

Lee-on-the-Solent Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116180
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338751
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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 of pupils on the school roll	272
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gareth Walker
Headteacher	Joanna Batstone
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 18 lessons taken by 10 teachers, and support sessions led by teaching assistants. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at curriculum plans, assessment records, minutes of meetings and analysed 71 parental questionnaires. They also had informal discussions with parents and carers.

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

- the differences in achievement between boys and girls
- the gap in pupils' achievement between reading and writing at Key Stage 1
- the capacity of the current leaders and managers to improve the school still further.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English. Around 15% of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is below average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties or speech, language and communication difficulties; a small minority have behavioural and emotional difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in three Reception classes. The school has gained enhanced Healthy Schools status, the Trailblazer Award for outdoor education, and Activemark. A children's centre managed by the school and privately-managed care before and after school operate on the same site. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2009 but has been absent from the school on medical grounds for most of this academic year. A temporary headteacher and temporary deputy headteacher have led the school since November 2009.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school where pupils achieve well and reach above average standards. Pupils enjoy learning, behave very well and take full advantage of the wide range of learning opportunities provided within the vibrant, stimulating environment. Their well-developed basic skills, together with their good levels of independence, enthusiasm and curiosity, provide a strong foundation for pupils' subsequent education.

Pupils are safe in the knowledge that they are cared for extremely well. Excellent relationships between pupils and staff underpin the effective teaching and the outstanding care, guidance and support pupils receive. This is evident in the close eye kept on pupils' academic progress and personal development and the high quality support provided for all groups and individuals. Teachers assess pupils' progress accurately and this enables them to set work at the right level for different groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils who fall behind in their learning soon catch up. Any anomalies in pupils' performance are quickly picked up and addressed. This is evident in the way staff have tackled the fact that girls tend to outperform boys in writing. Although good headway has been made, this issue remains, rightly, a school priority.

Pupils are very well supported by highly skilled and experienced teaching assistants. Additional adults are on hand in almost all lessons to support small groups and they also work successfully with individuals. Sometimes, however, teachers do not fully capitalise on their expertise during the introductions to lessons or when summing up at the end. This limits the opportunities for individual pupils to contribute ideas or comment on what they have learned.

The strong senior management team has provided a good level of continuity during a period of changes in leadership. They are extremely positive about the roles played by the temporary headteacher and deputy headteacher in driving improvement, and the inspection team found much evidence to support this view. Under the skilful and sensitive leadership of the temporary headteacher, all senior staff are working closely together, with the strong support of the governing body. They evaluate the school well, quickly and clearly prioritising areas for improvement. Pupils' attainment has risen and good headway has been made on several fronts since the last inspection and within the last school year. These factors indicate that the school has good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Narrow the gap between the attainment of boys and girls in writing by:

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- sustaining the current emphasis on planning topics that engage boys
- sharing the good practice evident in most lessons in displaying prompts and tips for tackling written tasks
- promoting the use of resources, such as dictionaries and thesauruses.
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to contribute their ideas and reflect on their learning by:
 - deploying the highly skilled support staff as effectively as possible in introducing new work and reviewing outcomes at the end of lessons
 - ensuring a more effective balance between input from teachers and the time for pupils to work independently.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy lessons, are eager to learn and they work hard. As a result, they achieve well and their attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and science is above average. This was fully supported by observations of work in lessons and pupils' books during the inspection. Pupils also demonstrated good skills when using modern technology, including computers and digital video cameras. Following a strong emphasis on writing, pupils' reading levels dipped a little, but their current levels of attainment in reading and writing are not significantly different. Girls generally outperform boys in writing, but, although a gap remains, boys are equally as keen to participate in lessons. A focus on developing pupils' speaking skills and increasing their vocabulary is helping them to put their ideas into words. When writing leaflets about safety in the sun, boys in Year 1 incorporated some of the words they had used or heard during the initial discussion, such as 'high factor' and 'dehydrated'. Pupils gain a good grasp of number facts and use these when solving mathematical problems. For example, pupils in Year 2 made good attempts at finding all the possible ways of using three ingredients for 'a reindeer's breakfast, lunch and dinner'. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in both their academic and personal development. This is due to the careful diagnosis of their underlying difficulties and the range of provision to support them.

Pupils are polite, tolerant of each other and appreciative of others' skills and efforts. Pupils' good spiritual development was evident during an assembly, when they made insightful comments about how happiness greatly depends on relationships with people rather than possessions. Pupils' good knowledge about the importance of keeping safe and healthy is reflected in the Healthy Schools status. They willingly help out, acting as playground buddies, for example. Pupils suggested ideas for using the school's extensive grounds when the school was applying for the local authority's Trailblazer Award for outdoor learning. Taking part in the national 'Big Tidy' day extends pupils' ecological awareness well.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In most lessons in literacy and numeracy, pupils are taught in ability groups drawn from the whole year group, which means that teachers can set the right level of challenge for different pupils. Teachers use 'on the spot' assessment well and engage pupils in discussing their learning. One teacher invited a pupil to '□ show me how you worked it out so I can see what's in your head'. Most pupils are aware of their targets and teachers follow these up well when marking their work. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to generate their own success criteria. For example, when creating advice leaflets for safety in the sun, pupils suggested that they should contain 'bossy words, headings and good connectives'. The teacher then displayed these 'success stars' prominently. Many classrooms include such prompts for learning but occasionally the tasks are not backed up with suggestions for vocabulary or key questions. Lesson introductions are sometimes too long, leaving insufficient time for pupils to work independently.

