

Poulner Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116031
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338710
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Rowena Onions

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeremy Heron
Headteacher	Leonie Fawcett
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings and school tracking and progress information. They also took into account the views of parents expressed verbally and through parent questionnaires.

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

- the impact of teaching on pupils' progress in writing ' particularly the progress of higher-attaining pupils
- the impact of school intervention strategies on different groups of pupils, particularly those entitled to free school meals and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- school systems for monitoring and improving attendance
- the impact of current leadership including governance on school improvement.

Information about the school

This average-sized infant school serves its local area on the edge of the town of Ringwood. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and speak English as their first language. A below-average proportion of pupils have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has an Activemark and Enhanced Healthy School status. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for just one year.

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?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

Poulner is a good school that enables pupils to do well. Good teaching and a thoughtful curriculum ensure that pupils make good progress throughout the school. From an average start on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are helped to develop skills and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics. This continues throughout the school. As a result pupils achieve well and make good progress to the point where the standards they reach by the end of Year 2 are above the national average. All groups of pupils do well. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are sensitively supported so that they learn to believe in themselves as well as making good progress. The current school focus on helping pupils who are potential higher-attainers to reach their full potential is paying off, especially in writing which had been a particular issue.

What greatly pleases parents is the way their children are helped to become well-rounded individuals. The way the curriculum is designed means that topics are planned to both develop basic skills and ensure that pupils learn important personal skills. This means that pupils are, for example, aware of the importance of keeping themselves healthy and safe. The development of pupils' skills in information and communication technology is particularly impressive. The school has successful strategies in place to encourage pupils to be independent, self-confident individuals and to work together productively. The combination of all these factors is preparing pupils well for their future lives.

Overall, teaching is good. Very good relationships are developed with the pupils and this makes them want to please their teachers by trying hard. Teachers and other staff are adept at asking the right questions to prompt deeper thought or to structure the learning of something new. Teaching assistants are deployed well and greatly enhance the success of lessons. In the main, pupils are interested and engaged in what they do, but there are occasions when they are expected to stay too long with one activity. At such times attention wanes, as does pupils' enthusiasm and the pace of their learning.

A key feature of the school is the way all staff know, value and look after each individual. Effective assessment and tracking systems mean that underachievement is picked up quickly and action taken to redress the situation. The school is successful in providing individualised personal support for all its pupils, whether this is celebrating with them or helping them to overcome personal difficulties. This has a positive impact on the quality of learning and pupils' achievement. There is a good and developing partnership between the school leadership team and parents, including those who are more reluctant to engage with the school. This includes increased attention to promote better attendance. However, currently, attendance is only broadly average and remains

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an area for improvement. Good leadership and management by the relatively new team are driving the school forward well. Many initiatives are new and are yet to show their full impact. However, early signs are that they are further improving pupils' academic and personal progress in what was an already successful school. The school's self-evaluation is detailed and accurate and the areas it is planning to develop are well chosen. As a result, it demonstrates good capacity to sustain its current good trend of improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of teaching and the curriculum on learning by ensuring that:
- pupils always have the opportunity to spend appropriate amounts of time on any one activity
- in each lesson there is a range of different types of activity planned for pupils to be involved in.
- Work with parents in order to raise rates of attendance by at least 1% against the national average over the next two years.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The school has paid careful attention to ensuring that all groups of pupils, such as those who are entitled to free school meals, are helped to make good progress. Although higher-attaining pupils do not yet do as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics, their attainments are nevertheless above average and rising. In lessons pupils show themselves to be as independent as their stage of maturity allows. They try hard and want to please. When they are not expected to stay too long with an activity, they are enthusiastic and diligent learners. Overall, pupils behave well, with a great number demonstrating exemplary behaviour. The few pupils who find self-control difficult are gradually being helped to improve.

Pupils feel very safe. They demonstrate this by the relaxed, confident way they move around the school, the care they take not to do things that might hurt themselves or others and in their openness with familiar adults. Pupils show they want to be healthy by joining in enthusiastically with physical activities and by eating the fruit provided for them. Community is important to the school. Pupils demonstrate good levels of responsibility for their ages. For example, older pupils very seriously support younger pupils in learning to use the library. Pupils gradually make increasing contributions to the community outside the school such as becoming involved with organising the recycling of school waste. All of these outcomes demonstrate that pupils have strong social and moral development. This, combined with their excitement about many things in the world in which they live and a growing ability to reflect on their actions and achievements, means that their spiritual development is also strong. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of their own culture and a growing appreciation of how this compares with the way of life of others. However this area of their personal development, although satisfactory, is not quite as strong as other aspects and

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developing this already features in the school's development planning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Over the last year the school has made some significant changes to the curriculum and to the way pupils are taught. New methods in the teaching of writing are beginning to have positive impact on progress and standards. Teachers make accurate ongoing assessment of their pupils' performance and use these to plan lessons to take learning forward. They give good feedback to their pupils and are careful to show them what they need to do to improve their work.

