

Court Lane Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116198
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	326344
Inspection date	16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	George Rayner

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	360
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	120
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robin Lander-Brinkley
Headteacher	Mrs Chris Twigg
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hilary Avenue Cosham Portsmouth PO6 2PP
Telephone number	02392 378 890
Fax number	02392 200 325

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following areas of its work: achievement and standards; teaching and learning; the curriculum; the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); and leadership and management, including the capacity to improve. Evidence was gathered from: lesson observations, discussion with staff, governors and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data and the school's documentation. Parents' questionnaires and additional comments were also analysed. Other aspects were not inspected in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. Almost all pupils have White British heritage and very few are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall. However, this includes a significant number of pupils with a range of chronic medical needs, some of which make concentration and learning difficult. The school provides for pupils in the EYFS in four Reception classes. There is provision for registered childcare on the school site, before and after the school day, which is run by a private company.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. There are some outstanding aspects, including the curriculum and the quality of care, support and guidance for pupils. Pupils' personal development and well-being, together with their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also outstanding. Pupils enjoy school immensely. They show this through their regular attendance, excellent behaviour and high enthusiasm in joining in with all that the school has to offer. Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to eat and drink sensibly and know why this is important. They thoroughly enjoy playing lively games, using the exciting designs in the school playground. They are proud that they chose these. They say that the adults often listen to their ideas, expressed through an active 'pupil voice'. Pupils readily volunteer for roles such as 'playground buddies' and 'playground leaders', making thoughtful written applications saying why they are suitable for these roles. Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to understand their role in the school community and to begin to understand less familiar ones. Because the pupils respond so well to this, for example when raising funds to help people in different and challenging circumstances, it powerfully supports them in developing as secure and valuable members of the community. This and pupils' progress in their learning prepares them well for the future.

The school cares extremely well for its pupils, so that they feel very secure. Systems for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare are very well organised. Staff have regularly updated training on child protection. Several parents commented upon the superb support that they have received for their children's individual needs, for example in times of bereavement. The needs of all pupils are carefully identified and the school takes exemplary steps to ensure that they are very well provided for. This includes the employment of a welfare assistant and individual designated support staff for pupils with chronic medical needs. It results in these pupils being fully involved in school life. Excellent links with specialised agencies ensure continued high quality support for pupils who need this. Each pupil's progress is carefully tracked, and staff use a range of effective strategies to help those who need support to catch up.

Since the last inspection the school has further improved its already outstanding curriculum by enhancing information and communication technology (ICT) provision. This has resulted in pupils improving their ICT standards to above average levels. The curriculum has several major strengths, including excellent music provision, enhanced by specialist teaching. Several exciting focus weeks add greatly to pupils' enjoyment of learning and give them excellent opportunities to bring together their skills from different subjects. For example, during an art week, pupils were stimulated to create some excellent art of their own and learned about the past when studying famous artists such as L. S. Lowry. A highly effective focus on health education contributes greatly to pupils' ability to care for themselves and others.

Although there was considerable variation between individual pupils, those who finished Year 2 in 2007 and 2008 entered the school at broadly expected levels. These pupils achieved well, so that their overall standards were above average by the end of Year 2. Standards are highest in mathematics and reading, where they are significantly above average. Progress is very good in these subjects. Pupils develop a good understanding of how numbers work and many learn to read well for their own enjoyment. Standards in writing, whilst above average, are less secure. Although pupils write well, the more able pupils do not always write with the versatility and fluidity that might be expected of them. This has been due to limited curricular opportunities to tackle varied writing tasks. However, the school has improved this. As a result, its assessments

show a significant rise in the writing standards of the pupils who have just finished Year 1, compared to last year. The needs of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with chronic medical needs, are carefully identified and effectively provided for. As a result, they make as good progress as their classmates.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers ensure that pupils know how to reach their learning objectives. Their enthusiasm strongly motivates pupils. They plan effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, and use marking well to encourage pupils and show them how to improve. Teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is very effective in giving additional help to pupils. Lessons are often outstanding; in these, highly imaginative methods inspire pupils. In a Year 2 class, pupils thoroughly enjoyed conducting a 'traffic survey', using moving images presented on an interactive whiteboard. Teaching is not yet consistently outstanding, however. For example, teachers occasionally do not make fullest use of pupils' responses to prompt them to improve. The school runs frequent curriculum workshops for parents, to ensure that they are well equipped to support their children's learning. These are popular and well-attended.

