

Fair Oak Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115997
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326306
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2009
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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)	547
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan Carter
Headteacher	Mrs Jinty Williamson
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2006
School address	Botley Road Fair Oak Eastleigh SO50 7AN
Telephone number	02380 693195
Fax number	02380 601731

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Fair Oak is a much larger than average junior school serving the large village of Fair Oak and an area of Horton Heath in a semi-rural setting. Numbers on roll have fallen recently because of a lower intake from the local community. There is very little ethnic minority representation, and there are very few pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around the national average. There are seven pupils with statements of special educational needs; the main needs comprise a range of specific learning difficulties. The school has received many national awards such as the Activemark and the Artsmark (Silver).

The school is part of the Hamble Sports Partnership and is a full service extended school in partnership with Wyvern Technology College.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Fair Oak provides an outstanding education for its pupils. On the school website, the welcome message says, 'Our aim is to provide excellent education for every child. We want everyone to feel excited and challenged by learning and believe that learning should be enjoyable.' Inspection evidence shows that through the efforts of the whole staff, the school fully realises this aim and provides a warm, caring environment where the excellent provision and welfare arrangements for each one of the pupils ensures their outstanding academic and personal development.

The range of opportunities that pupils are given, through the excellent curriculum, is outstanding. On entering the school, the visitor goes into the long corridor known as 'The Street' where a huge variety of exciting activities is taking place all the time. In one break time, no less than 11 different activities, including rehearsals and preparation, were underway. At all times, pupils were being independent and highly motivated. This desire to do well is instilled in pupils because staff are zealous in their attention to detail in recognising what each pupil wants and needs. Pupils know they have to work hard to be given this independence, and they do. Not only have standards in English, mathematics and science been consistently high across the school in the last three years, but also pupils are given excellent opportunities in all other subjects. The excellence of the displays through the school is testament to the consistently high standards being achieved in art and design, and has led to their Artsmark award. The quality of the music being played, on a variety of orchestral instruments, was exceptional. The school band was outstanding, as were the school choir and the Bollywood dancers. The sporting activities, arranged by the Hamble School Sports partnership, are comprehensive and exceptional. The 'Wall of Fame' displaying the exploits of pupils taking part in high levels of sport, occasionally nationally, is proof of their success, as is the award of the Activemark.

Teaching throughout the school is excellent. On entry to the school, teachers assess pupils' progress exceptionally well and make excellent use of this information when planning future work. This helps them to ensure that lessons are pitched at the right levels and that all pupils can succeed. Tasks engage pupils' interest and inspire them to learn. Relationships are strong and pupils work productively as a result. In lessons, expectations are high, the pace is brisk and pupils know what they are expected to learn.

The school has placed a particular emphasis on developing pupils' writing this year as this has been an area of relative weakness. In the 2008 national test results for pupils in Year 6, the standards reached for English, mathematics and science when taken together were high. School evidence clearly shows that this year the proportion of pupils predicted to reach the average levels, and the higher Level 5, in all subjects are very high, reflecting an improvement in writing. Individual improvement targets and outstanding support for pupils of all abilities consistently raise pupils' levels of achievement. It is also noteworthy that the pupils themselves know how best they can improve. The exceptional planning means that the goals of developing pupils' personal qualities of enquiry, adaptability and thoughtfulness are paramount in every lesson.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. They acquire a detailed understanding of safe and healthy choices, and make an exceptional contribution to the school and wider communities. The school council are justifiably proud of the input they have made to changes both inside and outside the school. This input is mature and thoughtful, and much appreciated by all staff. Attendance is above average, as pupils enjoy all their time at school. Pupils' behaviour, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. These

qualities, together with their outstanding skills in English, mathematics and science, prepare them very well for the next stage in their learning. Relationships with parents are good and the staff have a strong commitment to partnership with them. This contributes very well to the outstanding pastoral care the school shows for its pupils. As one parent observed, 'This is a fantastic school and I am so pleased my child has been able to attend it for the last four years. Each child is valued and their needs catered for. The staff and head are excellent.'

The very experienced headteacher's leadership is outstanding. As a result of her skill in encouraging others, and as a role model, she is exceptionally good at promoting the development of all those around her, whether pupils or adults. Strengths and weaknesses are speedily identified and everyone plays a valuable part in moving the school forward. The staff's full and shared commitment to meeting the needs of all are at the heart of the school's success. The excellent quality of the many links that the school has forged with the local community is testament to its outward approach to learning and community cohesion. There are very good links with schools in other countries, but the school acknowledges that although they have national links, there is room to do more to ensure that pupils gain a full understanding of their place in today's multicultural society. Governors have an excellent understanding of their strategic role in the school's development, and have very good systems for checking on its effectiveness and holding the leaders to account. As a result, they have a very clear understanding of what is working well, what can improve and how it can be achieved.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the higher level standards reached in writing are as secure as those in other subjects.
- Create further opportunities for pupils to understand their place in today's multicultural society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils enter the school with standards above expectations for their age. Effective organisation, and very careful and accurate assessments, show that pupils begin to make excellent progress immediately. Individual improvement targets and the excellent support for pupils of all abilities raise pupils' levels of achievement significantly. Progress is outstanding throughout the school, due to these rigorous systems that track each pupil and identify where additional teaching will be most beneficial. More-able pupils are challenged exceptionally well through a range of additional activities. As a result, they also make excellent progress. Pupils do well in music, art and physical education because the outstanding curriculum gives many opportunities for them to develop their individual talents. Pupils with special educational needs, especially those with statements of specific need, make excellent progress. Careful and very effective support from the experienced teaching assistants, and access to a tailored curriculum, helps them all to achieve extremely well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Relationships are excellent and pupils are confident and mature. Attendance is good. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' personal development are outstanding. The school encourages pupils to take responsibility for their actions, and their behaviour is exemplary. The dedicated work of the 24

