

Hook Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116045
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	319469
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Blackmore
Headteacher	Lynn Martin
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2007
School address	Church View Hook RG27 9NR
Telephone number	01256 762468
Fax number	01256 762141

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 much larger than average. The number of pupils taking free school meals is low. The school supports a large and expanding village where employment is high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is similar to that in most schools. The main difficulties these pupils encounter include moderate learning, speech, language and communication, and autism.

Since the last inspection there have been many changes of teaching staff. A temporary headteacher took over the leadership of the school in January 2008 and has subsequently been appointed to the post permanently. The governing body has also undergone a large number of changes of personnel.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The school is improving rapidly because the new headteacher has brought drive, organisation and clear direction to the leadership of the school. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. Together they have galvanised the whole staff and challenged them to improve the quality of teaching, accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards to the exceptionally high levels achieved just a few years ago. A great deal has been achieved in a very short time.

The teaching has become more effective because lessons are frequently monitored and training and support are carefully targeted to tackle weaknesses. Many lessons are now good, although some variation remains. As a result, pupils are now making good progress but it is not quite as rapid in Years 3 and 4 as it is in Years 5 and 6. In mathematics, many lessons engage and challenge the pupils through investigations and problem solving. The resulting work is conscientiously marked but there are few examples of comments that set out precisely what the pupils need to do to develop and enhance their mathematical skills and knowledge further. Whilst pupils know their targets, and find them useful in English, they are not as clear about the targets they are set in mathematics. A good range of extra curricular activities enhances the curriculum but information and communication technology (ICT) is not used extensively enough to promote independent learning.

Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. Some pupils make better progress than others because there are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of the support they receive. In some classes adults consistently support those with, for example, moderate learning difficulties whereas in others there are times when neither the work nor the support is sufficiently tailored to meet their specific learning needs.

The recent improvements have increased the pupils' enjoyment of school. They readily talk about all the subjects that interest them, the many activities they enjoy and about their sporting achievements. Relationships within the school are good. The pupils behave well both in the classroom and on the playground, where they are able to participate in a wide range of activities. The pupils' good personal development is reflected in their very positive attitudes to learning.

The headteacher has established a staffing structure which gives all of the teachers responsibilities and involves them in the drive to improve the school. The subject leaders for English and mathematics are playing key roles in moving the school forward and monitoring and evaluating the impact of improvement activities. The leaders of other subjects have implemented common approaches to planning and recording pupils' progress but have not yet monitored or evaluated how effectively their subjects are taught. Nevertheless, the roles of the subject leaders have expanded and developed considerably in recent months.

Partnerships and communications with parents are much improved with many commenting on the 'vast', 'huge' and 'dramatic improvements'. As one parent commented, 'Everything seems to be coming together'. The school has good capacity to improve further. Recent improvements have been rapid, and although there are still more to be made, the school is now providing a good education for its pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the teaching is consistently good and that more effective use is made of information and communication technology in the pupils' learning.
- Improve marking and target setting, particularly in mathematics, so that pupils know precisely what they need to do to extend their knowledge and skills.
- Ensure the work and support for all pupils with learning difficulties is tailored precisely to meet their needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards have slipped, over the last few years, from exceptionally high to above average in English, mathematics and science. Over recent months, the leadership team has concentrated its efforts on improving the progress the pupils make. They carefully monitor the standards each pupil achieves and analyse the extent of their progress. This now provides information that allows the teachers to plan their lessons to meet many of the pupils' needs and consequently accelerate their progress. As a result, the school's tracking records show many pupils now making good progress, although the picture is not quite as consistent in mathematics as it is in English.

The school sets challenging targets and recent assessments show the vast majority of pupils are on track to meet them with over half to the pupils in Year 6 on course to exceed the level expected for their age by the end of the year. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory but varies because of inconsistencies in the quality of support. In some cases individuals receive well planned support for activities that are well matched to their needs, but there are occasions when this is not the case and individuals do not make as much progress as they should.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils have very positive attitudes to school. In discussion, they say they greatly enjoy lessons in, for example, art and music. They very much enjoy and appreciate the many opportunities available to them in after school language, music and sports clubs. They particularly like representing their school in competitive games and are proud of their recent victory in the Millennium Cup cross country event. The pupils know how important it is to be fit and healthy and recognise the importance of a balanced diet.

