

College Town Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109859
Local Authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	325044
Inspection dates	25–26 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Trevor Davies

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 (total)	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Utton
Headteacher	Mrs Jill Ward
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2005
School address	Branksome Hill Road College Town Sandhurst GU47 0QE
Telephone number	01276 35292
Fax number	01276 37455

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

College Town is a larger than average junior school. It is in a garrison town, with just over a quarter of the pupils from service families. The large majority of pupils are of British heritage; while Nepali pupils from the local army base comprise the largest minority ethnic group. About a fifth of the pupils speak English as an additional language - an above average proportion. The proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the start of Year 3 is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has achieved Activemark Gold and the Healthy School awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school gives its pupils a satisfactory standard of education. There are strong features in the care offered to pupils and in their personal development. Pupils join the school with standards below the national average. Overall, they make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Although pupils attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6, progress in different classes and year groups is too varied. Standards in mathematics, which were an area for development at the last inspection, have improved steadily.

Pupils' personal development is good throughout the school. Behaviour is excellent, and pupils with responsibilities take them very seriously. Pupils have an outstandingly positive approach to the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and this is evident in their participation in sport and other physical activities. The many fundraising activities organised by the school council for overseas charities and within the local community help to develop pupils' life skills. The school has good partnerships with parents, other schools and outside institutions, which make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers make learning intentions clear to pupils. As a result, they have a clear understanding about what it is they have to learn. Teachers work hard to ensure that classrooms are vibrant and learning experiences are lively, for all pupils. Although planning is detailed, assessment information is not used consistently by teachers, to provide work that is matched to different pupils' needs. As a result, some pupils are insufficiently challenged and do not make as much progress as they should. Teachers regularly track pupils' progress, but the quality of this procedure varies between year groups. Consequently, this also makes an inconsistent impact on pupils' progress.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral support is a strong feature of the school. Pupils whose first language is not English, and those who find learning difficult, are well supported by staff with appropriate expertise and skills. The curriculum is satisfactory. It offers pupils a wide range of enrichment opportunities such as the Year 6 'Passport to the World'. The staff work effectively to ensure that the curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment and interest.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and her leadership team have analysed the school's strengths and weaknesses well. However, arrangements to check the effectiveness of the school's work are not rigorous enough to provide a complete picture of its performance. This means that the school's self-evaluation is not as detailed or unified as it should be. The school has accurately identified weaknesses in standards and achievement, and is working to improve these. However, arrangements for reviewing and developing these areas are not properly in place. Consequently, the school's capacity for future improvement is only satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress of pupils by ensuring that they are consistently challenged in all lessons.
- Ensure that self-evaluation is rigorously and regularly reviewed so that the school has a clearer understanding of the impact of its actions and can plan more effectively for further improvements.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are broadly average by the time they leave school, but standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection. This is because the school has focused on improving pupils' skills in problem solving and calculation. Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall but is uneven from year to year. They make good progress in Year 3 and satisfactory progress in Years 4 and 5, but in Year 6 pupils' progress is too slow. Nepali pupils receive good support and make progress in line with their peers, as do other pupils whose first language is not English. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities also receive good support towards the goals in their education plans and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They respect and look out for one another and are cheerful, polite and exceptionally well behaved. They know what is right and wrong and hold strong moral attitudes. Pupils contribute to the smooth running of the school as playground helpers, and conscientiously act as 'buddies' to children entering their class from other schools. The school council plays an effective role representing the views of pupils. As one member proudly said, 'The school council listens, but has a voice.' Attendance is good. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe, and incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with appropriately. The pupils' uptake of their many opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle is outstanding. They join in enthusiastically with the wide range of playground activities available. They know that exercise and keeping healthy are important, and welcome the excellent opportunities they have for sports and games. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the benefits of healthy eating and know about the dangers of substance abuse. As a result, the school has achieved the Healthy School Award. Pupils' understanding of economic issues is good. For example, they discussed how to set up a shop to raise money for their charities and for a gardening project in the school grounds. This, together with their satisfactory basic skills, means that they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their schooling. Pupils contribute well to their local community through, for example, links with the local army base, schools and sports organisations. They also gain an understanding of the wider world through their rainforest conservation project.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are interesting and pupils named the whole range of subjects as their favourites. Teachers motivate pupils well. There are good examples of constructive marking, for example in Year 6 topic books, and this gives pupils encouragement and guidance on how to assess and improve their work. However, this is not consistent throughout the school. Teachers use assessment information to set targets for pupils and to plan lessons. Teachers clearly identify