The attention to personal development through the design of the curriculum is particularly successful. Over each day teachers provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to learn new skills and to practise these in practical and cross-curricular ways. For example, pupils learn to write instructions and at another time use these instructions to make jam sandwiches. The balance of activities in a minority of lessons is, however, not always as good and the impact of the teaching is sometimes reduced. The school is already looking at ways in which the good practice in the foundation

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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classes can be extended to ensure that expectations of the time in a lesson to be spent on a single activity is carefully balanced with opportunities for pupils to be actively involved and practise their skills in a variety of ways.

The safety and well-being of pupils is very actively and successfully promoted. As a result the school's care of all pupils is outstanding. All staff are part of a team who value and support every individual. The provision for those experiencing academic or personal challenges is very well tuned to individual need. Good links with other agencies and professionals are used to full effect. Parents are fully involved with any initiative aimed at supporting an individual. The school has begun to make a difference to rates of attendance by successfully working with those pupils with patterns of persistent absence. It has appropriate plans to extend this work to encourage a wider group of parents to support the school more fully by ensuring their child's good attendance

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Over the last year the new leadership team has formed a clear view of the school's strengths and the way it can be improved. The headteacher is ambitious for the school and is energetic yet thoughtful in the way she leads the school. The introduction of new initiatives has been managed well and all staff demonstrate a shared vision for the future. The governors are supportive and proactive. They are prepared to discuss and question proposed changes and play an appropriate part in decision-making. They are making increasing use of the wealth of data about pupils' progress to hold the school to account in more detail, but they acknowledge that this is work in progress for them. Very good efforts have been made to forge positive partnerships with parents, who are supplied with good-quality information about the work of the school, their child's programme of work and the progress being made. Parents are actively encouraged to become full partners in their child's education, either by helping in school or through the school's 'home education' (homework) programme.

School data are being used to good effect to identify expectations for the progress for each individual pupil. Because of the way this data is used to influence provision, and because of the individualised personal care, the school is highly effective in promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring there is no discrimination. The school has made a good analysis of its own community and the communities of which it is a part. There are already successful activities to ensure the school plays a full part in enhancing school

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and local community cohesion, which are being particularly successful in working with 'hard to reach' groups. There has been good analysis made of the make-up of the local community in terms of faith and ethnicity and the school has forged links with other schools with different contexts to ensure that pupils gain experience of diversity. The impact of this can be seen in the way pupils with a variety of different backgrounds play very well together.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the school with skills and experiences normally expected of this age group, although there are strengths in personal and social development. Because they are well taught in a warm, welcoming environment, they make good progress. By the end of their foundation year, they are emerging as readers and writers and attaining standards in excess of the national expectation for children of this age, which represents good progress especially in their communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. Teachers use a range of skills to interest and engage children in their learning. They demonstrate an enthusiasm for learning which is quickly picked up by the children. The curriculum allows for a good mix of inside and outdoor activities and a good balance between those directly taught by adults and those which allow children to select from a range of activities designed to provide opportunities for them to pursue their own interests. Good leadership and management have ensured that current national advice about provision for young children has been considered and then adapted for the particular circumstances in the school. This underpins the continued effectiveness of the provision.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

77 inspection questionnaires were returned during the inspection. These questionnaires and discussions held with parents show that most parents are happy with the education provided for their children and are positive about the changes being made in the school. However, in about 15% of questionnaire responses parents expressed some concerns about the way the school is being reorganised with pupils being placed in mixed-age classes and then taught in ability groups for a part of the day. The reorganisation had begun only a few weeks before the inspection and was not yet complete. Thus, it was too soon to judge its impact, but there are positive signs. Inspectors found that the school had made good efforts to inform parents and to allay their worries, and that they have good plans to continue this process by giving parents regular updates about the impact on pupils' progress and through providing opportunities for them to discuss any individual concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Poulner infant 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 217 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	70	31	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	71	22	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	36	45	62	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	47	35	49	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	54	72	21	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	53	32	43	2	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	57	32	42	1	1	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)	38	54	31	44	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	49	35	48	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	44	39	53	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	42	35	49	6	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	61	25	35	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	67	22	29	3	4	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



1 October 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Poulner Infant School, Ringwood. BH24 3LA

We really enjoyed our two days at your school and would like to thank you for your help and friendly conversations. I know you will be pleased to know that we judge yours to be a good school.

Here are some of the highlights.

- You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and reach good standards.
- You really enjoy school and try so hard to learn.
- You get on well together and help each other.
- You are treated as a very important people and good care is taken of each one of you.
- Teachers help you to learn lots of new things.
- Everyone in your school, including you, is working together to make it an even better place.

To make things even better, this is what we have asked your school to:

- make sure that teachers are careful to see that you always have just the right amount of time to do the activities they have planned for you and that you have a variety of things to do in each lesson
- work with your parents to make sure that all of you come to school as often as you can and improve what adults call 'attendance'.

We are very glad that you like your school and think you are right to do so. We think that you could help your teachers to make your school even better by continuing to work hard and doing your best.

Yours faithfully

Rowena Onions

Lead Inspector

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