

# Lymington Junior School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	116051
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326317
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Bradley Simmons 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.

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Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jim Page
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah O'Flanagan
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 February 2006
School address	Avenue Road Lymington SO41 9GP
Telephone number	01590 674383
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Email address	office@lymington-jun.hants.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. The inspectors visited 22 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, individual education plans (IEPs) of a proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, minutes of governors' meetings and just under 80 parental questionnaires.

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

- the impact of the school's work to improve provision in mathematics, particularly for those pupils who were lower attainers at the end of Key Stage 1
- the progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4 and how much this has improved since the previous inspection
- the impact of the school's work to reduce inconsistencies in teaching since the last inspection
- how well assessment is used in the classroom to improve pupils' understanding of how they can improve their work
- to what extent the systems for support, guidance and care lead to improved outcomes for vulnerable and hard-to-reach pupils and those at risk of exclusion
- the impact of leaders and managers at all levels (including governors) on improving the school.

## Information about the school

Lymington Junior School admits up to 60 pupils each year. It is situated just outside the town centre on the edge of the New Forest. The pupils are very largely White British, and there are at present no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007. At this time, she was the fifth postholder in six years. A full complement of senior leaders has been in place from September 2008.

# Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

## Main findings

Lymington Junior is a good school and has a number of considerable strengths. Support, guidance and care provided for every child is excellent, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those pupils whose individual circumstances render them vulnerable. A striking example of the school's work in this area is the creation of a third teaching group in Year 6 for a group of pupils with particular challenges. Their teacher has successfully devised a curriculum which, at the time of the inspection, took the theme of a garden centre to provide the platform for inspirational learning across the basic skills and beyond. These vulnerable pupils are flourishing in a classroom that enables them to meet their potential.

This endeavour to tailor provision more exactly to pupils' needs is a hallmark of the school. Many teachers are involved in pieces of research to determine the impact of proposed innovations. The result is that teaching, in the round, is good, and pupils are enthusiastic and motivated by their learning. Thus all groups of pupils achieve well, both academically and socially, regardless of gender, ethnicity or prior ability. While lessons are generally strong, occasionally teachers do not probe pupils' understanding sufficiently through a range of well-considered questions. In addition, not every teacher is yet drawing upon the full range of good classroom assessment practice seen within the school. As a result, not all pupils clearly understand what they have to do to improve their work.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement has been proven in several fields. The headteacher and senior leaders have successfully tackled residual issues concerning teaching and learning identified at the previous inspection. As a result, pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4 has improved and is now good. Furthermore, the actions implemented by senior leaders to tackle underachievement in mathematics by lower-attaining pupils are beginning to pay off. During lessons, the progress made by these pupils was good. The school's excellent tracking systems shows that the majority of them are keeping up or catching up over the longer term.

Leadership is very effectively distributed across the senior leadership team, so that systems for monitoring and improvement are not dependent on one or two people. However, subject leaders and governors are not yet systematically involved in keeping the work of the school under review.

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

- Extend the core of good teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that the effective use of probing questions to assess pupils' understanding and deepen their learning is a consistent feature in 95% of lessons by December 2009.
  - embedding developing practice in classroom assessment, so that all teachers are able to draw upon appropriate strategies to help pupils understand what they have to do to improve their work.
- Increase the strategic participation of subject leaders and governors so that they are able to take a full part in evaluating and continuing to improve the work of the school.

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

2

Pupils relish their learning at this school. Teachers provide interesting resources which enthuse pupils and keep them engaged in their work. When pupils are asked to work together, they do so very effectively. They keep on task, challenge each other and plan their work carefully. They show resilience when asked to work independently, and respond well to teachers' questions, particularly where these really probe their thinking and understanding. All groups of pupils achieve good outcomes at this school. In 2008 national test results show that pupils attained standards which were broadly average. However, since the last inspection the progress made by successive year groups during their time at the school has increased and is now good. This is because they are productive in the classroom and clearly enjoy their work as a result of the help they receive.

Pupils feel secure and appreciated because they are treated as individuals. They told inspectors that limited incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. Vulnerable pupils feel special at this school. Teachers' judicious use of praise makes pupils feel that their skills and talents are acknowledged and genuinely valued. Behaviour is good. Pupils generally keep themselves on track and, during the inspection, needed only the merest hint of correction from an adult to return to the matter in hand. Around the building pupils are friendly to each other and welcoming to visitors. Pupils are not thrown by disruption to their routines. During the inspection windows were being replaced in various classrooms and classes had to 'camp out' in the hall or in other rooms. Despite this, pupils remained focused and the pace of learning did not drop.

Pupils have a clear understanding of what it means to lead a fit and active life. One parent felt that pupils did not do enough physical exercise. All pupils do at least two hours of physical education each week. Beyond this they also have opportunities to participate in sports other than in lesson time. Tracking of pupils' participation in these clubs demonstrates that individual pupils from all groups in the school benefit from them, including vulnerable pupils and those with special needs.

Pupils take responsibility in school. The 'LJ Way', devised by pupils to give a clear framework of rights and responsibilities, is an integral part of school life for all. Individual Year 6 prefects have helped to host community mornings in the neighbouring infant school, while the orchestra and choir have provided entertainment. Pupils' understanding of the contribution they can make to the national and global communities is less developed.

