

Jordans School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110241
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	288611
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Storey HMI

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	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Angela Van den Berghe
Headteacher	Mrs Pat Farmer
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001
School address	Puers Lane Jordans Beaconsfield HP9 2TE
Telephone number	01494 874217
Fax number	01494 874217

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Jordans is a much smaller than average village infant school serving a relatively advantaged area. Pupils enter the school in the September after their fourth birthday, with younger ones attending part-time initially. There are almost twice as many boys as girls. Just under a quarter of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups; few speak English as an additional language and none is at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below that found nationally; currently there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. There have been two changes of headteacher since the last inspection.

The school has achieved a Basic Skills Quality Mark and Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Jordans truly is a school where every child matters. As more than one parent says, it provides 'a caring, nurturing environment'. It is a good school with some outstanding features, notably the exceptionally high standards that pupils reach by the time they leave and their excellent personal and social skills.

The school's commitment to developing each child's potential personally and academically shows in the good quality of the curriculum. The contribution it makes to pupils' personal development is a real strength. As a result, behaviour is exemplary and the depth of pupils' awareness, even at age seven, of how to take care of themselves and the ways in which they can help others in school and beyond is outstanding. The curriculum has a strong focus on basic skills and is enriched by themed weeks and a range of activities outside the classroom, which engage pupils and develop their appetite for learning. The quality of the curriculum, plus good teaching, means that pupils make good progress at Jordans. The standards they reach and the skills they develop prepare them well for the next stage in their education and indeed for life.

All staff subscribe to the school's caring ethos. They know every child well and provide good support and guidance to help them in their learning. Individual teachers keep on-going records of pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. They pool their knowledge and experience to meet individual needs through additional support or extra challenge. Progress in other subjects is formally assessed for reporting to parents at the end of each year. However, more ongoing assessment is needed to inform planning for future work; this should be addressed as part of the school's planned review of linking subjects in a more creative way.

Teamwork is a feature of the school. Staff and governors are intuitive about what is working and what could be improved. However, data are not always looked at in sufficient detail to identify issues early enough or to prioritise initiatives for improvement. Despite some instability in staffing since the last inspection, the school has maintained its strengths and built on them. Provision in the Reception class has improved and is now based on the Foundation Stage curriculum advocated nationally. However, the school is not complacent and is ambitious to improve it even further, including looking at ways to help children make a smooth transition to the next class. The partnership with parents to promote children's learning is excellent and they are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Indeed, parents give particular credit to the new headteacher for revitalising the school after the period of change.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join Jordans with skills, knowledge and understanding that are generally above those expected for their age. They make good progress during their time in Reception and by the time they move on standards are much higher than those found nationally. The school's commitment to children's personal development and well-being starts before they enter, with an invitation to visit and join in a variety of activities. Children settle quickly because of the good relationships established between staff, children and their parents and enjoy being at school. From an early age they are developing as confident, happy learners. There is a mix of traditional teaching and opportunities for children to make their own choices. However, the balance between adult-led activities and opportunities for children to extend their learning

through making purposeful choices, including effective use of the outdoor area across all six areas of learning, are not yet fully established.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage further to ensure a good balance between the different ways that young children learn.
- Ensure more rigorous analysis of the information and data available to identify and prioritise the areas for future improvement.
- Improve the on-going assessment of pupils' progress in the foundation subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress during their time at the school as a result of good teaching and their excellent attitudes to their learning. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are exceptionally high. The numbers of children reaching the higher level 3 are very high and in contrast to the national picture, boys do very well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their peers because of the close attention paid to their needs and the additional support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils really enjoy their time at this school. They are very enthusiastic about their learning and particularly enjoy the exciting opportunities to learn through topics such as 'The Wild West' and 'Pirates'. It is no wonder that attendance is good!

