

Padnell Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115964
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326298
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Chris Nye HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	302
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Clannachan
Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Lawlor
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 November 2005
School address	Padnell Road Cowplain Waterlooville PO8 8EA
Telephone number	02392 252752
Fax number	02392 232084
Email address	adminoffice@padnell-jun.hants.sch.uk

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and held meetings with the headteacher, senior staff, the vice-chair of the Governing Body and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including pupils' exercise books, individual education plans of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, curriculum managers' files, monitoring records, minutes of staff and governors' meetings and evidence of strategic planning. Over one third of parents returned parental questionnaires and these, too, were scrutinised.

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

- the extent to which the provision is raising standards and improving the progress that pupils are making
- how effectively teaching is challenging pupils by accurately focusing on their needs
- how well leadership and management are improving the quality of the provision.

Information about the school

Padnell Junior School is larger than most primary schools. It is housed in well-maintained buildings and attractive grounds which are shared by the main feeder infant school and a privately run after-school club, which is not managed by the governors. The school has three classes in each year group. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average and the proportion claiming free school meals is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school has gained Activemark and financial management standard in schools awards.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a caring and supportive school where pupils feel safe and valued. An outstanding feature is the behaviour of pupils which is excellent in lessons, around the school building and on the playground. This is because the school has very effective behaviour management strategies which are consistently applied. Pupils are very polite and have commendably positive attitudes towards their learning. They spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about the school and a number commented on the most recent improvements. 'Things have changed', said one, 'there is much more hands-on experience.' Pupils respond well to the opportunities that they are offered to take on extra responsibilities, such as joining the school council, becoming play leaders or as playground buddies. They undertake these roles sensibly and this has also helped to create a very positive atmosphere in the school.

Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with standards that are broadly average. They make satisfactory progress and most achieve the expected levels by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, although attainment is slightly lower in mathematics. The school is aware of the need to improve achievement, and the strategies that have been put in place to achieve this are showing some early signs of success, although many are not yet sufficiently well embedded across the school. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and in lessons where the teaching accurately focuses on pupils' needs, it is good. However, the school recognises the need for this to be more consistent across the school and for more exciting lessons which challenge pupils to achieve greater levels of success.

Assessment systems have been well established, but are not yet having sufficient impact on learning. Pupils' work is well marked and pupils are beginning to become more involved in assessing their own learning, but this is not yet fully embedded in everyday practice. The written guidance given to pupils is clear and helpful, but it is not consistently followed up and pupils are not always aware of their targets and how to achieve them. A minority of parents indicate that they would like to be kept more fully informed of their children's progress and learning and the school is about to introduce suitable strategies to improve this. The curriculum is satisfactory and recent plans to improve this by ensuring greater consistency and a clearer progression through the school is starting to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. However, there has not yet been sufficient time to embed this across the whole school.

Under the effective leadership of the headteacher, and with the able support of curriculum managers and phase leaders, the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Staffing issues in the past have slowed progress towards addressing the weaknesses identified at that time, but the headteacher's determination to challenge underachievement and raise standards is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Governors have recently become more effective in supporting and challenging the school, but this is at an early stage and new initiatives such as linking governors with classes and curriculum areas have not yet had time to show impact. There is a well-designed school improvement plan to which all staff and governors have contributed. In the past improvement has not been fast enough, but although at an early stage, there is secure evidence to suggest that the school is now much more focused on raising achievement, indicating a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - learning is matched more to the needs of pupils
 - teaching consistently challenges pupils to improve
 - more lessons are stimulating and exciting

- Ensure that assessment is used to maximise progress by making sure that:
 - written guidance to pupils is acted upon and followed up
 - meaningful targets are consistently set and understood by the pupils
 - parents/carers are fully informed about their child's progress and learning

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

3

Pupils' attainment when they start school is in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Most enjoy their learning and achieve satisfactory standards. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6 they are in line with national expectations, although in the past standards have been slightly lower in writing and mathematics. Current rates of progress are improving as a result of a focus on improving writing. Progress in reading is good and pupils are very enthusiastic about books. This was well illustrated in a lesson where pupils were asked to prepare interview questions for famous authors about what they liked or disliked about their books. In mathematics progress is slower, particularly for girls, and this, too, has been a recent focus for improvement, although it is too soon to judge the impact of this on outcomes for pupils.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have detailed individual education plans which identify suitable support strategies. As a result they are supported well

and most make satisfactory progress, and some make good progress, relative to their starting points.

