

Siskin Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116172
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326340
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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 of pupils on the school roll	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Tiltman
Headteacher	Sean Connor
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They looked at school documentation, including development plans, recent monitoring reports, safeguarding procedures and pupils' books. Inspectors analysed 16 responses to the parents' questionnaire.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which teaching promotes good progress by providing sufficient challenge to all groups of learners
- the use of targets in lessons including pupils' own assessment of how well they are doing
- how well leaders have made improvements through monitoring, particularly in improving the quality of teaching and learning
- the success of changes made across the school to improve writing standards.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than an average junior school. It draws its pupils from the local area. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is well above average. Most pupils are of White British origin, with the next largest group being White from other backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. These are mostly pupils with behavioural and/or basic literacy and numeracy needs. There are a few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school runs extended services including a breakfast and after-school club. It also provides and coordinates the use of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). Along with Siskin Infant and Nursery School and the Children's Centre Siskin Junior School offers a programme of Family and Adult Learning. Recent reorganisation has increased the number of classes. There are now seven single-age classes. In the previous year, pupils were taught in mixed-age classes.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Pupils' attainment is low and shows little sign of improvement. The most recent 2009 assessment results show a marked dip from those in 2008 and a declining picture of progress. The school's tracking of progress in different classes over the past year shows very inconsistent progress being made by different groups of pupils. The quality of learning observed in lessons is inadequate. While there is some good teaching taking place, too many lessons are barely satisfactory or inadequate. The main reason for this is weaknesses in the planning and provision for pupils of different abilities. In particular, pupils who are more able are getting a poor deal because they are frequently not challenged sufficiently well by the work they are given. Although leaders in the school have identified this as an issue, they have not taken sufficiently robust steps through monitoring teaching to remedy it. Pupils' achievement is inadequate. The previous inspection identified three areas for development. In two of these ' to raise standards, particularly in boys' writing, and to improve the match of work to pupils' abilities ' progress has been poor. However, in the third issue, to raise attendance, the school has made progress and this is now satisfactory. The lack of effective action taken on the part of leaders in the school is evidence of the school's inadequate capacity for sustained improvement.

The performance of individuals and different groups of pupils is carefully tracked. However, there is little sign that this information is used in lessons because on many occasions the more able pupils were expected to work through inappropriately low-level work before being moved on to more challenging material. Too often the pace of learning was slow and, as a result, harder work was not reached. Changes to the curriculum to improve writing have been introduced but are not yet embedded across the school. Consequently, they have had very little impact on pupils' progress. In one lesson observed, writing skills were taught well with good use of drama and this helped the pupils to develop their vocabulary well. The use of targets both in lessons and through marking is developing securely. Most pupils can say what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) fairly confidently. However, weak reading and writing skills hamper their ability to draw information from websites.

Most pupils behave well in and around the school. They are polite and say they enjoy

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coming to school. While a majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning and focus well on their work, there are a minority who find it difficult to maintain their concentration. Most respond to gentle prompting by the teacher or other adults and this helps them to listen and take a more active part in lessons. Teaching assistants are active in their support for these pupils who are mainly boys. The pupils have a good understanding about how to lead healthy lives, especially the value of being active and taking exercise. The school is a calm and cohesive community. Pupils' satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is shown in their understanding of the difference between right and wrong and how they cooperate with each other in lessons. All the pupils spoken to say that incidents are dealt with firmly and fairly by adults. They feel safe in school. Pupils' cultural development is the weaker area and this reflects the school's limited success in promoting stronger links in the wider community.

Governors are not sufficiently well involved in the strategic direction of the school or in monitoring how well it is doing. Coordinators have a clear understanding of what needs to be improved but implementation of change has been slow and patchy. This is because the focus for improvement has not been sharp enough. Governors are not all sufficiently well involved in evaluating the quality of teaching or in shaping the overall direction of the school. Planning for improvement arising from the school's own evaluation does not have sufficiently clear timescales and outcomes. However, the school's very recent plan for raising attainment is more sharply focused.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and strengthen progress across the school especially in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - improving the consistency of teaching through rigorous monitoring and evaluation to urgently raise the proportion of good lessons
 - significantly improving lesson planning so that by the end of the autumn term, the work provided for groups of pupils consistently matches their ability
 - strengthening the involvement of governors in monitoring the work of the school and staff in the evaluation of improvement
 - ensuring that plans for improvement are sharply focused on key issues, contain clear measures to help evaluation of the success of changes made, and are clearly understood and implemented by all staff.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

The school's tracking of information over the past year shows a very inconsistent picture of progress being made by pupils in the mixed-age classes. Progress was slower in Years 3 and 4, with pupils making up some of the lost ground in Years 5 and 6. This picture of inconsistent progress in the current reorganised classes remains. Most learners, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and particularly those who are more able, are not making sufficient progress to raise pupil

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attainment to the expected levels. Across the school writing skills are very weak. Basic skills in using number and mental mathematics have rightly been identified by leaders as requiring significant improvement. A very recent external report rightly concluded that there was an urgent need to raise pupil attainment and progress. The school is working well to support pupils' social and emotional development.

Pupils' attainment when they come into school is well below average. The Year 6 assessment results since the last inspection show that pupil attainment is low in English, mathematics and science. Results showed some improvement in 2007 and 2008. However, the 2009 performance information provided by the school indicates a marked dip in performance. Weaknesses in basic skills and lack of independence in learning give the pupils a poor preparation for future challenges.

