

Cupernham Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116048
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312160
Inspection dates	13–14 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Rodger
Headteacher	Mrs Hilary Evans
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Bransley Close Woodley Lane Romsey SO51 7JT
Telephone number	01794 514494
Fax number	01794 522481

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of mixed housing on the outskirts of Romsey.

Almost all pupils are from a White British background very few are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. As children start school, their skills and understanding are generally below that typical of the age group.

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 are extremely happy with all that the school provides. A comment of one parent, 'We are delighted to send our children here', reflects the views of the vast majority. Pupils are very eager to learn and, as a result of good teaching, they achieve well and reach above average standards. The quality of care, support and guidance they receive is outstanding. The school's caring, family ethos makes it a very welcoming place to be. Pupils feel safe in school and secure in the knowledge that they are valued. Their progress in English, mathematics and science is tracked exceptionally well to ensure that work is challenging and based on their individual needs.

The school's caring atmosphere is underpinned by mutual respect and warm relationships. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they take on additional responsibilities willingly. The award of the National Healthy Schools standard reflects the school's success in promoting pupils' excellent awareness of the importance of eating well and keeping fit. Pupils develop good levels of independence.

The very rich curriculum supports pupils' academic and personal development extremely effectively. They respond positively to the wealth of opportunities to learn through hands-on experience, outings and visitors. The very well resourced classrooms and outdoor areas are used imaginatively across a range of subjects.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Central to the school's success is the determination of the headteacher that pupils should have the best possible environment in which to work and that they will achieve as much as they can. She works in close partnership with the deputy headteacher who provides an excellent role model for colleagues. Subject managers are increasingly pro-active in helping to raise standards, although their action plans are not specific enough about how developments are to be evaluated. This means that it is not clear if their work is having any impact on improving teaching and learning and raising standards. Governors are active, well informed and supportive. The school has demonstrated a good capacity to improve by enhancing provision and raising standards. The unswerving commitment of staff and governors, together with the strong partnership with parents, means it is well placed to move further forward.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Underpinned by their considerable knowledge of how young children learn, staff in the Reception classes strike an excellent balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children. Children delight in using the wealth of indoor and outdoor resources. Adults monitor their day-to-day progress carefully to help ensure that tasks have an increasing level of challenge. As a result, children make very good progress, particularly in developing their language skills. From a weak starting point, children's social development and their language and mathematical skills are broadly average by the end of Reception. Their knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development, are generally above average, reflecting the highly effective provision in these areas of learning. The Foundation Stage manager provides highly effective leadership and has established excellent links with feeder nurseries and playgroups to ensure that children settle in very quickly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Include specific criteria for pupils' achievement in subject development plans so that the intended impact is clear.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Pupils of all abilities make good progress, so that by the end of Year 2, they attain above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Due to effective teaching, standards have risen significantly in recent years. The school has been especially successful in developing pupils' skills in writing, through enhanced opportunities for pupils to write in a range of contexts and for different purposes. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress as a result of very carefully planned activities. The school has high expectations of all pupils and sets challenging targets for them. These targets are usually met and sometimes exceeded.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects is outstanding and this contributes significantly to their success. They really enjoy learning and their behaviour is excellent. Pupils adapt their behaviour well according to the context. They show reverence during assembly prayers, enthusiasm during lessons, and play harmoniously at breaktimes. Pupils are very well aware of how to keep safe and avoid hazards, and know a great deal about healthy lifestyles, including the importance of a balanced diet and exercise. They make a very strong contribution to the school and wider community, and talked enthusiastically about their responsibilities as members of the 'Lunch Munch Bunch' (table monitors) and as 'Litter Busters'. A wide range of stimulating activities helps pupils to develop a secure understanding of the diversity of life in modern Britain and around the world. Pupils' good levels of competence in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT), together with their ability to work independently, means they make good progress in developing the key skills they will need to help them become successful as they grow up.