

# Fernhurst Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116221
<b>Local Authority</b>	Portsmouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	338762
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Laver

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	297
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Barbara Lonsdale
<b>Headteacher</b>	Roberta Kirby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Francis Avenue Southsea PO4 0AG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books and a variety of documentation, including 66 parental questionnaires and 95 pupil questionnaires.

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

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

- How well pupils are achieving, especially in English.
- How well pupils' personal development underpins their progress.
- How effective are the strategies used by teachers in improving the quality of classroom learning.
- How well the curriculum and arrangements for care and support are contributing to pupils' development and learning, particularly for groups of vulnerable pupils and those from different backgrounds.
- How effectively leadership at all levels is managing improvement.

## Information about the school

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The majority of pupils in this larger-than-average junior school are from a White British background. The largest group of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds is of Bangladeshi heritage, often of second or third generation. There are many other pupils who have recently arrived from various countries, some of them from families with refugee or asylum-seeker status. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including weaknesses in key skills and a range of emotional and behavioural issues, and the proportion whose first language is not English are both above average. There are a small number of Roma children. A larger-than-average proportion of pupils joins or leaves the school other than at the usual times. Although the headteacher has been in post since before the previous inspection, there have been several changes in the leadership team and other teaching staff in the last two years.

**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?**

**3**

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

**3**

## Main findings

### Main findings

This school has some particular strengths, notably in the quality of the care, guidance and support it provides for a range of pupils with varied needs and from various backgrounds. It is successful in integrating these pupils into what both parents and pupils recognise as a caring community. Pupils make comments such as, 'I think my school is a good place to learn' and, 'The people around me care about me.' Although attendance is below average, it is improving. The great majority of pupils enjoy coming to school, both to learn and to take part in the good range of outside activities, such as the thriving after-school club.

Pupils leave school with average attainment, although the most recent unvalidated 2009 assessment results show the early stages of improvement. Pupils make satisfactory progress, although the rate of this progress is improving, and most pupils are on track to meet appropriately challenging targets in the next school year. Progress is strongest for those pupils who have been in the school since the beginning of Year 3. The improvement has come about partly because the school has begun to resolve the issues created by some changes in staffing. It has adopted a range of increasingly successful strategies, for example to improve boys' standards in writing. Improving progress results from the school's success in integrating pupils from a wide variety of national backgrounds and faiths, and often challenging circumstances. These include the complexities of refugee and asylum-seeker status. Many of these pupils join or leave the school at various times during the school year.

Pupils' social development is a strength of the school. Pupils are polite, welcoming and considerate to each other. Although there is occasionally boisterous or unsatisfactory behaviour, the school manages these incidents well. Pupils enjoy most aspects of lessons, particularly when the teaching is well-paced and encourages active tasks. However, the quality of teaching, while improving as the staffing has become more stable, remains inconsistent in the level of challenge it provides, especially for the more able. Consequently, these pupils do not always make as much progress as they should. The curriculum has some strengths, for example in the range of after-school activities and in music provision, but links between different subjects to enable the transfer of key skills such as writing are still at an early stage of development.

There has been progress since the previous inspection, notably in performance in mathematics. There has been less progress in developing the role of subject leaders, mainly because of several changes in staffing, and this has restricted the frequency, rigour and impact of monitoring. The school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained

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improvement. Although the strategies for improvement are beginning to have an impact, several of them are recent and are not embedded in such a way as to have a consistent impact on learning and attainment. There have been significant successes in other areas, notably in ensuring the effective integration of pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds, promoting community cohesion and enhancing pupils' understanding of the rich diversity of British society and the wider world.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise pupils' attainment and improve progress by:
  - improving the quality of teaching to be consistent with the best practice already evident in some classes, ensuring more able pupils are fully challenged.
- Improve the quality and consistency of learning by:
  - providing opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills
  - improving the way subject leaders monitor classroom practice.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils' achievement is improving. For example, progress in mathematics is better than at the time of the previous inspection and attainment, along with that in information and communication technology (ICT), is stronger than in the other key subjects. Although attainment in English, especially writing, has not met the school's own expectations, it has improved, and boys' progress is catching up with that of the girls. An important factor in this improvement is the teachers' very good use of assessment, which clearly shows pupils the next steps in improving their work. Pupils with special learning needs often make good progress. This is because the school targets them well and support staff help their learning. Many pupils whose first language is not English make good progress from their starting points because of well-targeted individual support.

There is good spiritual development, as seen for example in the reflective work on poetry. Cultural development is promoted through strong music provision, and the school makes effective use of the cultural diversity of its pupils, for example in assemblies. Social development is particularly good. Pupils with very diverse experiences work and socialise together very well, reflecting their enjoyment of school. Behaviour is satisfactory. Although generally good in lessons and around the school, it is sometimes challenging, particularly from pupils from very difficult circumstances. However, the school deals effectively with these instances, so that it is an orderly and safe community, and it is recognised as such by the great majority of pupils and parents. Attendance is below average, but it is improving because the school rigorously addresses the problem of persistent absentees and unauthorised absences through a range of strategies. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Although there are still weaknesses in areas of basic skills, the school prepares pupils for the wider world satisfactorily by encouraging activities, such as the reporters' club and problem solving in teams. Although the school council is not as active as it

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might be, pupils respond well to opportunities to show responsibility in other ways, for example through Year 6 pupils running clubs for other pupils.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. There is some very good teaching and learning, characterised in particular by high expectations and challenge, involving the pupils actively. This was seen, for example, in poetry lessons in which pupils prepared collaboratively to act out a follow-up to 'The Highwayman'. Some teachers mark very effectively in English, involving pupils in assessing their work, making them follow up corrections and using pupils' targets well to show them how they can progress to the next stage of learning. However, marking is used less effectively in other subjects. In some lessons there is insufficient challenge, especially for the most able. This is particularly evident when pupils spend too long listening to the teacher and are given insufficient opportunity to express their ideas at length.

