

Meon Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116222
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	326348
Inspection dates	29–30 April 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)	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jim Cuffe
Headteacher	Mrs Louise Linscott
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2006
School address	Shelford Road Southsea Portsmouth PO4 8NT
Telephone number	02392 732844
Fax number	02392 772030

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
Inspection number	326348

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Meon Junior is an above-average-sized school. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, with 90 per cent of pupils being White British. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average at 29 per cent. The nature of pupils' special needs include moderate learning, social, emotional, behavioural and speech or communication difficulties. A considerable number of pupils who join the school mid-year have special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Meon Junior is a good school. This is due to the excellent leadership of the headteacher, the overall efficiency of the management and the outstanding quality of pastoral care provided for pupils. A very supportive atmosphere for learning exists that ensures the pupils make good progress and achieve well. As one parent wrote, 'My daughters have both made very good progress during their time at Meon Junior, and I have no doubt that this is due to the strong leadership and wonderful teaching, which is also forever challenging the children to exceed all our expectations.' The quality of the many links the school has forged with the local and wider communities is testament to its outward approach to learning and typifies its good contribution to community cohesion.

Pupils enter the school with skills and understanding that are in line with, or just below, expectations for their age. Thanks to the care shown by all adults, pupils of all abilities make good, if varied, progress throughout the school. Careful analysis and planning enables pupils consistently to reach average, or above, standards in national tests. In the unvalidated test results for 2008, pupils reached above-average standards in science and average standards English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in these subjects was also average, and in line with the school's expectations. This represents good achievement for this cohort of pupils from their starting points in Year 3. By providing good-quality help from very well-qualified teaching assistants wherever it is needed, the above-average number of pupils with learning difficulties, and the most vulnerable pupils, make excellent progress, and most attain average standards.

Teaching and learning are good, and often outstanding. Observations and assessments of what the pupils know and can do are collected well and shared with all concerned. Lessons are well planned and based on trying to make sure that all pupils enjoy learning. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching. In almost all classes teachers' presentation is lively and moves learning along at a good pace. The appropriateness of the work offered to pupils in lessons is very good and challenging. However, these best features are not always seen in all classes. Very occasionally the teaching, although satisfactory, and despite the good assessment information available, does not provide consistent challenge. On these very few occasions, pupils' progress slows, and the behaviour of a few pupils is untypical of that normally seen.

It is this inconsistency in teaching that led to the conflicting views expressed in the pre-inspection questionnaires returned by parents of children at the school. A very large majority of parents hold the school in high regard. They commented on the openness of staff, their children's enjoyment of learning, the way the school welcomes all children and the care shown by all staff. Many parents agreed with the sentiments of one who wrote, 'When I asked my eight-year-old daughter for any other comments she said, and;quot;Well, mum, the school is just great so I don't have any other comments!and;quot;' However, there were a very few parents who noted the behaviour of some pupils, and the lack of progress their child had made, in a particular year group. This was entirely consistent with the less-effective teaching observed during the inspection, which the school is working hard to eradicate.

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are very good. By the time they leave the school, pupils become confident, articulate young people, very well prepared for the next stage in their education. They are extremely knowledgeable about how to stay healthy, and are

enthusiastic participants in the many opportunities for physical activities. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all their time in school and really look forward to being with 'all our friends'. They feel safe in school, attendance is satisfactory, and punctuality good. Pupils of all ages are keen to make their own personal contribution through raising money for charities and, particularly as they get older, taking on a wide range of responsibilities. To be selected as a house captain is seen as an honour, and as one girl stressed, 'Is the highlight of my time in the school - so far.' They enthusiastically take up the opportunities provided by special events and theme days to develop good team-working skills and independence, and these skills are fully evident in everyday school life.

The developing curriculum gives pupils increasing opportunities to practise and consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills. Thanks to the exceptional work of the coordinator, the standards reached by pupils, and the cross-curricular use of information and communication technology (ICT), are outstanding. In a series of lessons in the computer suite, the pupils made music allied to their science project in Year 3, transferred text from the outstanding learning platform into their own files in Year 4 and created moving pictures by embedding procedures in Year 5. These were also good examples of the school's development of links between subjects to enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment even further.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the assistant head. All developments are driven forward at a good pace. Strengths and weaknesses are speedily identified because the school has good systems for monitoring its work, in which all staff now play an increasing role. Teamwork is excellent. The school has improved considerably from its position at the time of the last inspection. The capacity to continue to improve is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the school's current systems for sharing best practice to ensure that all teaching is as good as the best, and pupils are enabled to make consistent progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From their starting points and because of effective organisation and very careful assessments, pupils are enabled to make good progress. Individual improvement targets and very good support consistently raise pupils' levels of achievement considerably. National test results in Year 6 in 2008 exceeded the school's carefully formulated and challenging targets. Achievement is good throughout the school due to the rigorous system in place that tracks the progress each pupil makes and identifies where additional teaching will be most beneficial. Pupils do exceptionally well in ICT, and well in music and physical education due to the many opportunities they have to develop their sporting and musical talents. However, the school has recognised that the more-able pupils in some subjects could achieve more. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress overall. They are very well supported by the experienced support staff and have access to a curriculum that helps them all to achieve their potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

