

Fernhurst Junior School

Francis Avenue, Southsea, Hampshire PO4 0AG

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils hold the school in high regard and value the activities and opportunities on offer. They respect each other and have excellent attitudes to learning. The pupils are a credit to the school.
- The headteacher is inspirational. She has developed a culture of respect and care in which pupils and staff flourish.
- The personal development, welfare and behaviour of pupils are outstanding. The school offers extremely effective support to help pupils develop positive attitudes and behaviour.
- Parents value the care and support their children receive. They appreciate the additional help available to them from the school.
- Leaders and governors care deeply about the pupils in the school. The best interests of pupils are at the heart of every decision they make. Leaders are proud of the staff and the staff are proud to work at Fernhurst.
- The curriculum is outstanding. It is carefully designed to develop confidence and ambition. Pupils value the range of opportunities on offer.
- Teaching is consistently strong and leading to good progress for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. As a result, outcomes are improving for all pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress, as do pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Leaders and governors do not track pupils' progress closely enough. Consequently, they do not identify pupils who could be making more rapid progress.
- Not all lessons are challenging enough for the most able pupils. As a result, these pupils do not always make as much progress as they could.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils who make more-than-expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that all lessons contain sufficient challenge to stretch the most able pupils
 - making sure that leaders use assessment and tracking information to accurately identify pupils who should be making more progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders have a commitment to the pupils that goes beyond the walls of the school. They consider all aspects of pupils' development to be equally important. Leaders take care to ensure that activities provide the experiences, skills and ambition pupils need to succeed. As a result of this approach, pupils develop skills and attitudes that prepare them well for life and their next stage in education.
- Leaders have created a culture that enables staff to develop the skills and confidence they need to become highly effective. All staff are given the training and support they need to develop. High expectations and very effective support build the confidence of staff. A good example of this is the exemplary support for newly qualified teachers. These teachers are nurtured by leaders and other staff in the school. They feel very well supported and, as a result, they are succeeding.
- Leaders expect pupils to behave well and work hard. They make sure that teachers plan activities that interest the pupils. Leaders also ensure that a wide range of activities are on offer out of school hours. Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities on offer to them. As a result, pupils are keen to attend school regularly and are developing a love of learning.
- Leaders have high expectations of themselves and all staff. They are highly reflective and always looking for ways to improve their own practice. For example, leaders are currently working with senior staff from other schools to develop their challenge and evaluation skills. Leaders provide staff with highly effective feedback that recognises strengths and identifies areas that could be developed further. This, combined with successful training and development, results in a school that is always looking for ways to further improve outcomes for pupils. In turn, this leads to strong leadership at all levels.
- Leaders have significantly improved the support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Pupils' needs are carefully assessed so that each pupil gets the support they need to succeed. Leaders use support from outside agencies very effectively and ensure that all pupils are well supported in the classroom. The accurate identification of pupils' needs and effective monitoring of the impact of support mean that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make very good progress.
- The curriculum is outstanding because it is designed to meet the needs of all the pupils in the school. Pupils are able to develop their skills and knowledge across a broad range of subjects. They also get to access a wide variety of additional experiences. For example, a recent visit from university students gave pupils experience of live performance and increased their awareness of university education. This approach results in lessons, trips and activities that broaden pupils' horizons and make them more ambitious.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' spiritual, emotional, social and cultural development. Thoughtful activities thread through everything the school does. Staff are also skilled in developing pupils' understanding of British values. A good example of this came at the time of the last election. Pupils had to vote for cakes to be made for

local older people. This developed pupils' understanding of democracy and encouraged them to be considerate and caring to older people.

