

Canford Heath First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113706
Local Authority	Poole
Inspection number	311343
Inspection dates	13 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Burghart

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	397
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs T Farrokhan
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Pelham
Date of previous school inspection	7-10 July 2003
School address	Learoyd Road Canford Heath Poole BH17 8PJ
Telephone number	01202 380015
Fax number	01202 257408

Age group	4-8
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and, in doing so, investigated the following issues: the quality of teaching and learning; pupils' achievement; the impact of the school's leadership and management; and the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation. Evidence was gathered about current standards. Discussions took place with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own views, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized first school. It draws pupils from a wide area, parts of which are recognised as being disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Most pupils are of White British origin and the majority speak English as their first language, although this is not the case for a small, but increasing, proportion. When children join Reception their attainment is typically below what is usually expected for this age group.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which strikes an excellent balance between high quality pastoral care and first-rate academic guidance. As a result, pupils' achievement is outstanding in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make excellent progress from below what is normally expected when they start school to well above average standards at the end of Years 2 and 3. It is not surprising that pupils are happy and enthusiastic and that attendance is good.

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds do very well. They build on the outstanding start the high quality support gives them in Reception, where virtually all children at least reach the goals expected of this age group by the time they join Year 1. In Year 2, over 90% of pupils are set to reach at least average levels by the end of the school year. In reading, where pupils make very good use of phonic strategies to sound out letters and blends in order to understand new words, nearly 40% of pupils are likely to achieve above average standards. In writing, standards are well above average. Pupils communicate well using an extensive range of vocabulary, construct interesting sentences, and show good attention to spelling and handwriting. The marked improvement in boys' writing is a real success story. Basic skills in mathematics are used very effectively to help pupils solve problems. Pupils are successfully encouraged to try different strategies with very positive effects on their ability to reason and work independently. The 2007 assessment results were significantly better than in previous years and this performance is being sustained this year. Outstanding progress rates are maintained in Year 3. As throughout Years 1 and 2, the performance of more able pupils is well above the national profile with the highest attainers approaching levels usually consistent with 10 and 11-year-olds.

High quality teaching is fundamental to pupils' impressive progress. Teaching is at least good in nearly all aspects and some is exemplary. The school was over-modest in its own evaluation of teaching as 'good'. Far from being a weakness in terms of self-evaluation, this is indicative of the lack of complacency and the continued drive for improvement. Teachers and teaching assistants make an excellent team. They are prepared to listen to pupils and this underpins outstanding relationships and pupils' self-confidence. High quality displays show how much staff value pupils' work. Much successful care goes into making work enjoyable and setting clear learning objectives. As a result, the curriculum is outstanding. There are very good planned links between subjects and careful consideration of developing pupils' skills as well as knowledge. A good range and number of extra-curricular clubs and activities enrich the curriculum. High quality planning ensures that subjects are given appropriate emphasis and that work is well matched to pupils' needs. The school has already identified that, building on its own successful initiatives in literacy and numeracy, to promote more use of information and communication technology (ICT) is the next step forward.

Support for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English is outstanding. It enables such pupils to make similar progress to others in the same age groups. The way all pupils, whatever their background or ability, are fully involved in the life of the school is outstanding. Excellent use is made of assessment information to present work at different ability

levels, set targets for individual pupils, and prepare pupils well for future study. Very successful marking shows pupils how they can make improvements. Pupils respond very well. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils enjoy being challenged and try hard to please their teachers. Personal development is outstanding, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are successfully encouraged to be responsible and contribute to the school as a community by being monitors and act as playground friends. Pupils know what is right and show that they are very aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. They are rightfully proud of the Healthy School award, and the Activemark and Artsmark awards. That pupils feel safe in school is a direct result of how effectively staff look after them and how successfully procedures for health and safety are managed.

Outstanding leadership and management at all levels, including staff and governors, underpin the excellent progress pupils make academically and personally. The school sets itself challenging targets and makes every effort to achieve and sustain them. Outstanding strategic management makes extremely good use of staff and resources. The headteacher's excellent leadership has created a skilled team of staff eager to make improvements based on thorough analysis of the school's performance. Staff, especially the senior leadership team, respond very well to responsibilities delegated to them. They play a full part, alongside the headteacher, deputy and governors, in monitoring and evaluating the impact of decisions taken, the success of new initiatives and the quality of education on offer. The school is extremely well placed for future development. Its success is recognised by the local authority and parents. One parent wrote, 'A fab school!', which seems to sum it up.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to an excellent start in Reception. Outstanding teaching and support help children to make particularly good progress to reach, and in a variety of cases exceed, nearly all the goals set for this age group. Children are systematically introduced to reading, writing and counting and do especially well in personal, social and emotional development. They are considerate, willing to take turns and share and are keen to take on responsibilities such as tidying up. Their behaviour and enthusiasm for learning are excellent. Children respond extremely well to the excellent Foundation Stage curriculum on offer. This strikes just the right balance between activities children can choose for themselves and those directed by staff, indoors and outside. The school's commitment to learning through structured play and hands on activity pays dividends in developing children's knowledge and understanding. Teachers and their assistants take every opportunity to engage children in conversation, sometimes in role-play, and skilfully encourage communication skills. This, together with excellent relationships throughout, has very positive effects, especially on those who find learning difficult. Ongoing assessments of children's performance are used very effectively to track progress and plan future learning opportunities. Staff know children very well. Parents are universally complimentary about the level of care and the quality of education in Reception. 'We think the staff do an excellent job and recommend the school to anyone with children of this age,' is a typical comment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more use of recent initiatives in information and communication technology to further enhance learning across the curriculum..

The school's self-evaluation is outstanding. Consequently, the school improvement plan accurately details areas for further development. Work to address the issue above is already in hand.

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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?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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



14 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Canford Heath First School, Poole BH17 8PJ

Many thanks for all the help and the warm welcome you gave me during the inspection. I was particularly impressed with those of you on the school council and how enthusiastically you told me about the school.

Your school is what adults call 'outstanding'. This means that it is extremely good at helping you to do well.

Here are some of the many highlights.

- The school is particularly well run.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are much better than average.
- You are being very successfully helped to become sensible young people.
- Outstanding teaching helps you to make especially good progress as well as making learning interesting and enjoyable.
- Children are given an excellent start in Reception.
- The school takes outstanding care of you; staff are very good at showing you how you can improve your work.
- Your behaviour is outstanding (that does not mean perfect!).

In order to be even better the school should:

- help you to make even more use of your ICT skills in other subjects.

You can help by continuing to work hard. I am sure you will!
Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Burghart
Lead inspector