meet its challenging targets at the end of Year 6.

Teaching and learning are mainly good. There are a few outstanding lessons which enable boys and girls to develop good independent learning skills. There are also lessons where, although teaching is satisfactory, topics and tasks are presented in a less inspiring way than in many other sessions. There is a good mix of age and experience. Newly qualified and established teachers receive a high level of support from the senior leadership group. Good teamwork, enthusiasm and consistency in applying school policies between teachers enable pupils of all ages and abilities to enjoy learning. Marking is regular and gives helpful guidance on the next steps in pupils' learning. Year teachers plan and work well together on providing opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills across the full range of topics and subjects. For example, in the information and communication technology (ICT) suite a Year 3 class used some quite complex art software to explore the tropical climate and Aboriginal culture of the Australian New Territories. The well-balanced school curriculum includes a broad and interesting range of work. The school sets regular homework in order to support pupils' learning.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils of all ages and ethnic groups feel very safe in the school. Behaviour is exemplary. The care, concern and respect that pupils show for each other and to adults in the school are excellent. Parents and pupils are very aware of what constitutes healthy foods as well as the importance of an active lifestyle. Year 5 pupils talked excitedly about their forthcoming school journey when they would be spending two nights sleeping under canvas. Contact with its nearby infant and secondary school neighbours and with the local community is extensive and adds significantly to the breadth of

pupils' learning experiences. For example, pupils are helping to design a play area for the local Parish Council, It prepares them well for future adulthood and their economic well-being.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The positive learning environment is a reflection of the outstanding levels of care and concern shown by all adults for the personal development and well-being of each pupil. Very clear school procedures to counter bullying or name-calling are followed closely. Pupils confirm that they tell a teacher or the headteacher straightaway should they occur and that such incidents are dealt with very quickly and effectively. The school successfully meets the emotional needs of pupils who enter the school with poor attitudes to learning or who have specific disabilities such as autism. Two carefully trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistants provide additional counselling when needed. Attendance is good.

The school council provides a very effective voice for the pupils to contribute to school matters. Their representatives carry out their roles in a mature and responsible way and keep their peers well-informed. As well as the conservation area noted above, other recent initiatives include introducing more imaginative playground markings, and bidding for netball kits for the school teams. Pupils are successfully encouraged to take an interest in events beyond their local area. The contributions by pupils of all ages in an assembly on the devastating effects of the Burmese cyclone demonstrated a keen empathy for the suffering of the people in that area.

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the experienced headteacher is a major strength and is focused on improving the provision to promote pupils' progress in learning, enjoyment and the standards they attain. The overwhelming view of parents and pupils of the headteacher's leadership qualities is summed by one parent as, 'His charismatic presence around the school and one who is loved and respected by all pupils - a role model for headteachers!'. He is ably supported by his deputy and senior staff and shows great skill in making all adults feel valued. The strong emphasis on enhancing pupils' personal qualities has been crucial in the school's continued success. Middle leaders are good although there is further scope for greater consistency in monitoring the degree to which teachers provide more effective academic guidance. Governors play an important role in the life of the school and have a regular programme of visits and reports from teachers to monitor the quality of provision. Governance, administrative support and financial controls are good. The school has a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement fully where appropriate early intervention strategies to support 3 and Year 4 pupils who are experiencing difficulties in their literacy and numeracy.
- Ensure that pupils who are not making the progress expected are monitored more regularly through assessment tracking systems.

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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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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

22 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Orchard Junior School, Southampton, SO45 4SB

I am writing to let you know how much I enjoyed my visit to your school. It was a pleasure to talk to so many of you. I very much appreciated the help you gave me during the inspection. You will be pleased to hear that I think that Orchard Junior is a good school. Here are a number of things I like about your school:

- you are keen to come to school, enjoy learning and make sure that no one is left out or unhappy. Congratulations on the contributions you are making to aspects of the school including the new outside classroom conservation area and the designs for the community playground project.
- you make good progress in your work.
- you are keen to follow a healthy, active lifestyle. We were very impressed with all the activities you take up before, during and after school. I hope Year 5 really enjoy their experience of sleeping under canvas!
- we especially liked the lovely relationships and the respect that exists between you and your teachers and all adults in the school.

The challenge now is to achieve even higher standards in your work. I have asked your teachers, with your help, to make sure that you receive early support when you fall behind in your work, so that you achieve the best you possibly can.

Once again, thank you for being so friendly and helpful.

Yours sincerely

Brian Evans

Lead Inspector