Pupils say they feel safe in the playground and are confident that any incident of bullying or misbehaviour is dealt with quickly and fairly. The pupils say they would readily turn to any of the adults in school should they need help. The pupils are well prepared for the future. They work together very effectively and are developing a good range of basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The monitoring of the quality of teaching, by the school and the local authority over the last year, shows a marked improvement term by term. The lessons seen during the inspection confirm

that this trend is continuing. Although there is still some variation, all lessons are at least satisfactory, most are good and a few are outstanding.

Lessons are carefully planned but in a few classes not enough consideration is given to the differing needs of groups, and, occasionally, to the specific learning needs of individuals. Most lessons are well organised and managed. Learning is purposeful and takes place at a good pace. Throughout the school relationships are strong and the teachers engage, motivate and interest the pupils who respond very positively to the tasks they are set. The pupils' work is routinely marked but in mathematics the teachers give them few pointers to help them improve or to indicate the next steps in their learning.

In most lessons learning support assistants play a very effective role but sometimes they react to individual pupils' needs rather than being active in moving an individual pupil's learning on at a faster rate.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The developing links between subjects is increasing pupils' motivation and enjoyment. Pupils consistently refer to the curriculum as 'fun'. This is having a positive impact on their progress and prepares them well for the future. All classes benefit from interactive whiteboards and three class computers, as well as a shared bank of laptops. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use the interactive whiteboards and ICT innovatively and independently. The emphasis, within the curriculum, on personal, social and health education results in the pupils making good progress in their personal development. There is a very good range of lunchtime activities, after school clubs, including many opportunities for sport, visits and visitors to support the enrichment of the curriculum. World Book Day and visit of 'the birds of prey' are just two of the recent events that have enhanced the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school gives a high priority to the care of the pupils. This provides the security for the pupils to enjoy school and to work and play safely. The school is successfully developing increasingly productive partnerships with parents, many of whom greatly appreciate the efforts of the headteacher and staff to bring about the recent improvements. A few parents still feel communication could be better but most are happy with the information they receive. The pupils are generally well supported but there are occasions when the support for pupils with particular learning difficulties is not as precise as it should be. The pupils know their targets in English but are not as clear about the next steps in their mathematical learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher is providing strong and effective leadership. She has transformed the school by robustly tackling areas of weakness and establishing a clear direction for all who work in the school. The whole staff are now very clear about their responsibilities and are committed to the high expectations of pupils set by the headteacher. The role of subject leaders has grown considerably in recent months. Whilst the core subject leaders are now very effective in their roles, the foundation subject leaders have yet to begin to evaluate how well their subjects are

planned, delivered and assessed. However, in a relatively short time they have established a secure base from which they can become more effective in their roles.

There have been many changes of personnel on the governing body. They now work in harmony with the headteacher and there is a shared sense of purpose and a commitment to providing a high quality education for the pupils. The chair of governors, working with the local authority, has been instrumental in managing many of the changes and improvements that have taken place. The governors have now established a strong position from which they can hold the school to account for its future performance.

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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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
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

05 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hook Junior School, Hook, RG27 9NR

This letter is to tell you about the recent inspection and to thank those of you who gave up your time to talk to inspectors. I am pleased to tell you that your school has improved a lot since it was inspected just over a year ago. It is now a good school with strong leadership and a clear direction for the future.

Some of you told us how much you enjoy lessons and that you find them interesting. You said that lessons are fun! Over the last two terms, the headteacher and teachers have made many changes to give you the opportunities to do well in lessons. Now that all of the adults are clear about what they need to do the teaching has improved. As a result, they are helping you to make better progress in lessons.

There have been many improvements in a short time and the headteacher and governors have more planned. You have got a lot of new ICT equipment but it is not used often enough to allow you to do your own work in a range of subjects. I have asked the headteacher to continue to improve the quality teaching so that every lesson is a good one and to make sure ICT is used in many more lessons.

The teachers give you lots of help, set you targets and mark all your work but in mathematics your targets, and the way your work is marked, do not always tell you clearly enough what you need to do to improve. Some of you, who sometimes find things a little difficult, are often well supported to do your best but there are times when you could be given work that is just what you need rather than the same as everyone else. So I have asked the headteacher and teachers to find ways of improving the marking and target setting in mathematics and to make sure that those of you who sometimes find things difficult are given exactly the right work to help you make good progress.

I enjoyed visiting your school and hope that it continues to improve and that you are soon reaching the highest standards.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector