

Freegrounds Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115918
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290367
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Jo Curd

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 on roll	
School	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs G Wright
Headteacher	Mrs A Featherstone
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2002
School address	Hobb Lane Hedge End Southampton SO30 0GG
Telephone number	01489 782075
Fax number	01489 799201

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Freegrounds is the only infant school in Hedge End. It is slightly larger than the average primary school. About half the children are from the locality. A growing proportion come from further afield. Most are from White British backgrounds. A much lower proportion of children are eligible for free school meals, have learning difficulties or disabilities or English as an additional language than the national average. A small, but increasing, number of children are presenting challenging attitudes and behaviour. Three of the nine teachers are newly qualified this year. Due to illness the Deputy Head Teacher has been absent from school for the last two months. Her teaching role is currently being covered by three teachers each week.

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 where all pupils are making good progress and high standards are consistently reached. Personal development, well being and care are all outstanding. The vast majority of parents are very supportive and appreciative of all the school does. As one parent said 'Freegrounds Infants School has far exceeded my expectations'. A parent of a child in the Reception class said 'I feel that he has made fabulous progress in the relatively short time he has been at school but - more importantly - he is happy relaxed and proud of his own progress'.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The strategic decision to cover this absence with three competent teachers who know the school, rather than one new one has successfully enabled the school's ethos and development to continue relatively smoothly. The situation is still uncertain and although not ideal, pupils are being cared for well and progress overall remains good. Self evaluation by all members of the school community, including the excellent support and challenge from governors, is extremely effective. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Leaders and managers continually strive to improve provision further. They are currently radically developing the curriculum to make it even more relevant and interesting and to further increase the achievement of all. Although this is not yet fully embedded it has already successfully inspired and improved pupil's speaking, listening and writing skills and is proving exciting for pupils and staff. Its precise impact on achievement and standards is not yet clear, however, and overall the curriculum is currently good. Because of the excellent team work, skills and commitment of all in leadership and management, capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

Children start at the school with standards higher than expected for this age. Due to good provision, including good teaching and a very varied curriculum all the children make good progress in their Reception year. They move onto Year 1 well prepared for the next steps in their learning and with standards higher than expected. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. By the end of this time standards are currently significantly higher than the national average and have consistently been so over the past three years.

Teaching and learning are good. Because of very good monitoring and support new, less experienced teachers, are supported effectively and are developing well. Communication, relationships and teamwork between all members of the school community are extremely good. Good links with other groups, including most parents, are used extremely well to promote and support pupils' learning. Pupils are not always given time at the end of lessons to review what they have done, however, and some opportunities for learning are occasionally missed.

Personal development and well being are outstanding. The children are happy and enjoy school greatly. Attendance is above the national average. They are confident, friendly and well behaved. They have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They eagerly carry out jobs and contribute well to their school and local community. Children have a good understanding and respect of differences between people. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Because of their good achievement and high standards and personal development all pupils are extremely well prepared for later life and learning. As one parent said, '...the school is providing our son with a very good education but also perhaps more importantly instilling enthusiasm and motivation for the future'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that good achievements of all pupils and high standards overall are retained as the curriculum is adapted and developed.
- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that pupils are given opportunities to consolidate learning at the end of lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Due to good teaching and a good curriculum achievement of all pupils including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, is good. Most children start their Reception year with standards, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal and social development, above the national average. Foundation Stage provision is good and all the children make good progress because teaching is good and all the children are cared for and supported very well. By the end of the Reception year standards are above national expectations. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. By the end of this time standards are, and have consistently been for the past three years, significantly higher than the national average. These standards and pupils' high achievement prepares them all extremely well for later life and future economic well being. There are no significant differences in the achievement of any group and the school is constantly striving to improve provision for all. Time in lessons is used well for learning and contributes well to pupils' good achievement. However some opportunities at the end of lessons to consolidate learning and maximise progress are occasionally missed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent. All the children entered assembly quietly, sat patiently whilst others gathered and participated fully in singing and discussion. One boy with challenging behaviour was supported extremely well and managed to remain quietly with his class throughout. Although the behaviour of a few pupils remains challenging they are supported extremely effectively and all are developing well. Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and attendance is above the national average. They feel safe because they are very well looked after and successfully learn skills of independence and cooperation. They have an excellent awareness of how to stay healthy by eating fruit and vegetables and taking exercise. They contribute extremely well to their school and local community through helping around the school, raising money for charity and performing in local care homes. Because of outstanding personal and social development and good progress in learning all pupils are extremely well prepared for later life and learning. Several parents commented how much their children's confidence and social skills had developed at the school. As one said '...my daughter's confidence has grown tremendously and her education at Freegrounds has been superb'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. New, less experienced, teachers are monitored and supported effectively and are developing well. They have been strategically placed in year group teams which contain a mix of new and experienced staff. All planning is done in these groups, which

