

Fleetville Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117137
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	312508
Inspection dates	08 October 2007
Reporting inspector	David Wynford Jones

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	356
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Carole Connelly
Headteacher	Mr Jeremy Loukes
Date of previous school inspection	12 - 14 January 2004
School address	228 Hatfield Road St Albans Hertfordshire AL1 4LW
Telephone number	01727 855134
Fax number	01727 811541

Age group	7-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector

The Inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, pupils' personal development and well being. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, sampling of pupils' work discussions with the pupils, the staff, chair of governors and a scrutiny of school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most schools of its type. Attainment on entry varies and is generally above average. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language, or come from minority ethnic groups are similar to the national averages. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is very low. Fewer pupils join or leave other than at the usual start times than in most schools. The school gained the National Information Communication and Technology Mark in 2006 and the Football Association Charter Mark in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features and rightly justifies its good reputation. Parental perceptions of the school are overwhelmingly positive. Many parents stated that they were 'very pleased with the school' and commented on the 'dedication of the staff'.

The purposeful and strong leadership of the headteacher and governors are key factors in the school's success. The end of Year 6 national test results from 2002 to 2006 show a steady pattern of improvement. Standards in English, mathematics and science are consistently above and at times well above the national average. Overall standards in 2006 were exceptionally high. Standards in English tend to be higher than those in mathematics and science. In 2007, standards in English were similar to those in 2006 but there was a slight drop in mathematics and science. Boys attained higher standards and made slightly better progress in mathematics. However, the results remain above the national average and these pupils made at least satisfactory progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work and teacher assessments suggests that standards in the current Year 6 are on track to match the higher standards seen in previous years. The progress of pupils who are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. This is because their needs are identified early and they are given effective support. Overall, pupil achievement is good.

Pupils say they like coming to school; they think their teachers 'make learning fun and cool'. They particularly enjoy their art and design and music lessons. Their enjoyment of school is reflected by their excellent attendance and good behaviour in lessons. However, pupils' enjoyment of learning is good rather than outstanding because it is sometimes lessened by teaching that lacks inspiration. The pace of the lesson is too slow and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to contribute to their learning. As a result, pupils lose concentration and commitment. Nevertheless, teaching is good overall because the vast majority of lessons ensure that the pupils make good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in their delivery. The electronic whiteboards are being used increasingly effectively to support learning and to sustain pupils' interest. Teachers' skills in assessing pupils' level of attainment are more variable, but all teachers are increasing the amount of involvement pupils have in assessing their own learning. Lessons are well planned and usually match the needs of the vast majority of pupils. Questioning skills are used effectively to promote pupils' thinking and to clarify their understanding. Relationships are good and teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils learning. Pupils know and understand their challenging targets in English and mathematics. There are some good examples of marking that gives pupils clear guidance on what they have to do next to improve their work but this is inconsistent in the different subjects. Marking tends to be better in English and this contributes to the higher standards pupils achieve in this subject. Care, support and guidance are good; the level of pastoral care is very good but there are inconsistencies in academic guidance. Health and safety procedures are fully in place. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and meet requirements.

The curriculum is good; it has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection and there are some outstanding features. Art and design is now a strength and pupils' cultural development is enhanced very effectively through different subjects, notably in art and design and music. Good links are being developed between subjects and information communication technology is being used satisfactorily to support learning. In a recent subject inspection, led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, provision in music was evaluated as outstanding. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum effectively. Pupils are very keen to attend the significant number of after school clubs and take part in sporting activities and competitions.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development very well. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding and they are well prepared for their future lives. Pupils have an excellent understanding of and a commitment to healthy living and the adoption of safe practices. Their contribution to the school and the local community is outstanding. They enjoy singing and playing their musical instruments, especially the steel drums, at local events. Members of the school council are proud to represent their school. They talk enthusiastically about their designs for a sensory garden in a local park. They like to take responsibility and take part in the school 'buddy' system. This helps new pupils to settle quickly and become part of this friendly and inclusive community. Several parents commented on how well this helps their children settled in. Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although their spiritual development is less well developed. Pupils do not consistently reflect sufficiently on matters and occasionally there are instances of inappropriate behaviour.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads and manages the school very effectively. He is supported well by governors who provide a good balance between support and challenge. Together, they set suitably challenging statutory targets and promote excellent links with other schools in order to raise standards and share good practice. Subject leaders make a sound contribution to the development of the school by monitoring and evaluating their subjects. They contribute to the school development plan, which accurately identifies the areas for development. Appropriate arrangements are in place to support the headteacher pending the appointment of a substantive deputy headteacher. The acting deputy headteachers have only been in post since the beginning of the term and are developing their roles well. They have clear areas of responsibilities and contribute satisfactorily to the leadership and management of the school.

Systems for evaluating the work of the school are secure and bring about improvement. For example, the school's leadership identified that girls do not do as well as the boys in mathematics. The introduction of grouping pupils in ability sets and identifying tasks and resources that stimulate girls' interest are having a positive impact on the girls' progress, although work still remains to be done.

Given the progress made since the last inspection; the achievement of the pupils; the effective links with other schools and the community; the vision for the continued development of the school, including the establishment of a children's centre on site in March 2008, the school provides good value for money and demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching and the academic guidance provided to the pupils.
- Ensure that the girls make faster progress and that their achievement is similar to the boys in mathematics.

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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	
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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 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.

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



09 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fleetville Junior School. St Albans, AL1 4LW.

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my visit and my discussions with you. I thought that you were very friendly and polite. Your behaviour in class and in the playground was good. I was very pleased to hear that you like coming to school and that your attendance is excellent.

I was particularly pleased that you have an excellent understanding of being healthy and make such a positive contribution to the school and local community. I am sure local people will appreciate the sensory garden you are planning in the local park. I am sorry I could not spend time listening to you play the steel drums and other instruments. They sounded great as I moved from one classroom to another.

The education you receive is good. You are making good progress in English, mathematics and science. The standards you reach are above and sometimes well above those found in most schools. Well done, but I think you can do even better. For this to happen, I have asked your teachers to make certain they give you more guidance on how to improve your work and to concentrate on helping the girls to make quicker progress and attain higher standards in mathematics. I have also asked them to make even more of your learning fun and exciting by making certain they always teach as well as they can all the time.

I hope that you will continue to play your part by always working hard.

Thank you once again for being so friendly and polite when I visited.

With best wishes

David Wynford Jones
Lead inspector