Leadership and management are good. Long-term illness of key staff has presented a significant challenge in maintaining the school's quality and performance. The headteacher and deputy have guided the school through this difficult period in an exemplary manner. They have maintained a resolute and sharply focused determination to continue to improve the school. Staff working at all levels share this fully. Subject leaders are well involved in monitoring their areas and contribute their own ideas for further improvement. A few have recently taken over their subjects and are not yet fully involved in securing first hand evidence by observing lessons. Plans are in hand to develop this. The governors are well organised and support the school through their commitment and are willing to challenge and question it when necessary. Rigorous self-evaluation has provided clear awareness of strengths and areas requiring further improvement. Well-focused strategies are being put into place, although some, for example to improve writing standards, are too recent to have had full impact. The school's leaders have succeeded well in maintaining most strengths identified by the previous inspection and fully tackling the only improvement requirement, related to ICT. The track record demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There is significant variation between the skills and knowledge of different children when they enter the EYFS. However, these are at broadly expected levels overall. Children make good progress. They enjoy their learning through an effective balance of adult led activities and opportunities to play and explore, both indoors and outside. At this early stage in the academic year, only a few children know their numbers to 10, but they have fun playing a variety of games to learn these. Children are able to sustain concentration extremely well when sitting on the carpet and persevere in practical tasks. They work co-operatively in small groups, discussing what they have to do and respecting each other's points of view, in exemplary fashion. Children respond very well to challenges and are good at independent activities. Their lively curiosity is stimulated by the rich environment and curriculum.

The adults are well qualified and skilled in meeting the needs of very young children. Teachers consider the unique needs of each child when planning activities and make very good use of observations to track the progress of each. The adults provide outstanding care for the children. The EYFS area is well-equipped, safe and secure, enabling all children to thrive. Relationships are excellent. Children commented that everyone in the school was 'really helpful and kind and

made learning fun'. The partnership with parents is exemplary, fully ensuring that all important information about each child is shared. Each morning a teacher is by the entrance to ensure that parents can share any concerns with staff.

The EYFS is well led and managed. Leaders have high aspirations and they evaluate provision continually. Following a recent change in leadership, there has been close liaison between current and previous staff to effectively identify areas needing further improvement. This identified that, while children make good progress in their reading, this could be even better. A well thought-out strategy to secure this by improving resources to enhance children's enjoyment and increase their ability to talk about what they have read, is too recent to have had full effect.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing for the most able pupils.
- Improve the consistency of teaching so that the quality in all lessons matches the best to be seen in the school.

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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?	2
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	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	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	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?	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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

03 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Court Lane Infant School, Portsmouth, PO6 2PP

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you. We are grateful for the help you gave, by talking to us and showing us your work. We were able to see that yours is a good school.

You make good progress in your learning and reach standards that are higher than those in most schools. We could see that you are very good at numeracy. Some of you told us that you love reading and you are very good at this, also. While you are also good at writing, your teachers know that you can be even better. We have asked them to help you do this as soon as possible.

The teachers help you a lot by teaching you well. Some lessons are outstanding. This is when the teachers come up with really good ideas for exciting things to do. We know that you really enjoy these lessons and work even harder than usual. Some lessons are not quite as good. We have asked the teachers to make all lessons as good as the best.

Some things about your school are excellent. One is the way that you are growing up. The adults are proud of you and look after you very well. Some of you told us that you know this and this makes you feel safe and happy. You help your teachers a lot by coming to school regularly, behaving very well, working hard and joining in with the things that they plan for you. Although your school is so good already, the headteacher and other adults still want to make it even better. They have some good ideas for doing this and we know that you often help with your own ideas.

Very well done to you all and very best wishes for your future lives.

Yours sincerely

George Rayner

Lead Inspector