

# Mill Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124015
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	380773
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	460
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jean Edwards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Debby Heavey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Sunnyside Avenue Tunstall Stoke-on-Trent ST6 6ED
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 234466
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 234465
<b>Email address</b>	millhill@sgfl.org.uk

---



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



© Crown copyright 2012

## Introduction

### Inspection team

Nigel Cromey-Hawke  
Adrian Martin  
Lyn Pender

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons, including joint observations with senior staff, observing 15 teachers and 17 classes. The inspectors also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, pupils' work, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspectors scrutinised paper questionnaires from 104 parents and carers, 105 pupils and 14 staff.

## Information about the school

This is a much larger than average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage, although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, mainly of Pakistani backgrounds, is well-above average, as is the number speaking English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well-above average. The school met government floor standards, the minimum expectations for attainment and progress set by the government, in 2011. The school has Healthy Schools' status and operates its own breakfast and after-school club.

Since the previous inspection the school has undergone significant staffing changes. In the last two years, changes have occurred at senior leadership level, and the school is currently led by an acting headteacher.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It has been improving securely since the previous inspection. Most pupils, parents and carers and staff are very positive about the school and the way it looks after its pupils. It is not good because attainment and achievement could be better and there is scope for improving attendance and some aspects of leadership and management.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Attainment on leaving the school in Year 6 is low but pupils make at least as much progress from their starting points as similar pupils nationally. Support for disabled pupils and those with special educational or behavioural needs is increasingly effective so that, while their achievement over time is satisfactory, it is improving rapidly. Attainment in reading is low, but also improving strongly. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the specialised support they receive.
- Teaching is satisfactory. There is an increasing amount of good teaching as staffing becomes more settled and higher expectations begin to impact on learning. Weaker teaching features a lack of pace, underdeveloped speaking and listening skills among pupils, a poor match of lesson activities to pupils' needs (notably the more-able) and inconsistent use of assessment guidelines to support independent learning.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are satisfactory. Behaviour in many lessons is good. Attendance is improving, especially persistent absence but is overall still low due largely to holidays taken by some pupils during term time.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Changes to consolidate staffing and new roles mean that some planning and monitoring practices are not yet fully developed and their impact not yet evaluated and proven. The school has the capacity to bring about sustained improvement, however, as demonstrated by an improving picture in terms of its outcomes.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and achievement by ensuring that the quality of learning and progress in all lessons is at least good by;
  - providing sufficient pace in lessons so that pupils are challenged in what they are learning and their interest is maintained
  - developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, so that they learn more effectively from adults and each other in lessons
  - ensure that there is a better match of activities to pupils' needs, especially for the more-able
  - share the good practice seen in some lessons in the use of assessment guidelines to help pupils understand how to improve their work across all classes.
- Continue to improve attendance, especially of those pupils taken away from school during term time by their parents and carers.
- Improve leadership and management by;
  - bringing a sharper focus to development planning so that it is easier to evaluate accurately the impact of actions upon outcomes
  - improve the monitoring role of subject leaders, especially in relation to the planning of teaching and learning.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory, as the school's self-evaluation shows. Attainment over time on leaving the school is low, but has been improving strongly and securely since the last inspection. Parents and carers are highly supportive of the improvement that is underway. As a result, despite changes in staffing, most pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise skills in a satisfactory way. Lessons observed during the inspection demonstrated that the vast majority of pupils are keen to succeed and apply themselves well when provided with appropriate activities and guidance. This is particularly the case within English, where literacy skills are strongly focused upon to support learning.

Children enter the Nursery with basic skills that are well below those typical for their age, especially in personal development and language acquisition. They make good progress through the Nursery but satisfactory progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage as a whole. This satisfactory progress is maintained throughout both Key Stages 1 and 2 but is improving. All groups of pupils have made at least the same levels of progress, given their starting points, as similar pupils nationally and last year this level of progress was significantly above average. Some groups of pupils have made better progress than others. Pupils who speak English as an

additional language regularly make good progress compared to other groups, helped by specialist multilingual teaching assistants.

In the past, there have been some relative gaps in boys' performance compared to that of girls, but this has been the focus of concerted support and last year boys made accelerated gains and outperformed girls, contrary to national trends. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, who often make up high proportions of each class, make satisfactory progress over time. Recently this has also improved to good and often high levels because of the impact of a wide range of small group intervention strategies the school has put in place. Higher grades are not being gained, however, in English and mathematics. Attainment in reading has been low since the last inspection, especially at Key Stage 1 but has, again, been improving every year due to the reading recovery programme operated by the school. Reading in Year 6 is currently close to national expectations. Across the school, inspection evidence and school performance data show that pupils are being prepared adequately for the next stage in their learning and that the majority are on track to meet the targets the school has set.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching and learning across the school are satisfactory. Much current teaching is good, notably in Nursery and in upper Key Stages 1 and 2. There is a very small amount of inadequate teaching but the school has this well in hand with a programme of professional development and challenge. Characteristics of the better teaching are good planning that uses assessment data well to ensure that a range of activities are provided to meet the often wide range of needs within a class. These lessons support pupils' confidence and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well as they enthuse and motivate pupils to participate in their own learning. Detailed and closely focused marking is used well within these lessons, as well as the effective use of assessment guidelines, to show pupils what levels they are working at and what they need to do to improve further. In one such lesson pupils acted as 'teachers' to assess the work of each other work as well as examples provided by their classroom teacher. In this fast-moving and challenging lesson, high quality learning about descriptive writing took place and was clearly greatly enjoyed by all.