In Meon Junior, each pupil is treated as a valued member of the school community and, as a result, their confidence and independence grow exceptionally well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of the different cultures through working so well together and their understanding of living in a culturally diverse Britain is very well developed. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance has improved well to around the national average. Behaviour is generally very good. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other, to staff and to visitors. They develop an excellent understanding of healthy eating, and know the importance of exercise and actively take part in a wide range of sports and other planned activities. Pupils participate in the life of the school and the local community very well. They take seriously their responsibilities as house captains, playground buddies, school councillors and as helpers around the school and play a major role in making a difference. They welcome the many opportunities they have to contribute to the local community by organising fund-raising for charities and taking part in local competitions. Their secure basic skills, together with their very good interpersonal skills, prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In almost all lessons, relationships are exceptionally good and teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is excellent and unobtrusive. Lessons are planned well to cater for the needs of different abilities, and the experienced teaching assistants enable all pupils to participate at their own level. Pupils have good levels of independence, listen attentively, work hard and show great enthusiasm. Pupils respond well to opportunities to reflect on their work as teachers make success criteria clear. The marking of pupils' work is exemplary, with very clear points for development that help them to know how well they have done and how to improve. In the outstanding lessons seen, teachers' high expectations, their skilful questioning and the brisk pace enabled pupils to do their best. Pupils appreciate the teachers' efforts to make work interesting and enjoyable. As one pupil commented, 'Teachers make learning fun.' This level of good teaching is not yet consistent throughout the school. In a small number of lessons time is not used as well and teachers are less consistent in their demands of the pupils for hard work, concentration and good behaviour. As a result, progress though satisfactory, is less rapid than elsewhere.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school curriculum promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning well. It is being revised to promote creativity and practical learning experiences. These approaches are continuing to be developed to include dance, art, drama and technology to increase cooperation, greater enthusiasm and support from the community. The stunning keyboard session observed is a good example of the benefits pupils are already enjoying. The careful planning of literacy and numeracy work includes many different approaches in order to appeal to different pupils. Pupils' enjoyment and achievement is enhanced through a good range of clubs, visits, visitors and extra activities, including residential visits. The sports partnership with other local organisations provides good

opportunities for pupils to access a wide range of sports both in and out of school. An outstanding aspect of the curriculum is the use of ICT to promote understanding and enjoyment. The comprehensive personal and social development provides useful life skills that will help serve learners well in becoming responsible citizens.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. The school provides a safe, enjoyable and secure environment, reflecting the high priority it gives to the care, guidance and support of pupils. Pastoral care, therefore, is outstanding. Policies and procedures to safeguard pupils are embedded and understood by all staff. Pupils say they are happy to talk to teachers if they are sad. One summed it up: 'I look forward to seeing my teacher and being friends with everyone.' Pupils' academic guidance is very good. The reviewed system that is currently being rolled out across the school analyses pupils' learning of units of work and the key skills to be learnt has added extra rigour to the process. This tracking of pupils' actual learning is enabling the curriculum to be accurately focused on precisely what pupils need to learn or practise. Pupils are also more involved in their own learning by evaluating their own and others' progress against the targets set for them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The exceptional headteacher combines a caring approach with a very clear focus on raising standards. All adults involved in the school value her open-door approach, through which she consistently gives an exemplary lead and which contributes to the effective relationships she develops with pupils, parents and the local community. She is given great support by the very effective deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, and a knowledgeable, hard-working team of managers and subject leaders. Although some subject leaders are new to their roles in the School Improvement Teams, management at all levels is good due to the staff's enthusiasm and the effective systems that are in place to monitor pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. Teamwork is of the highest quality. All staff now play a valuable part in moving the school forward. The administrative team, mid-day senior supervisor and site manager, are considerable assets to the school and are very much appreciated by all concerned.

There is a clear understanding of strengths of the school and areas that need more development. The school's self-evaluation is effective and comprehensive improvement plans set out the school's very challenging targets and provide clear guidance for raising standards. Although the school has a number of vacancies on the governing body, the current governors bring a wide range of skills to their role as critical friends. They are very committed to the school, and hold staff to account by challenging decisions and requesting explanations.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	3
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	1
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	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	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

14 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meon Junior School, Portsmouth, PO4 8NT

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we came to the school recently. Thank you for sharing with us your thoughts and feelings about school. You obviously thoroughly enjoy school and contribute much in making the school successful. We saw you go to a good school, and your behaviour, positive attitudes to work and play and the ways in which you care for one another are outstanding.

The school is a caring place and the staff work hard to make learning fun. The teaching is good and the curriculum also helps to make learning fun and interesting. We were very impressed by your enthusiasm for all of the extra activities you join in and for the sensible way you discuss your work. The school is well organised and your headteacher and the staff make sure that everything runs smoothly. You play your part well in making decisions through the school council.

Even in good schools there are some things that can be made better, and we have asked your teachers to make sure that no matter which class you are in, all your lessons are as good as most of them are. In turn, you must carry on listening carefully and take note of what your teacher says. Then you will all continue to make really good progress in your learning.

We wish you all the very best.

Yours faithfully

David Marshall

Lead Inspector