ensures consistency, support for new staff and the dissemination of good practice. Careful planning ensures that pupils of all abilities are challenged and supported well. Individual learning needs are met well within classes, sets and small groups. Resources are attractive and accessible enabling successful independent and collaborative work. Teamwork between adults is very effective and learning support assistants and volunteers play a very valuable part. Pupils are eager and very well behaved and time in lessons is generally used well for learning. Pupils are not always asked to reflect on what they have learned, however, and opportunities to consolidate learning at the end of lessons are sometimes missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broadly balanced, innovative and well enriched. It is currently undergoing a radical review to make it even more relevant, interesting and inspiring for all learners. As one parent said 'There's always something exciting going on'. Although this work is not yet complete it is already having a positive impact on the way all pupils plan, cooperate and work together. This is contributing to pupils' personal development. The extensive grounds are used well and are being developed further to increase the range of learning opportunities. The head teacher said 'We are on a journey to a learning led curriculum, the staff are excited and the children are buzzing'. Despite teachers' great enthusiasm for this, changes are being made gradually to ensure that all required aspects of the curriculum are covered throughout the school and that learning opportunities are evaluated at each stage. Its precise impact on the achievement and standards of all pupils is not yet completely clear.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The whole school community contributes to the extremely caring ethos of the school, working very well together to meet the needs of all pupils. Health and safety procedures are highly robust. Pupils' progress is monitored very carefully from the time they start at the school. Frequent assessments ensure that all pupils continue to make good progress throughout their time at the school. Appropriate individual targets for learning are frequently referred to by pupils and staff and used extremely well to guide progress. As one pupil said 'They are always there to tell us what we should be learning'. Good links with most parents, other schools and agencies are used well to support and extend learning and personal development. Parents of some pupils whose teacher is currently absent are understandably concerned about their care and progress. There is very good communication between the teachers who are covering the absence and support staff. Both the care and progress of these pupils are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The head teacher is astute, experienced and strongly committed to the development of each member of the school community. Despite a very successful track record, leaders and managers continue to strive for even better provision and achievement. This vision is shared and teamwork throughout the school community is very effective. Staff have successfully pulled together during the absence of the deputy head teacher; provision remains strong; behaviour and achievement are good and care is outstanding. Self

evaluation and monitoring are very thorough and highly effective. The school is working tirelessly to improve achievement and raise standards further. Governors' support and challenge in meetings and the life of the school is outstanding. Good links with most parents and other agencies are used well to extend children's learning at home. Leaders and managers listen carefully to parents concerns and where appropriate act on these, for example, in the way homework has been amended. This highly successful leadership and management are enabling good achievement, good provision and an outstanding school overall.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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?	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.

Annex A

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

31 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Freegrounds Infant School, Southampton, SO30 0GG

It was good to meet many of you when I visited you recently. Thank you for your help and for telling me so much about your school.

We think your school is excellent. You are all making good progress and are cared for extremely well. You are very keen to learn and work together very well. You are generally very happy at school and most of you are eager to attend. Your help with jobs around the school and performances in the community are extremely valuable. You are all excellently prepared for the future. We know that some of you in Scarlet class are missing your teacher but know that, because of the school and the teachers you have, you are still well cared for and learning well.

Your project work is exciting and interesting for you and your teachers. We have asked the school to make sure that you all continue to learn well through it. We have also asked them to give you opportunities to think about your learning at the end of lessons so that you all make as much progress as possible. Perhaps you could help by telling your teachers if you do not understand or if you need more time to think about what you have done.

Thank you again for your help. We wish you and your families the best for the future.

Jo Curd

Lead inspector