Pupils have a mature understanding of leading a healthy lifestyle that will stand them in good stead for the future and a good awareness of personal safety. They take their responsibilities within school as monitors or members of the school council very seriously. School councillors play an important role in working with staff to ensure that all pupils feel happy and cared for. All pupils have a strong commitment to helping those who need it, whether it is other children in school or people in the wider community, through the charity work organised by staff.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their strong moral and social understanding contributes to their outstanding behaviour. Families from the school's own increasingly diverse community are encouraged to visit to talk about their cultures so that pupils gain a meaningful understanding of the wider community. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education and future life. They reach high academic standards and are developing the ability to work both independently and as part of a team. More recently, they have also had the slightly more unusual opportunity to get involved, with their families, in developing their understanding of self-sufficiency through their work on the school's allotment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality of teaching fosters pupils' very positive attitudes to their learning. This enthusiasm helps to ensure their good progress.

Teachers regularly assess how well pupils are doing, particularly in writing and mathematics. The best lessons make good use of this knowledge to match the work to the needs of pupils' different abilities so that they all make progress. The intended learning is shared with pupils; activities are interesting and purposeful and questioning is used effectively to check pupils' understanding and develop their thinking. However, there are occasions where activities are not as challenging and this slows the pace of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well-planned and enriched by themed weeks, visitors and workshops. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the last inspection, although as a fast moving area there is always scope for further development.

Good use is made of the local area and links with the community to enhance learning. The school capitalises on the skills, expertise and willingness of parents and governors to provide popular activities such as cooking or the maths club. Where there is a demand, some additional out-of-school activities, requiring a specialist teacher, such as tennis and French are provided at a cost.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care offered to pupils is of a very high quality. Links with external agencies make a good contribution to meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place.

Guidance for pupils' academic development is good. Systems for tracking pupils' progress have been put in place and individual targets are shared with pupils to help them improve their writing and mathematics over time. Pupils receive regular feedback on their work, either verbally or through marking. It often celebrates pupils' successes and tells them what they have done well, but does not always link closely enough with the focus of the activity or tell them specifically what they need to do to improve. Assessment in other subjects is not as frequent. It needs further development so that it informs planning, particularly with regard to the progression of skills and ensuring an appropriate level of challenge or support in lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

All staff subscribe to the school's vision of being a good, caring school and work well together to translate this into reality. The small size of the school means that information is shared and informal management systems are generally successful. Staff have to take on a number of responsibilities. They do so willingly and prioritise their work carefully to make it manageable. Governors are equally committed and have made great strides in improving their strategic and monitoring role since the last inspection. The school is successful but not complacent and everyone is involved in the process of ongoing evaluation of what it does well and planning for further development. However, data is not always analysed in sufficient detail which means that not all potential issues, or any action which may be required, are considered at an early enough stage. The success of recent initiatives such as the marketing drive and curriculum workshops for parents demonstrate there is good capacity to bring about improvement.

Feedback from parents confirms that the school succeeds in establishing the strong partnership that it rightly sees as essential to establishing pupils' lifelong love of learning.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

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?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

13 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Jordans School, Beaconsfield, HP9 2TE

Thank you all for being so friendly and helpful when I visited your school recently. A special thank you to the school council who told me all about their important work and to the children in Year 2 who talked to me about their work and all the things they do at school.

I know that you think you go to a good school and I agree with you. I think Jordans gives you a good start and really helps you with your learning. I was very impressed by your excellent behaviour and the way you work well together. I know that you really enjoy your lessons and all the other interesting activities the teachers organise like 'Pirates' week and 'Little Green Fingers'.

Before I left, I talked to Mrs Farmer about how the school could be even better. She agrees with me that there could be more opportunities for the children in Reception to choose what they wanted to do and to learn outside in the new area. She also knows the teachers need to keep a careful eye on how well you are doing in all your lessons to make sure it is always very good. This will help them to decide what are the most important things to do next in your school. I hope you will help them by carrying on working as hard as you do now.

Best wishes

Alison Storey

Her Majesty's Inspector