The standards reached by pupils in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, combined with their keen appetite for teamwork, and their zest for learning, augur well for their transition to the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## The quality of the school's work

Work by senior leaders to improve teaching and learning has been successful. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is much less variable from subject to subject than was the case at the previous inspection. Teaching and learning are typically good. Well-thought-out plans enable teachers and well-deployed teaching assistants to build carefully on pupils' prior learning. Pupils with different levels of prior attainment are effectively challenged by the tasks they undertake. Lessons are well balanced so that pupils not only learn something new, but also have the chance to consolidate and practise their skills. Teachers explain new concepts crisply. However, if their plans have proved too ambitious and pupils are not following, they change tack and adjust explanations and tasks accordingly. The very best lessons are those where teachers and teaching assistants apply highly developed questioning skills. These skills enable them to really get under the skin of what pupils have learned and help to deepen this learning.

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

The school has good strategic systems to keep track of the progress of all pupils. Data on pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics is collected termly. The school keeps a close eye on the progress of individuals as well as that of different groups. Challenging targets are then devised for pupils to take their learning forward. In classrooms teachers have been trialling approaches to improving pupils' understanding of what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work. The result is that, in some classrooms, pupils assess their own performance very perceptively. In others, however, this self-assessment is sometimes too superficial.

The school is working hard to develop a curriculum which interests and enthuses pupils. Themes are used as a vehicle to engage pupils' learning across different subjects. For example, work for Year 4 pupils on electricity was inspired by a plea from Mr Tumnus, a character in the novel *The Lion, the Witch and The Wardrobe*, to help him mend the street lamps in Narnia. Such elements of the curriculum are increasingly carefully planned. As a result, pupils progressively develop and build upon skills and understanding in each subject of the National Curriculum year by year.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have a clear vision for the school's improvement. A judiciously considered range of monitoring tools ensures that they keep the work of the school clearly under review. Where weaknesses are uncovered, senior leaders act swiftly to deal with them. For example, having identified areas in which teaching could improve, the headteacher and her deputy worked to good effect alongside teachers in classrooms to improve individual teachers' skills. Strategic planning is focused effectively on pertinent priorities, and the implementation of actions to bring about improvements is well paced. The school accepts that strategic planning does not enable governors to hold the school to account across the full range of its work. This is because it lacks specific targets couched in terms of measurable benefits for pupils. This notwithstanding, governors receive a plethora of information about pupils' academic achievements which they discuss with the headteacher in depth.

The support provided to pupils who are vulnerable in the short or longer term is but one element in the school's unremitting drive to promote equality. A further example is the school's effective work to ensure that lower-attaining pupils in mathematics get the help they need. Such work is much appreciated by parents, the majority of whom are warmly supportive of the school's work and feel that staff are very approachable. Governors accept that their mechanisms for engaging with parents are, at present, too limited to allow a voice to the few parents who do not make their views known

directly to senior leaders.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is a strength at local level. Pupils show pride in their school and in the way they work and play together. They are warm and friendly to each other. They have a very good knowledge of, and understanding about, the main world religions. The school is not yet capitalising on pupils' differing cultural backgrounds when planning the day-to-day curriculum. Consequently pupils' understanding of the diverse nature of life in Britain is underdeveloped.

At the time of the inspection all safeguarding requirements were met satisfactorily. Arrangements for ensuring that only properly checked, suitable adults come into contact with pupils are kept under review by the school. Following worries about first aid from a parent on an inspection questionnaire, inspectors looked at first aid procedures and documentation. The evidence suggests that the parent's worries are unfounded.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	3
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	2
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

Just under 80 parents or carers returned questionnaires to inspectors, which is around the usual number for this size of school. Most parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the school. Several comment specifically on the positive impact of the new headteacher, and her role in changing the school for the better. The majority of parental criticisms were offered constructively, and where inspectors agree that these concerns are indeed issues, such issues appear as judgements in the body of the report. There were no particular trends in the small number of criticisms received by inspectors.

## 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.



10 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lymington Junior School, Lymington, SO41 9GP

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. Thank you also to those of you who talked to us about your school and showed us your work.

Many of you, and your parents, told us that you are happy and doing well. You will probably not be surprised that we judged Lymington Junior to be a good school. Your headteacher and all the staff work very hard to get things right for you. The teaching you receive is good. You enjoy learning, particularly when teachers ask you lots of questions which really test how much you know. We have asked them to do more of this! We saw some teachers using lots of different ways of helping you to understand what you have achieved and what you need to do next. It would help you if all teachers did this in as many lessons as possible.

The school works very hard to make sure that you are very well cared for and that you get the help you need to do well. Your headteacher and senior leaders harness lots of help from wherever they can to make sure that you get support at times when you are struggling with your work or perhaps feeling a little bit sad because of the things going on in your life. This help makes you feel very safe and secure at school so you concentrate on your work.

You are making good progress in your work in all year groups. This is because teachers keep a close eye on how you are learning and check that you do not fall behind. Your behaviour is good – well done! You are very polite to visitors and work extremely well with each other. You are happy and confident, and this means you are being well prepared for your next school. We know you will continue to do your very best at school.

Thank you again for the help you gave us.

Yours faithfully

Bradley Simmons  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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