

# Freemantle Church of England Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116341
<b>Local Authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	312268
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anthony Green

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	219
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Kevin Barnett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	Mansion Road Freemantle Southampton SO15 3BQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	02380 227925
<b>Fax number</b>	02380 234267

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<b>Age group</b>	3–7
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 July 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average size school. Approximately three fifths of pupils are White British and two fifths are from minority ethnic backgrounds, of which about a quarter speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who require extra support with their lessons is higher than those found in most other schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals varies from year to year from below average to above average, which also reflects the considerable difference in cohorts. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than at the start or end of the school year is considerably higher than average. At the time of the inspection the school was having an extension built, including a new Children's Centre to be opened in September 2008. The school has gained the Basic Skills Award, the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark for physical education, the Green Flag Award for its strong emphasis on ecology, and Investors in People.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

'We have been so pleased with our choice of local school. Our children run into school everyday, love the atmosphere, the work, the staff and the extras. They really feel it's their school.' This comment from a parent is typical of the overwhelmingly positive support for the school. This is an outstanding school, which is led exceptionally well by a very effective and innovative Centre Director (headteacher) in close partnership with his Head of Education (deputy headteacher). They have been extremely successful in creating a culture where pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and all staff share the same vision, that pupils are at the very heart of the school and that every learning experience offered is fresh, creative and exciting.

Pupils thrive and their personal development is outstanding because they respond with such enthusiasm to an excellent curriculum. They behave extremely well in class and around school and have first-rate attitudes to learning. They thoroughly enjoy talking to visitors about their work and are very proud of their many achievements. They have an excellent understanding for their age about staying safe, caring for others and the environment, and of the need to live healthily and to take regular exercise. Pupils know that staff listen to them and act on their suggestions. For example, fund raising initiatives, the purchase of school pets, such as chickens and guinea pigs, and the design for the woodland walkway, all stem from pupils' ideas. The innovative strategies to improve attendance are having a positive impact on the attendance rate, showing annual improvement. Attendance is now broadly average.

Achievement is outstanding because of excellent teaching and the extremely rich and varied curriculum. Children make rapid progress in the Foundation Stage. This outstanding progress continues into Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average overall, especially in reading and writing. Lessons are very well planned and resourced. There are excellent systems in place to identify and support the needs of pupils who have learning or behaviour difficulties or speech and language needs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also receive exactly the help they need. Furthermore, effective systems are in place to support pupils who are gifted and talented. Consequently, all groups of pupils make outstanding progress. However, the school recognises that there is still scope to extend further the breadth of opportunities for those who are gifted and talented. Pupils' excellent academic achievement, together with their outstanding work habits, prepares them very well for their future life.

The Centre Director and Head of Education show immense drive and determination in order to raise standards and to ensure that excellent foundations are in place to equip pupils for lifelong learning. Strong links have been established with parents, carers, outside agencies and local businesses, to support pupils' learning and to develop the school environment. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and hold the school to account well. The school has addressed the issues of the previous report very well and has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children receive an excellent start to their education in the Foundation Stage. Most start in the Nursery and Reception Years with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age. A significant number have low levels of language, communication and social skills.

They make excellent progress in the six areas of learning and by the time they are ready to enter Year 1, the majority achieve, and many exceed, the expected levels. This is because teaching is firmly based on developing children's early language and social skills in a very creative way. For example, children in Reception class were excited about a 'bear hunt' and wrote letters to the bear with specific questions. A particular strength is the way staff use observations and assessments to identify individual needs. The well-focused specialist support children receive to develop their speech and language skills is giving them a firm grounding for their later stages of education. Although the present building work restricts the use of part of the outdoor area, staff make the very best use of the available space to extend learning beyond the classroom. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is outstanding, as the leader uses her expertise in early years very well to bring about continuous improvements in provision. She is fully involved in the development of the new Children's Care Centre.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Widen the opportunities across the curriculum, for gifted and talented pupils to develop their skills further.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Standards by the end of Year 2 vary from year to year because of significant differences in cohorts and the higher than average number of pupils who start and leave school other than at the normal time. For instance, in 2007, almost half the pupils, who were entered for the Year 2 national assessment tests, did not start school in the Foundation Stage. In 2008, a third of pupils who took the Year 2 tests did not start in the Foundation Stage. However, the excellent progress pupils make throughout the school results in standards that are above average overall by the end of Year 2. In 2007, standards were significantly above average overall, because of a particularly able group of pupils. Data for 2008 indicates a slight dip in results for the present Year 2, notwithstanding the outstanding progress of this group of pupils. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' standards in Year 1 are above those expected for their age.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

