

Fordingbridge Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116068
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326323
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Christopher Wood 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)	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ken Hayward
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Hannam
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2006
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, as well as observing a wide range of other teaching activities. They met with representatives of the governing body and held discussions with members of staff and groups of pupils who were representative of the whole school community. In addition, they observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, the work that pupils had produced in their books, the quality of teachers' marking and the questionnaires completed by 71 parents and carers.

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

- how well pupils, in particular the more able and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make progress given their starting points
- the extent to which provision, particularly in terms of care, guidance and support, leads to outstanding outcomes for all pupils
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in tackling underachievement and promoting improvement in outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

Fordingbridge Junior School is a junior school of average size. Almost all pupils are from a White British background, with few from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. While the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, the proportion who have a statement of educational needs is slightly above that seen nationally. There are currently more boys than girls in the school although this varies between year groups.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Fordingbridge Junior School is an innovative, stimulating and harmonious school where children are successfully encouraged to 'adapt to an ever changing world and fulfil their goals and ambitions'. A pride and passion for learning and a tireless focus on the emotional well-being of the whole child is at the core of everything it does. It provides a good standard of education for all learners and has many outstanding attributes.

The headteacher, known to those connected with the school as the lead learner, provides inspirational leadership. He is supported determinedly by other school leaders and the governing body. A clear, compelling and shared vision is integral to the work of all staff members who are relentless in their drive to make further improvements to all aspects of the school's work. As a result of accurate and often critical self-evaluation, ambitious target setting, rigorous monitoring and timely actions there have been noticeable and sustained improvements in the outcomes achieved by pupils in terms of their learning and their personal development since the last inspection. Consequently, there is outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to involve themselves in lessons, particularly when given the opportunity to take on more challenging activities. However, in some lessons work is not always sufficiently closely matched to the pupils' ability. The curriculum is innovative in a number of respects and generally enables pupils to talk about and tackle learning confidently. Nevertheless, there are still some aspects where pupils could engage more fully and this has been rightly identified as an area the school aims to improve further.

The personal and social development of pupils is exceptional. Children are valued, listened to and grow into articulate, reflective and sensitive young citizens because the support and guidance they receive is coherent and highly personalised. They make good progress in their learning and achieve above average standards of attainment by the end of their time at the school. In addition, pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress in their learning because of perceptive targeting and appropriate support. As a result, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next phase of their education and future lives. Communication between the school and home is excellent and parents are therefore rightly confident that their children's experience of school is highly successful. As one

parent summarised astutely, 'my children are turning into well-mannered, well-educated, independent young people, thanks to the magnificent job the school does'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that lessons are consistently challenging for all groups of pupils by:
 - using existing information about pupils' prior attainment so that planning is more sharply focused on extending learning.

- Ensure that the curriculum fully realises the school's revised vision statement by:
 - maintaining and extending high levels of engagement through motivating 'hooks' at the beginning and throughout units of work
 - developing children's understanding of their place in a multicultural Britain and an international society.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils take pride in and enjoy learning. This is evident in their positive attitudes, good behaviour and above-average attendance. In many instances, pupils thrive because they are given opportunities to take initiative, make choices and learn through collaborative and independent activities. Pupils make good progress in lessons and by the end of Key Stage 2, standards of attainment are above average with no significant variations in the performance of different groups. Moreover, as a result of astute and well-targeted support, the progress of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. Over time, attainment in mathematics, science and reading has been particularly strong. Successful action by the school has resulted in a significant improvement in attainment in writing. Furthermore, the proportion of more able pupils achieving the highest level in English and science has also risen. The school's own assessment data and inspection evidence suggest that these improvements will continue.

Pupils are articulate and courteous and convey their opinions in an increasingly mature and thoughtful fashion. They are encouraged successfully by the school's promotion of rights, respect and responsibility to respond with sensitivity and tolerance to diverse issues, cultures and beliefs. They feel exceptionally safe at school and are confident that when problems arise, such as rare instances of bullying, these are treated seriously and dealt with quickly. Pupil representatives, such as the 'problem busters' and 'playground buddies' make a positive contribution to the emotional and physical well-being of their peers. Attitudes to healthy lifestyles and eating are very well developed and levels of participation in physical activities are high. Sporting opportunities are inclusive and vary from the 'energy burst' sessions in lessons to the popular multi-skills activities to the highly successful girls' football team who competed in the final of the Community Cup held at St Mary's Stadium. The development of workplace skills is also adeptly fostered through the school's focus on developing social skills. There are well-planned opportunities to

undertake relevant activities, such as the 'making it real' project through which Year 6 pupils develop their understanding of community issues. There are also many opportunities to contribute to the community, such as through the active school council, pupil-initiated charity events and most recently through a highly successful young citizen project.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching in all year groups is good and a steadily increasing proportion of lessons are outstanding. Teacher's subject knowledge is often impressive. However, the school's accurate monitoring rightly acknowledges that some lessons could be even more effective. In the best lessons, resources are imaginative and are used to stimulate and develop pupils' ideas. In these instances, explanations are concise, and highly effective questioning is used to probe, challenge and extend pupils' thinking. This was seen in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were asked to reflect on the difficulties of drawing a bicycle from memory. Pupils benefit in particular from opportunities to collaborate and work on problem-solving activities. In a Year 3 and 4 extension lesson, pupils engaged fully and made rapid progress when given the opportunity to use their mathematical skills alongside information and communication technology (ICT) to plan for improvements to the school grounds. One Year 4 pupil said confidently that she enjoyed 'being out of my comfort zone'. In less effective lessons progress is slower because the teachers' secure knowledge of pupils' prior attainment is not used precisely enough to ensure that work extends learning. When teaching is less challenging, small groups sometimes become inattentive.