- Leaders use additional funding well to enhance the progress that pupils make. The physical education and sport premium is used effectively to improve lessons and extend the range of clubs and activities on offer. Funding to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used very effectively. As a result, outcomes for these pupils are good and improving.
- Leaders know the school well and focus improvement activities on key priorities. They reflect on their own practice and are always seeking ways to improve. As a result, they maintain good standards in all areas of the school and challenge themselves to further improve outcomes for pupils. Leaders recognise that they need to improve their tracking of pupils' progress. Current tracking does not identify the rates of progress all pupils make from their starting points. Consequently, leaders are not able to identify those pupils who need to make more progress to reach the higher standards.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is committed to delivering its vision of high-quality education and care for every pupil in the school.
- Governors work in partnership with the headteacher to ensure that the school meets the needs of every pupil. They ensure that staff are well trained and well supported. They make sure that the school provides tailored support to meet the needs of parents.
- Governors take decisions based on the best interests of the children in the school. They ensure that funding is used wisely to maintain or enhance current good practice.
- Members of the governing body visit the school regularly to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of spending and improvement activities. Consequently, governors are very knowledgeable about the school and its current performance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a strength in the school. Leaders are proactive in their efforts to keep children safe. Members of the governing body check this aspect of the school's work stringently. Leaders act very quickly to address and work well with other agencies to tackle any concerns they have about a pupil's well-being. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and have a good understanding of safe practice on the internet.
- A highly skilled team of staff provides support for children and families who are experiencing difficulties. A wide range of additional support is on offer to parents, from dealing with bed-wetting to helping them manage challenging behaviour. Pupils and parents value and appreciate this help. There is compelling evidence of the positive impact of the early help offered by the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils enjoy their lessons. In all areas of the curriculum, including English and mathematics, teachers plan activities carefully so that they ignite pupils' interest. A good example of this can be seen in the wide range of activities used to stimulate pupils' writing. Activities, from campfires to visits from authors, motivate pupils. Consequently, pupils work hard and make good progress.
- Pupils behave extremely well in class. They are calm and purposeful in their lessons. Displays and equipment in classrooms are used well to support learning. Teachers quietly and skilfully manage pupils' behaviour. This can be seen in the quick and smooth transitions between lessons. It was also evident when pupils put away their equipment at the end of a physical education lesson during the inspection. This helps pupils to develop the resilience they need to keep going when tasks are tricky.
- Teachers and leaders have consistently high expectations of the quality of work pupils do in books. Teachers make sure that activities are interesting and engaging. Pupils ensure that their handwriting and presentation are immaculate. Consequently, pupils value the work they complete and it is of a high standard.
- Leaders provide highly effective support to staff to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good. Leaders make sure that the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are consistently well taught in all subjects. The feedback pupils get from teachers in lessons and in books helps them to understand what they are good at and what they need to improve. As a result of this good teaching, outcomes for pupils are improving.
- In some lessons, pupils make rapid progress because activities are very engaging and the level of challenge quickly increases. However, this is not the case in all lessons. In lessons that lack challenge, pupils do not make as much progress as they could, particularly the most able pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Parents value the exceptional ethos of care that is prevalent in the school. Extremely positive relationships exist between pupils and with staff. Pupils are very aware of the high expectations of their behaviour. They describe this by saying that they are expected to be friendly to each other. As a result, the school is a very strong community where individuals care for each other.
- Pupils know that their views are important to leaders. They value the opportunities they get to influence the school. For example, recently, pupils have influenced the quality of school dinners and tried out some new computer technology equipment. Pupils are given the opportunity to take on additional responsibility. For example, some pupils act as play leaders during breaktimes. They take their roles seriously and recognise the contribution that they are able to make to their community.

- Pupils have an excellent understanding of bullying and are confident that the school always sorts this out on the rare occasions it happens. Teachers act very quickly and effectively to tackle any issues. Children say that staff really understand them and know how to help them. Consequently, pupils are encouraged to develop resilience and independence.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their physical and mental well-being. They have access to a wide range of sporting activities and regularly consider current issues and concerns. For example, older pupils developed their understanding of bullying and food disorders when writing responses to imaginary agony-aunt letters.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The school provides excellent support in pupils' personal development. Pupils behave impeccably across the school. Staff believe that behaviour is managed consistently well. The school addresses any poor behaviour and rewards good behaviour. As a result, pupils say that the school treats them fairly. They value the inclusive nature of the school. One pupil summed this up by saying, 'all pupils would be welcomed here'.
- Current rates of attendance are higher than national averages for all groups, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The school expects all pupils to attend school regularly. Potential issues with poor attendance are tackled very effectively.
- Fernhurst is a highly inclusive school where all pupils are supported to succeed. Staff are committed to providing the same high level of education and care to all pupils. The occasional pupil with poor or challenging behaviour receives excellent support. Staff work closely with parents and outside agencies to develop a flexible approach. Consequently, pupils who have specific behavioural difficulties are given the time and support they need to improve.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points. This is because teaching is consistently good. Teachers understand what pupils know and can do. They provide carefully planned activities that closely match pupils' abilities. Teachers plan lessons that engage and interest all pupils. Consequently, pupils enjoy their learning and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The good support for disadvantaged pupils means that they achieve as well as or better than other pupils in the school. The school's high expectations for these pupils can be seen in the broad range of effective activities that enable them to make good progress. For example, swift action is taken if disadvantaged pupils miss too much school. These and other activities successfully address any gaps in learning.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive highly effective support. The SEN leader expertly coordinates a talented team. Support staff are well trained and make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. Catch-up programmes are very effective as

they are carefully planned and closely monitored. As a result, these pupils are making rapid progress and catching up with their peers.

- While some pupils make rapid progress, this is not yet typical because some activities do not contain sufficient challenge, particularly for the most able pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	116221
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10037832

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	354
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Cooke
Headteacher	Roberta Kirby
Telephone number	02392 735 998
Website	www.fernhurst.portsmouth.sch.uk/
Email address	office@fernhurst.portsmouth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.
- Heidelberg, an after-school club on the school site, is managed by the governing body.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors took into account 43 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including 27 written responses. Inspectors also considered 26 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A range of documents were considered, including records of pupils' attendance, behaviour and safety, and the school's information about pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons and parts of lessons, all of which were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised work in pupils' books.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff, pupils and three members of the governing body. The inspector met with two representatives of the local authority.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Claire Prince

Her Majesty's Inspector

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