



Stourfield Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113729
Local Authority Bournemouth
Inspection number 289705
Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Peter Clifton

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Cranleigh Road
School category	Community		Southbourne
Age range of pupils	4–7		Bournemouth BH6 5JS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01202 424585
Number on roll (school)	320	Fax number	01202 421 116
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Diana Cobden
		Headteacher	Catherine Kirkham
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2001		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007	Inspection number 289705
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school situated on the outskirts of Bournemouth. The school shares its site with the junior school where most pupils transfer at the end of Year 2. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The school is a designated centre for the development of thinking skills and teachers from other schools visit to observe the school's work in this area.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Its success has come about because of the commitment and teamwork of staff to promote the highest standards, improvement and enjoyment. The headteacher, is rightly very highly regarded by the parents, governors and staff. Initiatives are exceptionally well thought through and innovations are carefully evaluated to assess their impact. The pupils rapidly become part of this drive to improve because they are taught how to evaluate and reflect on their own learning from the time they enter the school. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and their attendance is good. They behave well, respect and help each other. These strengths are recognised by nearly all parents. Many comment on the 'wonderful' school and one parent aptly noted that 'it should be shown as a leading example to other schools'.

The excellent quality of leadership and management results in exceptional levels of achievement. Children come into the school with below expected skills. They make exceptional progress in Reception because of the high quality provision. By the time the pupils move to Year 1 standards are average overall, and speaking, listening and reasoning skills are above average. Pupils continue to do exceptionally well through Years 1 and 2 reaching above average standards. Standards in reading are well above average because of high numbers of pupils attaining the higher Level 3. In Year 2, speaking, reasoning and problem solving skills are exceptionally good.

The quality of teaching and the curriculum are both exceptional. There are two key reasons for the teaching to be as strong as it is. Firstly, all teachers use common approaches built on a solid foundation of developing pupils' thinking. They give pupils time to work out their own solutions often through discussion, challenging them to reason carefully. In lessons, questions posed by the teacher often provoke debate and pupils have to think hard to find answers. Secondly, teachers have an acute understanding of how well pupils are doing and this is communicated to individual pupils who therefore are also very aware of their own progress. Pupils' targets for improving are crystal clear and these form the basis of very effective planning which results in purposeful learning enjoyed by all pupils. The curriculum is highly creative and subjects such as music and art feature strongly. Pupils experience a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The 'Nurture Group' is exemplary. It enables pupils of all ages who have emotional or social difficulties, or delayed development, to integrate effectively. Teaching assistants provide high quality support.

Given the overall strength of provision there are no major areas for improvement. However leaders have accurately identified the need to develop the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement development identified to improve the use of ICT across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are high and all pupils achieve exceptionally well. Children come into school with below average skills and abilities in nearly all areas of learning. Their mathematical development is particularly weak. Children make rapid progress so that by the time they enter Year 1 they have attained average standards. Speaking and problem solving skills are better than those expected because the teaching promotes thinking and reasoning exceptionally well within a highly supportive environment.

The 2005 and 2006 results in Year 2 were above average, having improved markedly from those in 2004. Current standards indicate that this upward trend in results is set to continue. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make excellent progress because they are fully included in lessons and given additional support which is very carefully targeted. A key reason for this success is because teachers and teaching assistants have an acute understanding of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and plan consistently to build skills and understanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils respond well to the high expectations set by teachers. They quickly take up and enjoy the challenge to explain their understanding and develop a clear understanding of how well they are doing. They take great pride in their work and enjoy praise and rewards, and the commendation of their peers as well as the teacher. Pupils are very patient in listening. Good attendance was exemplified by one pupil, who said, 'We always come to school except when we are ill or have to go to a funeral!'

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils feel very safe in the school and very confidently say what they think about school because this is very strongly encouraged. They feel their views are highly valued and respected by teachers and other pupils. Health and safety is very clearly understood in lessons, such as physical education.

A good level of physical activity is evident in the playground during playtime, where organised games are the norm and there are few pupils just standing around. The playground is spacious and extremely well equipped and this encourages children to be imaginative and energetic in their play. The school council help to organise 'walk to school' days, with a very high level of participation. In addition, pupils know about a healthy diet and regularly drink water.

