

Locks Heath Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115926
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326292
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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)	509
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Clive Wright
Headteacher	Mr Jim Lambert
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2006
School address	Warsash Road Locks Heath Southampton SO31 9NZ
Telephone number	01489 572226
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Locks Heath is a larger-than-average junior school. The school has its own indoor swimming pool and extensive grounds which include a nature reserve. Nearly all of the pupils transfer from the adjacent Locks Heath Infant School. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. There are relatively few pupils with minority ethnic heritage or pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly specific learning difficulties, is below average. Among a number of other accreditations the school has the Enhanced Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Locks Heath Junior is an outstanding school. Standards are well above average and all groups of pupils make excellent progress. The very positive learning environment is a result of the outstanding levels of care, guidance and support shown by all adults for the personal development and well-being of each pupil. Since the last inspection, when it was deemed good, there has been a very effective focus on raising the attainment of all pupils including higher attainers. Subject leaders plan learning carefully to meet individual needs and teaching and learning are outstanding. All groups of pupils are confident, articulate and eager learners who are clear as to what they have to do to improve their work further. The catalyst for this continuing striving for excellence is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, who is supported strongly by his senior team and the governing body. Of the many parents who returned questionnaires almost all highlighted the happy ethos of the school under his leadership. One parent wrote, 'My two children love Locks Heath - both have enjoyed every minute of it - the teachers are great and led by a very approachable headteacher who knows every pupil in the school.'

The school consistently exceeds its challenging targets. Well above average achievement across all curriculum areas has been sustained over time because teachers provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to apply and reinforce their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. These basic skills prepare them well for the next phase of their education and for adult life. Pupils are attentive listeners, and when in paired work or in group discussions confidently express their views. Teachers, however, recognise that there is further work to do in assessing pupils' progress at more frequent intervals so that any underachievement can be tackled even earlier. Support assistants work effectively in partnership with teachers in meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers use electronic whiteboards confidently and effectively to support learning. Most pupils comment that 'learning is fun'.

The broad and balanced curriculum makes superb use of the space around the school including the playing fields, nature reserve and swimming pool. Every pupil in the school has 20 minutes in the swimming pool per week throughout the year. Standards are very high and the school finished second in the 2009 primary school national swimming championships. Pupils speak with tremendous enthusiasm of their residential visits to the New Forest, the Isle of Wight and a working farm in Devon. A high proportion of pupils enjoy singing in the two choirs, playing in bands and orchestras as well as taking part in arts, sporting and other club activities during lunchtime and after school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. An annual visit from a Masai warrior's wife has been a very effective catalyst for reflection and discussion. This is just one example of the school's excellent approach to community cohesion. Excellent school procedures to counter bullying or name-calling are followed closely. Behaviour is exemplary and attendance is good. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the wider community. School council members carry out their roles in a mature and responsible way. Very strong partnerships exist with other schools and the local and international community. All of the above indicate that the school has an outstanding capacity to build further on its current success.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend and build on strategies for assessing pupils' progress through the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are considerably higher than average and show a rising trend. Standards in English, mathematics and science are consistently well above average over time and represent excellent achievement from pupils' starting points. A high level of progress for pupils of all abilities, including those with English as an additional language, is maintained in all years because of the wide and effective range of support programmes to meet individual needs. This is further underpinned by outstanding teaching and pupils' enthusiasm for learning.

Pupils are very aware of their own challenging targets and ways in which they can achieve them. Those pupils with specific learning difficulties benefit from early intervention by teachers and well-trained support staff, who meet their learning needs well, and so they make excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning is evident in lessons. They enjoy school and one pupil summed it up by saying, 'Each class is a team and we all work together.' Pupils are confident with adults and their peers and these good relationships create a happy working environment. Behaviour is outstanding both in school and outside on the field, where pupils are well supervised at playtime and lunchtime. The buddy system, 'Friendship Stop' and 'Pals Patrol' help all children to socialise successfully. Pupils are given many opportunities to make a good contribution to the school and local community. For example, the school council reviews the school rules annually. They cheerfully carry out responsibilities and raise money for charities and for schools in Kenya. They learn about differing lifestyles and situations through events such as the veterans' tea party and community projects.