pupils acting as playground leaders every break time is just one example of the responsibilities that pupils are given and which they enjoy. The school places great store on pupils' development of healthy lifestyles, and they all know how to look after themselves well. Pupils soon learn that the school is a safe place, and know that they can talk to staff if they have any personal concerns. They are thoroughly involved in the school and local communities. The school council regularly undertakes surveys of pupils' opinions, analyses responses, and plans accordingly. The enthusiastic work of the 'smile squad' of pupils at all break times ensures that no pupil is left out or ignored. Such activities mean that pupils have a very good understanding of citizenship. Pupils' independence, and their high standards in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT), prepare them very well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are never less than good, and often excellent. Teachers' planning is exceptional and in all subjects is firmly based on the use of careful, but simple, assessments. This ensures that tasks are pitched at the right level for all pupils. Learning is fun. Lessons move forward at a very good pace and pupils' attention is held throughout. The use of resources, such as the interactive whiteboards and computers, inspires pupils to try their hardest. The PE (physical education) survey in Year 4 entailed pupils using a spreadsheet to record their results and a multimedia program to present their findings. This is an exceptionally high level of achievement in ICT for their age.

High expectations of pupils' behaviour are evident in all classrooms. Teachers and teaching assistants are very skilful at creating a learning environment where pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and work together to meet the exacting challenges they are given. The planning and preparation that went into an outstanding lesson in Year 5, led by teaching assistants on safety in the kitchen, was matched by the enthusiasm of the responses and the outstanding progress made by all pupils. Marking is carried out with the pupils, and is used very well to give very clear and immediate pointers about what they need to do reach even higher standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding, due to the staff's sustained determination to provide pupils with a very broad range of interesting and inspiring work to do. Each year, projects give pupils an excellent variety of experiences that develop their academic progress and personal and social skills. These also widen their understanding of all the opportunities available to them. For example, work in music and drama culminated in a dance festival where pupils performed 'Bollywood' dances from the country they had been studying. One parent said, 'One of the best things about Fair Oak is the sense of fun; the huge projects help children to learn widely and create fantastic memories.' These projects involve the whole school and develop strong links with the local community. Themed weeks focus on specific areas of the curriculum. For example, the photography challenge led to a display that carefully observed changes in science. There is a huge number of well-attended clubs including French, German, gymnastics, choir and all sports.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding level of care for its pupils, and related procedures, including child protection, are very good. Health and safety routines, and risk assessments, are firmly in place and are carried out thoroughly and regularly. Pupils' safety and well-being are always paramount, ensuring that the school is a very safe and supportive place to be. The partnership with parents is exemplary. The Parent Staff Association provides unstinting support and is a real asset to school.

Linked to the exceptional practice in pastoral care, there are robust procedures in place to assess the pupils' academic progress. Comprehensive assessment information is regularly updated, and pupils' strengths and weaknesses are accurately identified. This information is used to provide appropriate support or extra challenges at all times.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The very experienced headteacher's leadership is excellent, and with the outstanding skills of the senior management team and year leaders, they make an impressive team. All staff follow their lead, and teamwork is a strong aspect stressed by all involved with the school. The administrative team is recognised by all concerned, especially the parents, as a considerable asset to the pupils and is very much appreciated for all the many ways that it supports the school. One way in which everyone follows the headteacher's exemplary lead is to relate extremely effectively with all pupils, parents and the local community. Partnerships are outstanding. Management at all levels is good, and strongly committed to the continuing professional development of staff. This is reflected in the drive of leaders and managers to continue to improve the already amazing curriculum and to do their very best for all pupils. There is an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and areas that need refinement through the excellent school development plan. The excellent governing body brings a wide range of skills to bear to act as a critical friend, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where this is judged to be necessary.

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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?	2
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**

08 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fair Oak Junior School, Eastleigh, SO50 7AN

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school when we visited you recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and would now like to tell you what we found out about your school. We agree with what you told us - Fair Oak Junior is an excellent school. These are the main reasons why we thought the school was so good.

- You make outstanding progress and really try hard at all times. We were very impressed that you knew what to do to make your work even better.
- We saw that you know you are especially lucky to have so many different activities both during and after school. We were very impressed by the school band, choir and Bollywood dancers.
- Your headteacher and staff do a super job in organising the school and making sure you have interesting lessons.
- You all really enjoy being in school. Many of you try very hard to help others. For instance, the school council, the 'smile squad' and playground leaders do a super job.
- You behave exceptionally well, work hard and listen carefully to your teachers - all of this helps you to succeed.
- All the adults in the school look after you very carefully. They always make sure that you get help if you need it.

We agree with the governors and staff of your school, and we have asked them to make sure that you continue to achieve the very high standards in writing that you achieve in all the other subjects. We also concluded that there are ways in which the staff could help you to find out even more about how other people live in Great Britain.

Finally, we would like to thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

Yours faithfully

David Marshall

Lead Inspector