'This is an amazing school to be in for children, turning them into lovely, happy, caring and thoughtful citizens.' This comment from one parent sums up pupils' excellent personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions. From a very early age, pupils learn independence and responsibility and are fully involved in the life of the school. They contribute much to their school and the wider community by taking on responsibilities and raising funds for the school and charities. Strategies such as 'Walk on Wednesday', 'March on Monday' and excluding unhealthy items from lunch boxes, ensure that pupils are developing an excellent understanding of healthy living. As one said, 'We can't eat chocolate as it's not good for us. We have to eat healthy foods'. Their participation in a wide range of out of school clubs further enhances their healthy life style.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated, respond positively to the tasks set and are very eager to learn. Teachers, and very well-informed support staff, make excellent use of questions to engage and assess pupils. Marking is conscientious and includes regular dialogue with pupils so they have a good knowledge of what they need to do to improve. As a result, all groups make outstanding progress. One afternoon a week, all classes are taught by support staff to allow teachers time to plan together. The quality of teaching by this group of support staff is high and sustains the excellent progress of pupils. For half a term, prior to the end of the school year, pupils move up a year to prepare them for their new classes, or for the transition to junior school. This innovative approach ensures that the pace of teaching and learning does not diminish, as it maintains the momentum of learning and the very positive attitudes of pupils.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

Pupils benefit from an impressively rich curriculum where excellent links between subjects excites their motivation and enjoyment. For example, Year 2 pupils spoke with enthusiasm about turning their classroom into a real coffee shop. This involved role-play, language, mathematics, economics and design. The pupils also talked proudly about how the money raised is being used to buy a chicken run. The outside woodland walkway provides a stimulating learning environment, which also includes a pupils' vegetable garden. The produce is used for school lunches. The excellent emphasis on personal, social and health education has led to the outstanding personal development of pupils. A superb range of lunchtime and after school clubs, visits and visitors, supports well pupils' academic and personal development. For example, during the inspection a theatre group gave an enthralling performance of 'Treasure Island' to the pupils. As one parent commented, 'The school gives children many opportunities in and out of school, which are invaluable life experiences'.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The school takes excellent care of all its pupils. As a result, they feel very happy and safe. The procedures to protect and safeguard pupils are thorough and meet government requirements. Parents are very appreciative of the care and support their children receive. The school has excellent systems in place to monitor and track pupils' academic progress, which ensures that work is set at the correct level for them. Pupils are encouraged from a very early age to be fully involved in their activities by planning their own work and reviewing how successful they have been. Teachers set challenging targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy. They involve them well in their own learning by talking to them about what they do well and where they need to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Under the outstanding and extremely purposeful leadership of the Centre Director, there is a very strong commitment by teaching and non-teaching staff to ensure that the school runs smoothly for the benefit of all pupils. His drive, enthusiasm and example are key factors in motivating staff keen to contribute to raising achievement. The very strong partnership between the Centre Director and Head of Education has ensured a consistently high calibre of teaching and has created a curriculum that captivates pupils' interests and motivates them to learn. Subject leaders make a considerable contribution to raising standards through regular monitoring and providing training for colleagues. They also have regular opportunities to teach in different year groups to model good practice. The school's self-evaluation is clearly focused on raising standards. Governance is outstanding. Governors question, support and contribute to the work of the school exceptionally well. They are extremely well informed and bring a wide range of skills to the school.

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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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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	3
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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

14 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Freemantle Church of England Infant School, Southampton, SO15 3BQ

Thank you for your very friendly welcome when we visited your school. You and your parents told us that you attend a very good school and we agree. In fact, we feel that your school is outstanding. It was obvious from what you said that you really enjoy all the different activities provided. We were very impressed by many things. These are just a few of them. We do not have the space to list them all!

- You work hard in lessons and are successful in your work.
- Teaching is outstanding, which is why you all do so well.
- The work planned for you is very interesting. It is made even better by the visits you go on, the visitors who come into school, and the many clubs you attend. We also enjoyed the afternoon play by the visiting pirates.
- We were very impressed by the coffee shop run by Year 2, and the amount of money it raised to buy your 'Eglu' house for your chickens.
- You are very well cared for by all staff and you feel very safe at school.
- You know how important it is to stay fit and healthy and to eat healthily.
- The outside area is lovely, especially the woodland walkway, the many animals for you to care for and the wooden decking, for you to sit in the sun and enjoy your healthy lunches.
- The full size pirate ship being built in the playground is wonderful. We know you will have many happy hours playing on deck and learning inside.
- The school is excellently led by your Centre Director, Head of Education, senior staff and governors.

Even in an outstanding school, there are things that can be improved. We have asked your school to give those of you with special talents the chance to have even more opportunities to use them.

We wish you all the best for the future, and in your new building when it opens. We hope you carry on making Freemantle School such a happy place to learn and that you continue to work as hard as you are doing at present in your own work and also in the way you care for the environment. Your Green Flag is very well deserved.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Green

Lead Inspector