

Denmead Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116043
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326313
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Gadd HMI

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)	293
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Amanda Kennedy
Headteacher	Miss Eleanor Beale
Date of previous school inspection	9 March 2006
School address	Bere Road Denmead PO7 6PH
Telephone number	02392 252735
Fax number	02392 230824

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Denmead Junior School is larger than average. A small proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low and all pupils speak English as their first language. A larger than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This group includes pupils with physical disabilities, moderate and severe learning needs, dyslexia, those with behavioural, emotional and social needs and those requiring speech and language support.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Denmead Junior School is a satisfactory school. It provides a caring environment in which pupils enjoy learning. Standards and achievement in mathematics and science are beginning to rise again after a decline in the last few years. One parent said, 'My child is always happy to come to school'. This captures the views expressed by the majority and concurs with inspection evidence. Positive and encouraging relationships between staff and pupils ensure that personal development and well-being are good, underpinned by the outstanding range of extra-curricular clubs and enrichment activities. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and stay healthy. Pupils are confident in expressing their feelings, respect differences and enjoy exploring a variety of cultures.

In 2008, standards and achievement in the end of Year 6 national tests declined considerably. In mathematics, standards were considerably low and in science they were broadly average. Pupil progress was weak in both these subjects. In English, standards were above average and progress was good. In 2009, unvalidated data from the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that pupils reached above-average standards and made good progress in English. Overall standards, when including mathematics and science were broadly average, and progress, satisfactory. This improvement in achievement and standards from the previous year is underpinned by a good curriculum that provides pupils with a meaningful context in which to learn. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, due to the good adult support they receive and the good links the school has with other agencies.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has led the school through a difficult time including periods of staff absence and, along with her senior management team, has worked tirelessly to limit the negative impact this has had on standards and achievement. Recent well-planned actions have led to fundamental changes in the planning of mathematics and the good development of staff subject knowledge in this area. The science leader has developed clear links with other subjects so that pupils understand how science is a part of everyday life. These actions have yet to have their full impact on overall progress, although the number of pupils now making good progress in mathematics and science across the school is beginning to rise.

Teaching and learning have also improved and are now consistently good. Pupils are beginning to catch up on past underachievement as a result of an increased focus in this area. Teachers engage pupils and provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and in small groups. Pupils are aware of what they are learning, and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust within the classroom. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace and work is well matched to pupils' needs. Good questioning by teachers is developing pupils' understanding of new concepts well. As this is a recent improvement, the full impact has not yet been seen but is becoming apparent in pupils' increasing rate of progress in mathematics and science.

Academic guidance is generally satisfactory. Where it is good, in English for example, marking is of a high standard and provides pupils with a clear understanding of how to improve their work. Pupils are able to talk confidently about their targets. This good practice is not yet consistently applied in mathematics or science. The school has begun to use the new strategy, Assessing Pupil Progress (APP), and recognises that this now needs to be further developed. Pastoral care and support provided for pupils are good and are having a positive impact on pupils' well-being and self-esteem.