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Consistently good teaching means that pupils become keen learners. The skilful use of assessment information enables a fine grain diagnosis of pupils' individual needs which is then translated into really good support. Teachers show a great deal of skill in using all available resources, including computers, to enhance learning. For example, Year 2 pupils use simple digital cameras to record one another recounting their imaginative journeys. Teaching assistants play an important role providing one-to-one help for individuals, particularly those with learning difficulties, and very proficient guidance for groups of pupils. Occasionally they are not deployed early enough during lesson introductions in order to create smaller groups to help more confident pupils build on their existing knowledge rather than cover familiar ground.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. Great strides have been made since the last inspection in developing a curriculum that stimulates and motivates pupils of all abilities. Drama plays a powerful role in developing pupils' confidence in speaking and has contributed to improved standards in writing. Multicultural theme weeks, input from a wide range of visitors and frequent visits broaden pupils' experiences and provide contexts and ideas for their descriptive and creative writing. A successful innovation is the introduction of 'small world trays'. These range from a small tray with farm animals for pupils to play with, to much larger containers with pebbles, shells, large shiny beads and so on which cry out for pupils to manipulate and explore. In sharing ideas with their classmates and responding to prompts by teachers, pupils develop their language skills, explore spatial relationships and engage in imaginative play. These resources contribute to the very good balance struck between teacher-directed activities and pupils' independent learning. Most learning is centred on well-devised practical activities. Art and ICT feature strongly and pupils are developing good skills in these subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The calm and purposeful atmosphere and very positive encouragement of all individuals mean that pupils are secure in the knowledge that there is always someone to turn to if necessary. Pupils and parents recognise this and it is a key factor in pupils' very positive attitudes. Relationships between adults and children are excellent. The school goes the extra mile in supporting pupils who are especially vulnerable. For example, support for pupils during periods of emotional upheaval, such as a family bereavement, is sensitively provided by specially trained staff. There are excellent partnerships with parents, the neighbouring junior school and specialist agencies, and procedures for safeguarding children are well established. The expectations of staff for behaviour and achievement are set high. The pupils know this and respond accordingly by trying their best. Assessment and systems are generally meticulous and translated into very clear targets and guidance, so that all pupils have a good understanding of how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Central to the success of the school in improving standards is the excellent partnership between the headteacher and deputy. They play a pivotal role in ensuring that teachers are well motivated, supported and fulfilled. Staff respond well to the strong leadership of the headteacher, who has a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. She has cultivated a common sense of purpose and has successfully led improvements to teaching, learning and the curriculum. The deputy headteacher's infectious enthusiasm and excellent teaching inspires staff and pupils. The effectiveness of subject leaders has improved since the last inspection. They now monitor lessons and sample pupils' work to identify strengths and areas for development. Many subject action plans, however, do not include specific targets for pupils' achievement. This means that the impact of leaders' actions on improving achievement and standards cannot be objectively measured.

Governors are loyal and supportive and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through effective whole school self-evaluation. This involves wide consultation and the rigorous analysis of assessment information. Governors visit the school frequently and are well informed about emerging issues. They share the school's desire to see achievement improve even further.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
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?	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?	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

27 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Cupernham Infant School, Romsey, SO51 7JT

Thank you for making me so welcome during my visit. I enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. You told me that Cupernham Infants is a good school and I agree with you.

Here are some of the important things I found out.

- You enjoy school because teachers make lessons interesting and organise so many exciting activities.
- You try really hard and make good progress.
- Children enjoy everything they do in the Reception classes and make a very good start in their learning.
- You behave extremely well and look after one another.
- You help the school in many ways, such as being in the Lunch Munch Bunch or the Games Gang.
- The school takes good care of you and helps you learn how to stay safe and keep healthy.
- Teachers keep a careful eye on how well you are doing.
- The school is well run and everyone who works there is keen that you all do your very best.

I have suggested that plans to make the school even better could be a little more detailed.

Once again, thank you for your help. I wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rob Crompton Lead Inspector