Other key features of pupil outcomes:

- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and valued, and responses from the parental questionnaires tend to support this view.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves healthy and well. Inspectors were particularly impressed with the good awareness of some pupils about the importance of mental health.
- Pupils are keen to make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. The school council manages its own budget and pupils are well trained in providing 'buddy' support to others on the playground.
- Attendance is satisfactory and the school is doing all it can to improve this.
- Pupils have good opportunities to work in teams and they develop satisfactory workplace skills such as in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This was well illustrated during the inspection by their understanding and enthusiastic support for Comic Relief in an assembly when the 'Comic Relief School Song' was sung with gusto and musical skill.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

The quality of the school's work

Although some aspects of teaching, such as planning and how behaviour is managed are good, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. At its best, inspectors observed lessons that had clear learning objectives, very clear teacher explanations, in-depth questioning and purposeful tasks. In such lessons pupils made good progress because the teaching was exciting and well focused on their learning needs. For example, in one English lesson well-focused teacher questioning and discussion helped pupils make good progress in understanding and enjoying a text that the class had been analysing. However, this is not yet a consistent picture throughout the school, and in some of the lessons observed a lack of challenge and verve meant that the pace was too slow and enthusiasm for learning was not as good as in others.

When observing lessons and pupils' work, inspectors focused on how effectively assessment was being used to support learning. They also looked at pupils' exercise books and at tracking data to see how well the outcomes of assessment were informing the planning of lessons. Although the school has worked hard to establish effective systems to assess and track pupils' progress, sometimes opportunities to assess pupils' understanding in lessons are missed. In exercise books pupils are usefully starting to assess their own learning so that they can understand it more and teachers are providing them with clear guidance about how they can improve their work. However, this is not always followed up to determine whether pupils' misconceptions have been fully resolved. Similarly, although the school has developed good systems to identify pupils' targets in English and mathematics, these are not yet being consistently applied, and some pupils remain unaware of what their targets are or how to achieve them.

The school is currently reviewing the curriculum to ensure that it is more sharply focused on pupils' needs, is more creative and encourages more exciting teaching. This is a very promising development, although it is too soon to judge its impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The school also recognises that although such activities such as the bridge building day for Year 5 pupils and well planned trips enhance the curriculum, more could be done to enrich it further, for example by increasing the number of clubs and other activities.

The quality of pastoral support, care and guidance that pupils receive is good. The school works well with outside agencies and partnership schools to provide support to families and pupils facing challenging circumstances, for example through the appointment of a parent support adviser.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	3
Effective assessment	3
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	3
Support, guidance and care	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Under the effective leadership of the headteacher, who has a very clear understanding of what needs to improve, the school is starting to overcome its weaknesses and the direction of travel is encouraging. There is a sense of common purpose and although progress has been slow in the past, inspectors saw evidence of emerging strength in middle management which is supporting the drive to raise pupils' achievement. Curriculum managers and phase leaders monitor their subjects and year groups well and have a clear understanding of where strengths and weaknesses lie. Well-devised improvement plans, which are the result of accurate monitoring by the headteacher and middle managers, are in place to address weaknesses, and the impact of these are becoming evident.

Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and found that they are consistently applied and meet requirements. Discussions with senior staff and a governor demonstrated that the governing body has recently become much more involved in the school and is starting to provide a suitable balance between challenge and support. However, this is at an early stage and is not yet fully secure.

The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Within the school community itself and at a global level this is good, for example through pupils' support for the protection of rain forests through sponsored walks. However, the school recognises the need to develop this more in terms of the local community and pupils' understanding of other communities within Britain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	3
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	3
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

One hundred and five parents responded to the questionnaire, including some with more than one child at the school. A large majority of those who returned forms expressed satisfaction with the school. However, a minority expressed concern that they were given insufficient feedback on the progress of their child and that communication with the school was weak. A small minority also considered that parents were not well informed about how they could help their child's learning.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
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. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- 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.
- Achievement:** an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
- 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.

24 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Padnell Junior School, Waterlooville PO8 8EA

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently and for helping us with the inspection. We really enjoyed chatting to you and the adults, looking at your work and sharing your lessons. I really enjoyed hearing you sing the Comic Relief song with such enthusiasm! We also thought that your excellent manners and behaviour in lessons and on the playground did you great credit. Well done!

I am sure that you are keen to hear what we discovered about your school, which has improved a lot since the last inspection and is providing a satisfactory education for you all. These are the things that we liked about your school:

- you enjoy learning, behave extremely well and try hard
- you are kept safe, are well cared for and know how to keep yourselves fit and healthy
- some of the teaching is good, but occasionally it is not challenging or interesting enough
- most of you achieve the expected levels in English, mathematics and science.

Your headteacher and other leaders know what needs to be done to improve the school, and they have already made a good start on this. To help with this, we have asked your teachers to:

- improve teaching and learning so that it more often matches your needs, and challenges you to do better with more exciting and interesting lessons
- make sure that you all know your targets and how to achieve them
- follow up anything that you do not understand when your work is marked
- make sure that your parents and carers are given more details about your progress so that they can help you learn as well.

Good luck in the future!

Yours faithfully

Chris Nye
Her Majesty's Inspector

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