The improvements in pupil outcomes indicate that there are clear emerging strengths in aspects of the current leadership and management. In view of the existing good teaching and learning and the school's very effective self-evaluation the capacity for improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in mathematics and science to a consistently good level across the whole school.
- Ensure that the new national strategy, APP, for assessing pupil progress is fully implemented.
- Improve marking so that pupils have a clear understanding of their targets and how to improve their work.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry varies from year to year from broadly average to above average. In the last few years, actions to improve standards and achievement have not occurred rapidly enough to prevent the decline in test results in mathematics and science. In 2008, while standards in English were above average following good progress, pupils' progress in mathematics and science was particularly weak. However, since then the impact of the school's initiatives is becoming apparent. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in mathematics and science and have maintained the good progress they made in English. Standards in English remain above average and in mathematics and science are now average. Overall standards are broadly average. Pupils who have physical disabilities, moderate and severe learning needs, dyslexia, behavioural, emotional and social needs and those requiring speech and language support make good progress due to the good targeted support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. Pupils say they feel safe and one child commented, 'they're big on safety here'. They have a clear understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle including the importance of exercise. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are able to reflect on issues such as death, beliefs and different cultures. They have a clear understanding of what is acceptable and what is not and consequently, their behaviour is good overall. Although sometimes, a small number of pupils temporarily lose concentration during lessons. Pupils are aware of the needs of others and listen attentively to their views. Pupils enjoy the responsibility they have in the school council, showing good awareness of the school as a community and contributing well to it. They are particularly pleased with their fundraising efforts, both for local charities and those in Laos. Pupils talk with confidence and work collaboratively, demonstrating good speaking and listening skills. The sound development of academic skills and the ability to plan and work in a team are preparing them well towards their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers create a purposeful working environment and relationships are strong. This enables pupils to feel confident in answering questions and sharing their ideas. In English and the integrated learning units, pupils make consistently good progress. In mathematics and science there have been improvements in planning and teachers' subject knowledge. The school's internal data and observations by inspectors indicate that pupils are beginning to make progress at a more rapid pace, overcoming past shortcomings in learning. Interactive whiteboards are used well and support pupils' learning. Learners are encouraged to evaluate their own work and to discuss this with their peers. Pupils are challenged to share their thinking skills. This is particularly the case in mathematics where pupils are demonstrating a growing confidence to share and discuss different methods of solving mathematical problems with one another. Assessment through target setting is being developed and the school recognises the need to ensure that this becomes consistently embedded into school practice.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has been well developed and provides a broad range of activities. It enables pupils to develop their academic, creative, practical and sporting skills. The introduction of a well-planned integrated curriculum has made learning more meaningful and has increased pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment. The school rightly recognises the need to strengthen the mathematical elements in the integrated curriculum programme in order to increase understanding and achievement in this area. There are outstanding opportunities for enrichment activities such as a variety of sports clubs, yoga, street dance, cookery, woodwind, violin, and drama. The curriculum is also enhanced by a variety of visits to such places as Hampton Court, the Mary Rose, theatre trips and residential weeks for Year 6 and Year 4. Visitors to the school enable pupils to develop an understanding of the wider community while the support to a school in Laos gives them an awareness of the wider world and cultures. The school is looking towards becoming an 'eco school' and consequently the pupils have a strong sense of the importance of caring for their world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care and support provided are good. Procedures for safeguarding and health and safety are fully established and are robust. The commitment and teamwork of the whole staff has created a safe and happy place for learning to take place. Pupils are happy and confident in approaching adults in the school to solve problems. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils are set challenging targets but the guidance that pupils receive to achieve these is variable in different subjects. Academic guidance is good in English; pupils are given clear advice through marking and through discussion of targets on how to improve their work. Consequently, pupils are better informed and make good progress in this area. The school realises that this good practice now needs to be embedded in mathematics and science.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Since the last inspection, staffing difficulties have had a negative impact on the pace at which improvements were made. Until recently, leaders and managers have focused on developing and implementing the good integrated curriculum and sustaining the good provision in English. Although changes have occurred since the last inspection in mathematics and science, as yet there is limited evidence of improved attainment. Recently the school's focus has shifted to this area of need.

The headteacher has ensured that all staff share a common vision and commitment and work together to raise standards and achievement within this fully inclusive school. Good self-evaluation is supported by rigorous systems to check each pupil's progress. Challenging targets are set and the school is further developing its process for monitoring outcomes for groups of pupils. Leaders and managers at all levels are now monitoring teaching and learning through observation, examination of planning, work scrutiny and pupil conferencing. As a result of these emerging strengths within leadership and management, a growing number of pupils are beginning to make better than satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. Sufficient time has not yet passed to evaluate the full impact of the school's actions for improvement.

The school is aware that some parents are concerned about general communication between home and school and the information they have access to. Currently the school regularly shares information with parents through newsletters and, as a result of recent feedback, has changed its systems for reporting on progress. The school is considering changes to the way it seeks the views of parents. The governing body provides a satisfactory level of support; it ensures that the school meets all statutory requirements. Sub-committees are established to support and challenge the work of the school. Community cohesion is good. The school has a clear understanding of what is required to develop it further and is taking effective action to improve pupils' awareness of other cultures both locally and internationally through its links with the Medina Mosque in Southampton and a school in Laos.

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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	2

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	2

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	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	2
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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	2
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**

30 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Denmead Junior School, Denmead, PO7 6PH

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. You were very helpful and polite, and we enjoyed talking to you. You are proud of your school, behave well and we can see that you enjoy coming to school. I am writing to inform you of our findings.

These are the best things about your school:

- it is a very happy place where you enjoy your lessons and get on well with each other
- you know how to keep safe and healthy, and enjoy taking lots of exercise
- you make good progress in English and satisfactory progress in mathematics and science
- the curriculum is fun and your teachers help you to enjoy your learning
- you have lots of clubs you can join and many school trips that add to your learning experience
- your school provides you with a satisfactory education and you reach above-average standards in English and average standards in mathematics and science
- the headteacher and her staff want the very best for you and are determined that you should make as much progress as you can in lessons.

We have asked your school to improve three things to make it even better:

- make sure that you make good progress and reach high standards in mathematics and science
- ensure that you all benefit from the new way in which teachers assess your work
- make sure that marking helps you to improve your work and that you understand your targets for improvement.
- You can help by doing your best in all your lessons.

Yours faithfully

Susan Gadd

Her Majesty's Inspector