Pupils are involved in the development of rules and they are quick to spot infringements! They set high standards for themselves in their relationships. They take on responsibility for helping to make the school run smoothly. They are very aware of any unpleasant behaviour in the playground and point out when there are shortcomings in the 'buddy system'. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. They are keen to have their say and know how to brief their school council

representative. As a result, for example, they enjoy improved levels of equipment and a reorganised 'Golden Time'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The large majority of teaching is good or better. Children get a flying start to their education in Reception. Staff have very high expectations and, from their earliest time in school, pupils are taught to think for themselves. A superb feature of Reception is the provision to develop speaking, listening and thinking skills. As a result children are remarkably confident when, for example presenting information to the rest of the class. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution through their work with small groups of children.

Nearly all lessons provide a very strong level of challenge to pupils of different abilities and needs. Teaching assistants work sensitively with pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities and this ensures that they are fully included in lessons.

Pupils nearly always give thoughtful answers to questions and readily explain what they understand. When this does not happen, other pupils help or the teacher prompts them to provide further information. This often leads to pupils coming up with ideas of their own. In one mathematics lesson, for example, pupils debated whether 5×7 was the same as 7×5 and how they might find out whether the digits were always reversible in multiplication. The time given to the pupils, and the gentle prompting by the teacher, elicited a sensible and well thought out response from the pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school has a flexible and highly creative curriculum covering all subjects. Art, music and physical education feature prominently at different times of the day making pupils' experiences varied. Key skills such as those requiring problem solving in mathematics are exceptionally well provided for because of the consistent focus on reasoning and explaining. The 'let's think' lessons provide an excellent opportunity for pupils to apply skills in many different subjects. The school plans to enhance pupils' access to computers so that they can use ICT more regularly to extend learning.

The curriculum for children in Reception is exceptionally well planned. Children have an appropriate time for learning through choosing their own activities and there are high levels of quality support provided to guide them with their learning. Opportunities are given for the children to take on different roles such as talking about learning in their role as the 'class teacher'. Visits and visitors provide a valuable further dimension to the work of the school and the good range of clubs is very well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The exemplary commitment of all staff to ensuring the greatest possible quality of personal development and academic achievement for all pupils is a strength of the school. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are very strong. A purposeful, constructive climate for learning successfully promotes a real sense of enjoyment and adventure into the learning. The school teaches pupils how to support others more vulnerable and to include everybody equally in all learning activity.

Pupils understand extremely well what they have to do to improve. This is because they are unusually actively involved in setting their own targets and in assessing how well they have progressed. The school promotes pupils' health and fitness very well, paying attention to their physical, emotional and psychological well-being with equal vigour.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Exceptional leadership by the headteacher and senior staff has resulted in highly successful teamwork. All staff promote common, very high, expectations consistently and effectively. Pupils assimilate the school's values very rapidly, becoming exceptionally effective partners in their own learning.

Excellent planning of all aspects of the school's work has impacted strongly on raising pupils' achievement and on creating enjoyment and success. Self-evaluation is accurate and all involved know clearly where strengths and areas for improvement lie. Recent innovations such as the 'Thinking' programme have been highly successful in improving pupils' learning and their understanding of it. This has contributed significantly to the track record of recent improvement. All issues identified in the last inspection have improved strongly. The school has excellent capacity to improve further.

The school enjoys its deservedly high reputation. The governing body is very capable and fulfils its role outstandingly well. It successfully holds the school to account whilst supporting all staff. They, and all staff, place the welfare and safeguarding of pupils at the heart of the school.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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

¹ Grade 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for giving us such a superb welcome to your school. We greatly enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes and were extremely impressed with how open and friendly you were. You gave us much valuable information and this was a great help to us. We think your school is outstanding and gives you a very high quality of education.

What we most liked about your school:

- The outstanding lead given by your headteacher to making the school even better.
- How well all adults work together to make your learning purposeful and enjoyable.
- Your knowledge about how well you are doing and how to improve.
- Your very positive response to what you are asked to do.
- How well you are developing your thinking and reasoning skills.
- The consistently good teaching which is helping you to learn exceptionally well.
- The excellent start you make in Reception.
- How well the school works with your parents or carers.
- How well all pupils are included in school's work.

We have asked your headteacher and others to work on:

- improving the opportunities you have to use ICT in different subjects.

We greatly enjoyed the visit and hope your school continues to maintain this high quality of education.