Pupils knowledge about healthy lifestyles and the importance of regular exercise and healthy diet provides the basis for the school's Enhanced Healthy School Award. The excellent physical education curriculum and weekly swimming lessons reinforce their skills and knowledge. They learn about the environment first-hand through use of the outdoor classroom and nature reserve. The high level of basic skills ensures that the pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are systematically monitored very carefully and the school accurately judges the quality of both to be excellent overall. A great many outstanding lessons were observed. All teachers plan an emphasis on developing pupils' thinking skills and this is clearly having a very positive impact on learning in the classroom. Pupils are good independent learners and also work collaboratively, so that they make outstanding gains in learning. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and manage pupils and resources exceptionally well. Teachers make good use of ICT in whole-class teaching and for individual work in the ICT suite. Planning across year groups is a real strength and there has been a clear and effective focus on raising standards.

The majority of lessons are exciting and promote a very high level of learning, although very occasionally input from teachers is a little too long, which slows the pace of learning. Assessment through questioning is very good and teachers use pupils' ideas well to take learning forward. Work is marked regularly and thoroughly. Pupils, including the gifted and talented, are given frequent opportunities to work in pairs and groups and they confidently evaluate their own and others' work. Pupils make a very valuable contribution to the success of lessons. Classrooms and corridors have excellent displays and these contribute well to learning. Creative work is of an exceptionally high quality and the school has an excellent focus on the celebration of pupils' achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is broad and balanced and planned to meet the needs and interests of the pupils. It is especially enhanced by specialist French and music teaching. There are effective links between subjects which make the work interesting, relevant and enjoyable. Pupils benefit from a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities ranging from poetry and drama to all types of sporting activities. The curriculum is enriched extremely well by days out of school in Year 3 and residential visits in Years 4–6. These visits promote links with many areas of the curriculum and give children good opportunities for spiritual and cultural development. There are many visitors to the school and pupils take part in local music festivals, community events and school productions. Sports events play an important part in school life and pupils achieve considerable success at both county and national level.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are given excellent guidance on healthy lifestyles and staying safe. The school works very effectively with parents and outside agencies to ensure that all pupils make excellent progress. The caring ethos promotes the involvement of all pupils and they say that their views are taken into account. Pupils feel secure in a safe, supportive environment where they know they can seek help and advice.

Pupils are set challenging targets which help them to achieve well. Senior staff rightly recognise that there is further work to do to build on their assessment profiles, so that any underachievement is picked up very quickly. All procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. There is a most effective emphasis on ensuring that pupils can use the internet and other electronic communication safely and that parents are aware of possible dangers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school which he communicates expertly to governors, staff, parents, pupils and to the local community. He and his senior managers have high expectations and give excellent direction on how to raise achievement. Issues identified in the last report, such as raising the attainment of higher-attainers, have been addressed very successfully through a well-defined staff development programme. Subject leaders analyse strengths and respond to any weakness in their areas of responsibility very efficiently. Teachers at all levels and all adults in the school provide brilliantly for pupils' academic and personal

development, care and support. Senior managers acknowledge that there is no room for complacency and are seeking to make their formative assessment processes even more effective in support of pupils achieving their full potential.

Parents overwhelmingly support the school and its ethos. The provision for pupils with additional needs is very well organised and led. Good robust self-evaluation procedures underpin the school's development plan. Staff work well as a team. For example Year 6 teachers planned and executed the designing, making and advertising of 'slippers'; this was an excellent illustration of how a topic can give pupils opportunities to apply and reinforce their basic skills in the context of a practical challenge. Governors are very effective in holding the school to account and are making excellent constructive contributions to the school. Financial controls and administrative procedures are good.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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?	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
The extent to which 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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

09 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Locks Heath Junior School, Southampton, SO31 9NZ

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. You will be pleased to hear that Locks Heath Junior is an outstanding school that achieves very high standards. Here are a number of things we like about your school.

- You are making excellent progress in your work and take a full part in the life of the school both in and out of the classroom.
- You are keen to come to school and enjoy learning. We enjoyed seeing all your work on display, including evidence of your very successful residential trips to a farm in Devon, the Isle of Wight and the New Forest.
- You follow a healthy lifestyle and take full advantage of the fine sporting and leisure facilities that you have on the well-laid-out school grounds. Congratulations on the high standards of your art, music and sporting activities and also to all those who helped your swimmers to finish second in the competition against all primary schools in England.
- You help one another to be happy at school. School councillors take on responsibilities very well and in a mature manner as, for example, in reviewing the school rules each year.
- We were very impressed with the way that you, the headteacher, teachers, classroom assistants, governors and administrative staff all work closely together as a well-knit team.

We have asked your teachers to raise standards even further by using their assessment of your work to guide you on to the next stage of learning. You can really help if you are not sure by asking the teacher what you need to do to improve your work. In this way you will achieve your full potential.

We wish you the very best of luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Brian Evans

Lead Inspector