Marking and assessment are used well to provide pupils with guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils know their targets and can explain with growing confidence what these mean. Many make good use of the high-quality learning

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

displays to improve their work, in particular the quality of their writing. Help from additional adults is also used wisely to support learners. The contributions of emotional literacy support assistants and the home school liaison officers known as the Jigsaw worker are also noteworthy elements of the school's exceptional pastoral care.

The curriculum, driven by the '7 learning dimensions' such as creativity and resilience, is broad and balanced, with coherent provision for literacy, numeracy and for ICT. Increasingly apt cross-curricular links are made between subjects and this enables pupils to see the relevance of their learning. Innovative subjects such as philosophy for children have improved pupils' creative thinking skills and developed high-quality speaking and listening. Pupils in Year 5 rose exceptionally well to the challenge of devising their own philosophical questions, while Year 6 maturely debated complex issues of morality linked to their study of 'Macbeth'. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their talents in music – as was seen in a rousing whole-school singing assembly, and in drama. The recent production of 'Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat' was highly successful. Pupils also benefit from a very wide range of enrichment activities, clubs and educational visits. The outdoor environment, which is exemplary, is used very effectively to support learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership at all levels is outstanding. An inclusive ethos that ensures equality is promoted and discrimination is eliminated is apparent across the school. A passion for promoting learning pervades all of the school's work. Staff members at all levels feel valued and are committed to ensuring that the school improves further. This enacted vision, which has grown out of consultation between staff, pupils and parents, has been a key factor in enabling the school to sustain and build on its past successes.

There are many well-established whole-school procedures and the training and development of staff, supported by effective performance management, are excellent. This allows members of the school community to work successfully to meet the challenging targets that are set. The governing body, which is also outstanding, offers accurate and insightful evaluations of the work of the school and is skilled at providing well-focused challenge. The impact of their support and monitoring has been seen particularly in terms of the progress made by pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Both the school and governors adopt best practice and constantly seek to improve systems to safeguard children.

The school takes seriously and promotes community cohesion effectively. Its audit and strategy are underpinned by a comprehensive analysis of the school's context. It works very well within the local community and with nearby schools. Accurate self-evaluation has identified a need to further develop pupils' international awareness as well as providing more opportunities to engage with peers from different backgrounds. The school has begun to address this through pertinent development of its curriculum.

Relationships with parents are exceptionally strong and this, along with the school's relentless commitment to working in partnership with others, contributes enormously to the positive outcomes achieved by learners, as well as the school's continued and deserved high standing in the community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

An above average number of completed questionnaires were received by the inspection team. A very large majority of parents were happy with their child's experience of the school. As one parent commented incisively, 'both my children have flourished since being at the school. Their confidence and self-belief has multiplied by more than I could have wished for'. Parents rightly feel the school is exceptionally well led and keeps children safe. Many commended the dedication of staff in helping children to succeed and the welcoming atmosphere. As one parent summarised fittingly, 'the school is extremely well managed and is a very supportive learning environment. The lead learner and his team keep parents well informed through surgeries, newsletters and curriculum sessions and are always approachable'. A small number of parents were concerned about boisterous behaviour in the playground. The school has recognised this issue and prompt action has reduced incidents of poor behaviour so that they are rare and dealt with effectively.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fordingbridge Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 71 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 220 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	11	1	0

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: the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.

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.



17 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fordingbridge Junior School, Fordingbridge, SP6 1HJ

Hopefully, you will remember that I visited your school recently with another inspector to see how well you were doing. I'm pleased to say that you go to a good school which has many outstanding aspects. I really enjoyed talking to some of you, seeing you at work in lessons and meeting with your teachers. I was very impressed by the appearance of the school, particularly the wonderful outdoor areas. These are the most important things I found out.

- Your teachers are rightly very proud of you and you appreciate the excellent support and care that they provide.
- You get on well together, enjoy coming to school and are curious to learn even more about the world around you.
- You make good progress in your lessons and do well in tests when you take them.
- You enjoy many of the things you learn about in lessons, particularly when you have a chance to work together, make choices or use your imagination. Sometimes, some of you do not find the work interesting or you find it too easy.
- You like being healthy and taking part in a wide range of activities, clubs, trips and sports. Your girls' football team did really well to get to the finals of the Community Cup.
- You do many things to help the community and are keen to take on roles of leadership and responsibility, such as 'problem busters', 'playground buddies' and school councillors. We were very impressed with your Young Citizen award.

We have asked the lead learner (headteacher) to focus on two things which will make the school even better.

- Make sure that the work you are given is consistently challenging.
- Make sure that the things you learn about are always interesting so that you always want to do your best.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by involving yourself fully in your lessons.

Yours faithfully

Chris Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector

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