what pupils are expected to learn in lessons, but this is not always carefully matched to their differing needs and abilities. This means that pupils sometimes are given tasks which are too easy for them, so they do not make as much progress as they should. Where teachers do cater well for all abilities, for example when Year 3 were planning and creating moving monsters in design and technology, the pupils respond very positively and make good progress. The school rightly recognises that not enough has been done to ensure that teaching is consistently good in all classes. Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants provide effective additional support for pupils whose first language is not English, and for pupils who find learning more difficult. This support helps these pupils to make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Teachers are currently developing links between subjects so that pupils learn skills in a more meaningful context. The curriculum is being adapted to ensure that activities are challenging for pupils of all abilities. Extra-curricular opportunities and enrichment activities are a strength, and have a good impact on pupils' enjoyment of school. A wide range of after school clubs such as tag rugby, cricket, football and badminton, have a positive impact on pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles. The school has been presented with the Activemark Gold in recognition for its work in sports. A range of visitors, such as theatre groups and poets, also helps to enliven the curriculum. Visits, including residential weeks in Years 5 and 6, help pupils to develop good social and teamwork skills. Special days provide much excitement for pupils, such as the Tudor Day, when they ate Tudor food, wore costumes and learnt about how the lives of girls and boys were different in comparison to their own. The outdoor environment is used well to promote learning. The Environmental Centre promotes real-life experiences for pupils outside the classroom, such as the Living Eggs project and the wildlife, pond and bird-watching areas. These help pupils understand food chains and the lifecycles of different animals. The teaching of German and French has a positive impact on pupils' global understanding. Information and communication technology (ICT) across the school is an area for development. Although pupils have opportunities to practise their ICT skills in discrete lessons, they are not given sufficient opportunities to apply them to tackle challenging tasks in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral support for pupils is a strength of the school. Parents are very positive about the way staff develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. 'My daughter is a completely different, confident child, mainly thanks to the school', was the comment of one parent. Effective health and safety arrangements are regularly reviewed and all of the staff are aware of their responsibilities with regard to child protection issues. Throughout the school, relationships are excellent and pupils have confidence in their teachers and other adults. The staff receive training in identifying vulnerable pupils. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support, as do pupils whose first language is not English. Individual education plans for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are written clearly so that pupils know what they are trying to achieve. Pupils know their targets, which are discussed with their teacher. However, although teachers regularly assess the progress of pupils, the information is not always used effectively to help plan their next steps in learning. As a result, there is not sufficient challenge for all pupils in lessons and this slows the progress they make.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and the leadership team work well together. The school has gone through an unsettled period in which there have been staff changes at both management and classroom level. This has had a negative impact on pupils' progress as staff are settling into their roles and teaching groups. The headteacher has clear plans in place to ensure that appropriate training and coaching are provided for newly appointed staff. The leadership team have had a positive impact on the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning as well as assessment systems throughout the school. However, they also recognise that assessment information is not used rigorously enough to inform teachers' planning. The headteacher has worked hard to ensure that all pupils and families are included in the school. For example, all staff have received training in order to improve their understanding of Nepalese culture. Curriculum workshops also help parents to understand the school's provision and visitors such as those from the Ghurkha museum all contribute to the school's good promotion of community cohesion. The impact of governors is satisfactory. They contribute to the school development plan and self-evaluation as well as visiting lessons, but do not take a sufficiently active role in school development. The school's commitment to support the staff and governors through appropriate training is evident and, as a result, the school has achieved the Investors in People award.

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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?	3
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 learners' needs?	3
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

20 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of College Town Junior School, Sandhurst, GU47 0QE

Thank you for being helpful and making us welcome when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and we agree with you that it is a very friendly school and that your teachers make your lessons interesting. The school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education.

There are excellent opportunities for you to take part in physical activities and sport and work outdoors, such as the Environmental Centre. The school really encourages you to be fit and eat healthily. You make excellent friendships. You play well together, behave exceptionally well in and out of the classroom, and have good attitudes to your work in lessons. Your school is successful at helping to create good relationships within the local community and extending your knowledge of the wider world.

To help the school to perform better we have asked the headteacher and teachers to:

- improve your progress by ensuring that in all lessons you are challenged as much as possible
- ensure that they regularly and accurately assess and review how well the school is doing, so that it knows exactly what to do to improve still further.

You can help by trying to do your best and continuing to enjoy your time at school. Remember to ask teachers if you need help.

Yours faithfully

Trevor Davies

Lead Inspector