There are some strengths in the curriculum. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, for those whose first language is not English, and for pupils

<sup>1</sup> 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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from challenging backgrounds. The school makes good use of links with other schools, for example to utilise the sports facilities which are lacking on the school's own site. There is good provision in sport and music, with all Year 4 pupils receiving instrumental tuition. Pupils greatly enjoy the out-of-class activities and the after-school club, which both have a good take-up. They talk enthusiastically about trips such as the Dorset residential visit. However, the school's efforts to develop basic skills across the various subjects are at an early stage. Opportunities are often missed in subjects such as history to develop extended writing skills, and the work is sometimes too dependent on worksheets. This does not allow more able pupils in particular to demonstrate more advanced skills. Although the school provides some enrichment activities for gifted and talented pupils, provision for these pupils within the classroom is at an early stage of development. There is a good level of care and support for all pupils, who are confident in asking for help when necessary. The school uses outside agencies very successfully to provide extra support, for example in language development for pupils who come to the school with little or no English. The school works hard to support families as well as pupils to help them develop as confident, rounded learners who enjoy all aspects of school life.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has worked hard to address issues from the previous inspection. She has managed considerable staffing changes and is leading the school into a period of improvement which has begun to bear fruit in furthering pupils' progress. The headteacher is supported by a governing body which is involved well in school life and has a satisfactory understanding of what steps are necessary to move the school to the next level. Monitoring is not fully effective as it relies heavily on the headteacher in the absence of a stable and experienced leadership team. Rigorous monitoring is relatively recent, and the role of subject leaders in this process is still underdeveloped, which accounts for some of the inconsistencies in teaching and progress. The school is very successful in promoting equality of opportunity and nipping any instances of discrimination in the bud. The result is that the school, with its very diverse population, is a happy environment. There are robust arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare. There are good links with other schools in the area, and these links promote staff development as well as providing additional opportunities for pupils, for example in

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sport. The school promotes community cohesion well. Pupils join in local events, and the school utilises the varying experiences of families to develop an understanding of how different cultural experiences can be an enriching as well as a potentially challenging experience. The school has several links with other schools in England and overseas, for example in Caen. These links build on the pupils' understanding of diverse cultures already evident within the school's own immediate environment.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

In the response to questionnaires, parents were very positive about the school's impact on their children's progress and well-being. In particular, they believe that their children enjoy coming to school and feel safe when they are there. Parents greatly appreciate what they regard as the caring, supportive ethos of the school. Typical of many comments was, 'If I have any issues or concerns, staff are happy to listen and deal with them effectively.' Most parents feel that the school is well led, that the teaching is good and that the school meets the particular needs of their own children well. Parents have a high regard for the quality of teaching, although inspection findings show that there is some inconsistency in the teaching. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views overall. A few parents believe that the school does not resolve incidences of misbehaviour effectively, and some feel that the school does not help them support some aspects of their children's learning sufficiently. While acknowledging these concerns, the inspection team believes that the school has involved parents in their children's learning with increasing success since the previous inspection. Inspection



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findings show that although there are examples of unsatisfactory behaviour, lessons are rarely disrupted and the school is an orderly and well-run community.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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

The inspection team received 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 297 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	59	27	41	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	50	32	49	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	28	40	61	4	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	30	38	57	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	41	34	55	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	35	34	55	6	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	41	37	57	3	3	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)	23	32	34	55	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	39	35	59	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	39	35	59	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	27	38	57	3	3	4	6
The school is led and managed effectively	21	32	36	54	3	3	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	42	34	55	0	0	1	1

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



19 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fernhurst Junior School, Francis Avenue, Southsea PO4 0AG

Thank you for your polite and warm welcome when we visited your school recently. You were very friendly when telling us about your school and we enjoyed seeing you in lessons and in other activities around the school.

Fernhurst Junior School gives you a satisfactory education. Not all of you do as well in your learning as you should, partly because the school has gone through a difficult time, with a lot of teachers leaving and joining. This has not made things easy for your headteacher and other staff. Now you are beginning to do better in subjects such as mathematics and English, and very well in ICT. We know that you like coming to school, although several pupils do not attend as regularly as they should. We know that you like most of your lessons, you like the after-school clubs, you like taking on the responsibility of helping others and you feel safe in school. Behaviour is not always as good as it should be, but we were impressed how most of the time you get on very well with each other. The school looks after you very well. As a result, many of you who have difficulties with your work or other problems make good progress. Your teachers often teach you well, especially when they give you interesting things to do which allow you to work together or on your own. However, sometimes teachers do not give the cleverest ones amongst you enough opportunity to show what you can do. Teachers do use your targets well to show you how to improve, and we were impressed by how many of you actually know your targets.

In order to help you learn even better we have asked that:

- the school makes teachers more aware of how to make sure that all of you, especially the cleverest ones, make even more progress
- the headteacher arranges for experienced teachers to have more opportunities to advise other staff on how to help you learn well in all lessons.

By continuing to show the keenness to learn that we have already seen, you can help the school produce even better results.

Yours sincerely

John Laver

Lead Inspector

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