

Poulner Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115999
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312139
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Hilary Bonser

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	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Colin Bull
Headteacher	Mrs Beverley Levett
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	North Poulner Road North Poulner Ringwood BH24 3LA
Telephone number	01425 474590
Fax number	01425 476791

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than many junior schools. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds, the majority of which are socially and economically advantaged. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups or at an early stage of learning English. The school has received several national awards including Investors in People, the Gold Activemark and FA Charter Mark. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2006.

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 some outstanding features. Parents and pupils justifiably hold it in high regard. Excellent care, support and guidance contribute to pupils' outstanding personal development, helping them to form very good relationships and behave well. They have a very thorough understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. Under the outstanding leadership of the current headteacher, a gradual decline in achievement has been reversed, and achievement is now good for pupils of all abilities. Since her appointment, effective school action and good teaching have already significantly increased the rate of progress in every year group. Although standards have begun to rise from broadly average, the effect of pupils' improved progress has yet to overcome the slow start to Key Stage 2 made by some of the older pupils. A key factor in the improvement is the increased rigour and scope in assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Teachers use this information increasingly well to focus on the precise needs of pupils and to identify and support those of all abilities who are not making the expected progress towards their challenging end of year targets.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy the newly designed, very well planned curriculum introduced last year. As it becomes established, it is fully capturing their interest and has a very positive effect on their keenness to learn. As one parent put it, '...my son has been completely swept up by so many interesting lessons and outings...'. It is also contributing very well to pupils' personal development through the many opportunities it offers them to make choices and decisions and to take more responsibility for their own learning. This is a school where each pupil is known and cared for in a way that includes them all fully in school life. The meticulous tracking and comparison of the progress of boys and girls of differing abilities and backgrounds helps them to achieve equally well. The good partnership with governors, parents, other schools and agencies also contributes well to pupils' very positive attitudes. Such strengths result in a happy atmosphere where pupils feel respected, secure and confident. One pupil commented, 'Teachers are always looking out for you and we are never alone'.

The school identifies its strengths, its areas for development and what is needed to remedy them accurately. It is very aware that standards in writing and mathematics are not yet high enough and has drawn up plans to address specific areas of weakness within them. In a small minority of lessons, the pace is too slow and work is not matched closely enough to pupils' differing abilities. In these lessons, progress is just satisfactory. The school is currently focusing attention on these areas. The improvements already made show that the school is well placed to make further progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Fully implement plans to raise standards in mathematics and writing.
- Remove the remaining inconsistencies in teaching to help pupils make at least good progress in all lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The large majority of pupils, including those in with learning difficulties and disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and more able pupils now achieve well in relation to their previous attainment. Standards on entry to the school vary from average to just above average. Over several years, performance in the Year 6 national tests declined gradually to