The pupils say that behaviour is improving and that there are now few pupils who do not behave well. They report that bullying was an issue in the school last year, but it is now much improved and, as a consequence, they feel much safer. They are confident that incidents are dealt with by adults. Most enjoy coming to school and happily take on responsibility to help it run smoothly. They say that good attendance is often talked about and they like the prizes they can get from coming very regularly. They play happily together at playtimes. They know a lot about keeping fit and have a good awareness of being safe on the roads. One pupil commented that there were 'loads of after-school clubs'. They say that these are well attended, particularly those that involve sport. A minority of pupils express their views and opinions with confidence and maturity, others show more reluctance. In an assembly on being kind and considerate, most pupils responded appropriately when given time to reflect, and joined in with the prayer. Pupils have limited awareness of the diversity of British society.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is inadequate because of fundamental weaknesses in planning, arising from the poor use of assessment information. The pace of learning in lessons is too slow, for example when the pupils are kept busy carrying out low-level tasks involving cutting out and very simple sorting. On some occasions teaching assistants support the pupils well, especially when helping to provide support to keep pupils focused on their work or in reading basic information. At other times they are inadequately deployed or not sufficiently well briefed. There are extended periods when some pupils, particularly boys, disengage from learning without being challenged. Marking is improving, providing comments to commend good work and setting further challenges. Most pupils know what they need to do to improve because targets are stuck into their books and referred to during lessons.

The curriculum has significant shortcomings in meeting the needs of pupils in the school. Provision to improve pupils' basic skills is not yet securely in place. Appropriate strategies to improve writing, for example, have been introduced but not yet driven through well enough to secure consistent implementation. This is hampering progress. Guided reading is not meeting the needs of all of the pupils sufficiently well. Weak basic skills are hampering learning across different subjects. Strengths in the curriculum include a strong focus on pupils' personal, social and health development. Pupils say they enjoy the wide range of activities on offer after school, and trips and visits. Breakfast club provides a calm start to the day and pupils say they enjoy going to the after-school club. Assemblies provide appropriate opportunities for reflection and worship.

As at the previous inspection, the care of pupils is good. Pupils who are potentially vulnerable, with emotional and behavioural needs, are given good support to help them work alongside their classmates. The climate for learning is supportive and pupils feel confident to make mistakes. Procedures to promote better attendance and follow up on pupils who are persistently absent are effective. However, more remains to be done to help pupils to become more confident and independent in their work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The steps being taken to secure better teaching are largely ineffective. The headteacher has monitored lessons and provided feedback but this has had limited impact. Crucially, leaders know that some teaching in the school is inadequate or barely satisfactory and have not taken sufficiently strong steps to improve it. There is wide acceptance among the leaders that provision for the more able pupils is not good enough, yet action to deal with this has been far too slow and ineffective. The provision to secure equal opportunities is inadequate. While there is a desire on the part of staff to improve the life chances of the pupils, efforts made to embed improvement since the previous inspection have been ineffective. Improvement has been hampered because the focus for development is not always clear or sharp enough. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate. Coordinators have not been given a strong enough lead by the headteacher regarding their roles and responsibilities, for example in evaluating subject provision in lessons.

The school is a calm and orderly community. Safeguarding policies and child protection procedures meet the current government requirements. The school has had some success in developing links with parents. A good deal of information goes home and there are increasing numbers of parents attending evenings to discuss their children's progress. Links with the community are strengthened through the school's management of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and the programme of Family and Adult Learning. There are a number of new governors and the chair of governors has been recently appointed. Governors have yet to get to grips with some aspects of their work and have not provided a sufficiently strong challenge to the work of the school through monitoring. The plan to promote community cohesion is recent and based on a clear evaluation of the school's local context. Evaluation is patchy, but identifies the need to develop pupils' multicultural understanding.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

School surveys of parents and carers show that they have a positive view of the school's work. Communication between parents and the school is regular. The inspection survey outcomes provide limited information since only a small proportion of questionnaires were returned. A few parents chose to add comments which are evenly balanced between positive and negative views. There is no common strength or weakness expressed. The parents' evening which took place on the first day of the inspection drew in good numbers to talk with staff about children's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Siskin Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 142 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	5	31	11	69	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	8	50	7	44	1	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	5	31	10	63	1	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	13	13	81	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	19	12	75	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	25	11	69	1	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	25	10	63	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	3	19	10	63	2	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	31	10	63	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	25	10	63	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	2	13	12	75	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	19	9	56	2	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	5	31	10	63	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Siskin Junior School, Gosport, PO13 8AA

Thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and felt very welcomed by you and your teachers. We think your school looks after you well, but it is not giving you a good enough quality of education to enable you to make the progress you are capable of by the time you leave. This is because improvements are needed to help you to learn better, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.

This is what we found:

- your lessons do not always help you learn as well as you could, although some are good and particularly enjoyable
- your behaviour is getting better and a majority of you listen well to your teachers and answer questions
- you are getting better at knowing what you need to do to improve your work because of the targets you have been given and the comments made by your teachers
- you have a good understanding of the importance of being active and keeping healthy
- you feel safe in school and are well cared for by the adults
- your attendance is improving which means you have more opportunities to learn.

We have asked your headteacher and the other adults to do these things:

- ensure that all of your lessons help you to learn as well as possible
- make sure that the work given to you meets your needs and is at just the right level to help you make better progress
- improve how your teachers and the school governors keep an eye on how well you are doing to make sure things are getting better
- make sure that the plans they write to improve the school cover the right things and lead to improvements in your learning.

All the adults in school will be working hard to make the school better. To help the school an inspector will visit regularly to check the progress it is making. You can all help by making sure that you always do your best and concentrate hard on your work.

Yours sincerely

Peter Clifton

Lead Inspector

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