A wealth of opportunities, including a range of visits, visitors and clubs, make learning fun. Most work is centred on themes which integrate many subjects and set pupils' learning in contexts that are meaningful to them. This contributes greatly to pupils' enjoyment and achievement across the curriculum. When studying the local area, for example, pupils learnt to use coordinates, looked at weather and climate and enhanced their writing skills when designing travel brochures. There are many opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their computer skills. For example, after making model

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

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moon buggies in a design and technology lesson, pupils took digital pictures and inserted them into a word-processed account. Bar charts and pie diagrams frequently feature in mathematics work, such as the Year 2 investigation into modes of travel to school. Good opportunities in physical education are recognised by the award of the Activemark.

Closely targeted support for pupils helps them to make the most of opportunities offered by the school. The knowledge staff have about their pupils ensures they pay close attention to all aspects of care and guidance, working collaboratively with families when required. All pupils, including those with emotional or behaviour problems, are sympathetically helped to overcome barriers to their learning and personal development. The school judiciously uses advice and support available from outside agencies, such as specialists in speech and language therapy.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: 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?

Despite the uncertainties in leadership and management over the last year, staff have sustained their efforts to ensure all pupils do as well as they can. This has been achieved through the unswerving commitment of senior staff to get on with the job. This common determination was reflected in the entirely positive comments about the school's leadership and management in the questionnaires returned by 31 members of staff. The governing body has also provided stability during this period. Governors have not shirked difficult decisions and, working closely with senior staff, they monitor the school's provision and the outcomes for pupils carefully. Development plans have sharpened since the last inspection and set out a clear agenda for improvement based on the results of well-focused self-evaluation.

The school has a strong commitment to equal opportunities and to avoiding any discrimination. As a result, pupils do well and are able to participate in all aspects of school life. The governing body ensures that policies for the safeguarding of pupils are implemented effectively by regularly undertaking risk assessments and ensuring that child protection policies are implemented. All visits outside school are thoroughly prepared and identify potential risks to pupils' safety and all visitors require the appropriate identification. This means that pupils, staff and visitors are kept as safe as possible.

A comprehensive review of community cohesion identified the school's successes in this

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area and highlighted areas for improvement. Cohesion is promoted very effectively at local level through excellent relationships with the providers of before- and after-school care and the children's centre that shares the same site. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own locality and different countries and cultures is developed well through topics, such as Me and My World. In carrying water over a distance, pupils learned to appreciate a regular water supply, for example. Activities during a recent Community Cohesion Week provided pupils with useful insights into the similarities and differences in communities in the United Kingdom and beyond.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the school with skills and understanding that are a little below the levels expected for their age. Their good progress in Reception is the result of the calm, purposeful and stimulating environment for learning. Children thoroughly enjoy the wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. During one session, where children were free to choose, there was a hive of activity. Indoors, children used their considerable computer skills to place animals in their correct habitat or sing along merrily to the 'Five Fat Sausages' song illustrated on the screen. Others played in the mock 'seaside' or used mirrors to explore the symmetry of butterflies. Such activities, underpinned by good teaching, really capture children's imagination well. As well as imaginative play, their learning is supported by first-hand experiences, such as watching the development of caterpillars into butterflies inside the butterfly tent.

The outside area is used effectively. 'Let's make a hospital', said one pupil to her friend, when playing with large construction material. 'I'll rescue you!' cried another as he saw

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his teacher 'in distress' in the sand pit. Adults frequently engage children in conversations and promote language skills well. A focus on letters and sounds provides a good basis for developing children's early reading and writing skills, although some opportunities are missed to reinforce these in the outdoor area.

All staff contribute to the regular recording of children's progress and use this information to track their progress through the year and to monitor the outcomes. The strong partnership with parents and carers is evident in the warm relationships and informal rapport shown as parents and carers accompany their children into school. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage provides excellent leadership, keeping the provision under review, identifying areas for further improvement, and inspiring colleagues with her contagious enthusiasm.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers are positive about the school and what it does for their child. Within these positive views, a few raised individual concerns about their child's progress, the information they receive, and the quality of leadership and management. Inspectors find that the vast majority of pupils make good progress. They also consider that the school provides a good range of information and opportunities for parents and carers to discuss their child's progress. These include: encouraging parents and carers to accompany their children into the classrooms in the morning; the comprehensive written reports issued in March, which include specific targets for individual children; and the well-produced newsletters which contain useful ideas for parents and carers to support their child's learning at home. Governors acknowledge parents' and carers' concerns about uncertainties in leadership and management because of the continuing illness of the substantive headteacher. Inspectors consider that they have done everything in their power to ensure continuity.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lee-on-the-Solent Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 272 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	58	28	39	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	45	35	49	4	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	32	40	56	7	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	34	39	55	7	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	42	38	54	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	37	37	52	7	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	44	39	55	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	44	28	39	4	6	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	31	43	61	4	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	21	45	63	8	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	21	45	63	5	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	15	44	62	7	10	6	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	38	40	56	3	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lee-on-the-Solent Infant School, Lee-on-the-Solent, PO13 9DY

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed watching you work and play happily together. You get on well with one another and with your teachers.

The school is providing you with a good education. Children make a good start in Reception and this continues as you move through the school. The good teaching helps you to make good progress in your learning and to achieve well. You enjoy your lessons, behave well and have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. We also liked the way that you help one another, for example as 'playground buddies'.

The adults care for you extremely well and help you if you have problems. Those in charge of the school are working hard to make it even better. Girls do better in writing than boys at the moment so we have suggested some ways to help boys improve. The classroom assistants do a great job and we think they could help out more at the beginning of lessons so you all have a better chance to share your ideas and ask questions before you start work.

You can help by continuing to work hard and doing your best all of the time.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Rob Crompton

Lead inspector

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