This level of rigour and challenge is not consistent across the school, however. As a result, pupils' engagement sometimes slips and their confidence and progress are weaker. Both the school and some parents and carers recognise temporary staffing in the past has resulted in variable expectations and practices within some classes that are only now being tackled. In some classes, for example, speaking and listening skills are not yet fully embedded. Consequently, pupils are not getting the benefit of listening to the contributions of other pupils or adults within the class. Levels of pace and challenge are also not always sufficiently high to fully engage all pupils, and their interest flags as a result. Satisfactory lessons also feature activities that are not always as well matched to pupils' needs as they should be, particularly the more-able. This means that such pupils' potential is not always maximised by the teaching they receive. The match of teaching to the needs of pupils with special educational needs is now good, due to better identification of their learning

difficulties. The teaching of reading is satisfactory but variable, with good practise evident in respect of those pupils in the early stages of English acquisition.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The behaviour and safety of pupils in the school is satisfactory. Parents, carers and pupils are generally positive about behaviour, although a small minority of parents raised concerns which were investigated by inspectors. The school focuses upon developing children's social skills and behaviour from the moment they enter the nursery classes. Clear expectations and routines are established quickly and the nurture group setting is used effectively to provide in-school support where needed. The inclusion team also work well with families to provide learning opportunities for parents and carers to help them support their children's learning and development outside of the classroom. Parents and carers are full of praise for this aspect of the school's work, particularly the day-time classes provided in healthy eating, programmes for 'Dads and Lads', reading, numeracy and behaviour management. They are also very supportive of the breakfast and after-school clubs that ensure pupils get a healthy start to the day and help them, after school has ended, to both catch up on work and engage in sporting activities.

Exclusion rates show that in the past a small core of boys demonstrated unacceptable behaviour but the school has dealt with this well. In the vast majority of current lessons pupils' behaviour is good and disruption to learning is rare. Most pupils say they feel safe and highly valued and the school is very largely a warm and harmonious community, where pupils demonstrate respect for each other and a tolerance of diversity. Behaviour in the playground is more lively but overall satisfactory and well monitored by adult helpers and pupil buddies. Bullying of all types, including racial discrimination, cyber-bullying and bullying related to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is of a generally low level and well managed. Attendance is low overall but has been improving each year since the previous inspection. The school has focused very sharply through the work of both the Family Worker and learning mentor upon reducing persistent absence in the last three years. This has included making clear the possibility of legal action. This has been very effective, with levels of persistent absence improving from high to now below that of similar schools nationally. Punctuality has improved similarly. The school is aware that its overall attendance figures are still held back, however, by the impact of some families taking their children away on holidays from school during term time.

### **Leadership and management**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school is currently undergoing a period of transitional leadership but this is being well managed by the acting headteacher and governing body. Staffing has been consolidated and many are in new roles and with different responsibilities. Despite these changes, the school's capacity to improve is demonstrated by a trend of sustained improvement in achievement and attendance. The school recognises that, while it knows its major strengths and weaknesses and has taken concerted action to address many of them, there are still inconsistencies in practice and expectations, and some new ways of working are not yet fully embedded. This is the case with

some subject leaders, who have yet to fully adopt the extensive programme for monitoring the quality of provision within their areas followed by well-established colleagues. The school has appropriate plans in place for driving whole-school improvement, although, again, some aspects of it lack sufficient detail to make it clear exactly what needs to be done to bring about improvement. This makes the evaluation of impact more difficult.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The rich curriculum is satisfactory with strengths in its provision for exciting themed events, out-of-school activities, artistic and sporting involvement and its promotion of heritage understanding. However, the curriculum is at different stages of development throughout the school, and within year groups, resulting in provision that is inconsistent and achievement that is satisfactory. The core skills of reading, writing, communication and mathematics are not yet fully developed enough to impact consistently upon outcomes over time, nor has their impact yet been fully monitored. The school promotes equality and deals with discrimination well, with the very small number of racist incidents being dealt with appropriately. Gaps between the performance of groups have been successfully closed. The governing body has a good understanding of the school and is supporting it strongly during this transitional period. This involves visits to classes, support for reading and lesson monitoring and involvement in planning for the future. Most parents and carers are highly supportive of the work of the school but also recognise that the school has yet to consistently operate some of its new ways of working and expectations about learning across all classes. Safeguarding practices are good, with good practice being demonstrated in site safety and vetting and barring procedures.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



11 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Mill Hill Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 6ED**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and my colleagues when we inspected your school. You were very friendly and enthusiastic about what you do.

Mill Hill Primary is a satisfactory school. You make satisfactory progress from the start in the Early Years Foundation Stage until you leave. It is not better than this due to some changes in teaching staff over the last few years and uncertainty about the school's leadership. The levels of attainment the vast majority of you reach by the time you leave the school in Year 6 are low, but these are improving rapidly under the leadership of the acting headteacher, staff and governing body. Those of you who find learning difficult are making satisfactory progress overall, but recently this has improved to good progress due to the many additional support classes the school has introduced. Those of you who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of the high quality support provided for you, especially from the specialist teaching assistants. The school looks after you well and you say you feel safe. Behaviour, although satisfactory over time, is also improving and is often good in lessons. Most of you attend school regularly, but attendance is low overall because of the impact of some pupils taking holidays during term time. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, but, again, improving rapidly. To improve the school further, I have asked it to do the following things:

- make sure that you make at least good progress in all your lessons
- further improve the attendance of all pupils, so that your learning is not disrupted
- improve some parts of school planning and the monitoring of what goes on across the school.

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn and if you have any problems. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,  
Nigel Cromey-Hawke  
Lead inspector