broadly average with a consequent fall in achievement to just satisfactory. Effective school action in the last eighteen months has accelerated pupils' progress especially in mathematics and writing, which have been a particular focus for improvement. For example, more planned opportunities across the curriculum have been used well to give pupils a real sense of purpose and enthusiasm for writing. Pupils are now making good progress in most lessons and standards are rising. However, improvement activities did not eradicate the impact of the slow start to Key Stage 2, which was made by older pupils. As a result, standards remained broadly average at the end of Year 6 in 2007. In English, standards in reading are higher than in writing. One reason for this is that not enough use has been made oral work and drama to stimulate ideas for writing. The school is not complacent about the difference and monitors individual progress equally carefully in both.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The successful emphasis the school places on all aspects of pupils' development contributes significantly to their excellent personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils clearly enjoy school and describe it as being 'adventurous', 'exciting' and 'fun'. This is reflected in the above average attendance. Pupils behave well and show consideration and respect for each other. They make a good contribution to school life and are appreciative of the many responsibilities that they are given. They make decisions through the school council and are proud of this influence they have within the school. Pupils say they feel safe because bullying has been tackled successfully through a whole school project. They are confident that the adults in school care for them and help them to resolve any concerns. They are very well aware of what to do to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. They are keen to take part in the many sporting activities available to them and gain great pleasure in the bingo game devised to encourage healthy packed lunches. Pupils are prepared well for their future lives, for example, through organising fund-raising activities and their increasing independence and initiative.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Most make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn, and plan varied, interesting tasks that engage and motivate them. They ask questions that encourage pupils to think hard and to justify their answers. As a result, pupils concentrate, learn well and enjoy their lessons. Teachers provide increasing opportunities for pupils to work independently and to become more involved in their own learning by evaluating their work. One pupil explained, 'It tells teachers how confident you feel about the work and how they can plan to help you even more later on'. Teachers make good use of a wide variety of assessment information to adjust their planning and to provide the right kind of support to help pupils meet the high expectations of their progress. In a small minority of lessons, the pace is rather slow and tasks and questioning are not matched closely enough to individual needs, limiting pupils' progress to satisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The broad, relevant curriculum meets all requirements. There is now a strong emphasis on integrating subjects into stimulating units of work. Teachers plan these carefully to adjust what is taught to the particular needs of their pupils. They also provide many more opportunities for pupils to plan and work together and apply the many skills they are taught, for example writing, in subjects across the curriculum. This new approach is already successful in enthusing pupils and enabling them to contribute actively to their learning. As one parent put it, 'My daughter is buzzing about her learning'. This contributes to their personal development and good progress in lessons, although it is too early to see the full impact on standards. The school recognises that not enough use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning and has recently purchased equipment to enable this. The curriculum is enriched by an excellent variety of popular clubs and other activities, with many that support healthy lifestyles well. Visits out and visitors to the school further enrich pupils' learning and develop their interests and greater understanding of the world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All staff know the pupils and their individual needs very well. The support given is very effective in promoting pupil's personal development and good progress. The very good relationships are based on mutual respect. Pupils feel that the systems for recognising their achievements 'encourage us to work harder and feel proud inside'. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are thorough and carefully adhered to. Good provision, including a wide range of additional programmes, for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, gifted and talented pupils and those who speak English as an additional language help them to do well. The support they receive from highly skilled teaching assistants makes a significant contribution to this. Pupils are clear about how to improve their work from helpful marking comments and the targets they are set in English and mathematics. They are very aware of these and regard them as '...something to aim for, otherwise we don't know what we are doing'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides excellent leadership, ably assisted by the school leadership team. She has a very clear sense of direction that is focused fully on improving standards in all areas of pupils' development. She has shared this very effectively, creating an enthusiastic hard working staff team keen to contribute to improvements. A strong emphasis on accountability and supportive teamwork helps staff to meet the high expectations she has of them. This is reflected in the improvements in pupils' progress and achievement and the stimulating curricular provision. Subject and year leaders make a good contribution to this. The new development teams, which include all teachers, are now actively involved in an accurate process of self-evaluation. It is underpinned by rigorous monitoring and evaluation. Good account is taken of the views of governors, parents and pupils. The governors are very supportive of the school. Several are inexperienced as they are recently appointed. This limits the scope of their monitoring activities. The school makes good use of effective partnerships with other schools and with

parents, for example through the home learning tasks, to extend pupils' personal development and learning.

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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	3
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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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.

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	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

19 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Poulner Junior School, Ringwood, BH24 3LA

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 playtime and talking to you. There are many things we like about your good school.

We liked these the most.

- You behave well, work hard, enjoy school and make good progress in most of your lessons.
- Your headteacher runs the school very well.
- The school looks after each of you very carefully and, as you say, all of the adults do all they can to help you.
- The school is now providing many more interesting and exciting things for you to do.
- You understand very well the importance of eating the right things and taking plenty of exercise.
- We agree with you that your teachers are good at making lessons interesting and helping you to improve.

We have asked your teachers to help you do even better in mathematics and writing and to make sure that you get the right kind of work to help you improve in all of your lessons.

Thank you again

Yours sincerely

Hilary Bonser

Lead inspector