

Mundella Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	118384
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	379612
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
Lead inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Allan Britton
Headteacher	Anne Mason (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	22 October 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick

Additional inspector

Noureddin Khassal

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors spent eight hours observing teaching, which included visiting 17 lessons and observing eight teachers. Inspectors heard groups of pupils reading in Years 1, 2 and 6, and held meetings with pupils. Meetings were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and staff. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including policies, the school improvement plan, pupils' work and records of their learning and progress. In addition, inspectors considered the responses to questionnaires from 16 parents and carers as well as responses from questionnaires submitted by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Mundella is slightly smaller than most primary schools. Most pupils are from a White British heritage while a few others mainly have an Eastern European background. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is a little higher than in most schools. A high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational needs, is above average. The majority of these pupils have communication, literacy, and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in the Reception class. Above-average proportions of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the normal ones. In particular, just over a half of the current Year 6 joined the school during Key Stage 2.

The acting headteacher took up post three weeks ago. The school is receiving support from a national leadership school until a permanent headteacher is appointed. The school provides a daily breakfast club. The new pre-school on the site is separately managed and not included in this inspection.

The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school where achievement is satisfactory, pupils enjoy coming to school and they are well cared for. By Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average but fewer pupils reach higher levels than do so in most schools. The school is improving but is not yet a good school because further improvements are needed in teaching, pupils' achievement and aspects of leadership and management.
- Pupils' progress is satisfactory but varies between year groups. Children make a good start in Reception and good progress in Year 2. In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is satisfactory overall and accelerates in Years 5 and 6, although the percentage of pupils reaching higher levels of attainment in key subjects is lower than the national average. Strategies to improve reading at a fast rate are not fully embedded across the school and the development of pupils' phonics (knowledge of letters and sounds) skills is not yet rigorous enough.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers manage pupils well, but teaching does not secure good learning in all lessons. At times, teachers make insufficient use of assessment information and work is not well enough matched to pupils' abilities.
- Pupils' behaviour is good overall, and pupils are well mannered and considerate. Relationships are good. Pupils are very well cared for and are kept, and feel, very safe.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders have raised expectations of what pupils should achieve. The action taken, including management of staff's performance, and targeted, specific support and intervention in Years 5 and 6, has improved pupils' attainment by the time they leave the school. The monitoring of teaching and assessments of pupils are very regular but do not always focus enough on the learning of particular groups. Nevertheless, the improvements made demonstrate the school has the capacity to continue to move forward.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement by December 2012 by:
 - increasing the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 6
 - raising attainment and accelerating pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 by ensuring lessons progressively build pupils' basic skills in Year 1.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils in all years make good or better progress by July 2012 by:
 - using assessment information more effectively to ensure lessons build on all pupils' prior learning
 - ensuring that phonics skills are taught in a systematic and consistent manner to better help pupils, particularly the less able, to develop their reading and writing skills
 - ensuring there are opportunities for lower-attaining pupils to read and be heard to read every day.
- Ensure that all those with leadership responsibilities rigorously evaluate and improve pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring lesson monitoring consistently focuses on how well teaching meets the learning needs of different groups and accelerates pupils' progress, where needed
 - evaluating the achievement of different groups as they move through the school in order to make improvements
 - providing strong targeted support in literacy, including phonics, for pupils in Years 3 and 4 in order to accelerate their progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children's starting points on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are low because many have weak communication skills and/or personal development. Good quality teaching results in good progress and begins to lift their attainment, although this is still well-below expected levels on entry to Year 1. As a result of satisfactory, but uneven, progress in Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment remains securely below average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. In Year 1, some pupils lose ground because teaching is inconsistent and does not always take sufficient account of their achievements at the end of Reception. In Year 2, pupils learn and progress well because tasks build on their previous skills. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils of all abilities learned to construct simple bar charts while more-able pupils progressed quickly to interpreting information in more-advanced charts.

Pupils' attainment in Year 6 has risen steadily and is broadly average in reading,

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writing and mathematics with fewer pupils attaining higher levels than they do in most schools. Overall, there is satisfactory but uneven progress through the school for different groups of pupils, including: those who are disabled; have special educational needs; are learning English as an additional language and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. Due to robust targeted support, progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 for lower-attaining pupils, including the many later entrants who join the school with gaps in their knowledge and skills, and this helps attainment to be stronger by the time that pupils leave school. However, progress is satisfactory overall because in Years 3 and 4, teaching and intervention procedures are not rigorous enough to enable pupils, particularly less-able pupils, to quickly build on the phonics and literacy skills acquired in year 2.

The quality of learning in lessons is satisfactory but varies between year groups. Pupils make rapid progress in phonics, reading and writing in Year 2 because activities are enjoyable and successfully build on their existing skills. However, progress sometimes slows in literacy in Year 1 when pupils' learning is not completely matched to their needs. In a Year 1 phonics lesson, for example, most pupils learned to use their knowledge of sounds satisfactorily to read words, but the progress of lower-attaining pupils stalled when tasks became too hard. In a Year 3 literacy lesson, when writing a recipe for 'Marvellous Medicine', most pupils learned well, but the progress of lower-attaining pupils was slower. This was because they were not consistently enabled to apply their phonics skills when writing. Most parents and carers feel their children are making good progress. The inspection team found that pupils' progress is satisfactory but uneven through the school.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers hold very positive views about the quality of teaching. Inspection evidence confirms a number of strengths in teaching but with inconsistencies between year groups. Relationships in lessons are good and teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. The school's policies on rewards and sanctions are clear to pupils and used consistently. Teaching is good in Reception and a good balance is struck between children learning for themselves and the direct teaching of basic skills by adults. Reception staff monitor children's progress skilfully in lessons and over time to plan the next steps in learning, including in reading, phonics and numeracy.

The school has regular and accurate assessment information about the performance of all pupils and in the best lessons, teachers use this information and their secure subject knowledge to plan well-matched activities for all. For example, in a good mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils of all abilities learned to predict more complex number patterns because of the way in which the teacher matched their work to their needs. However, assessment is not always used so well and tasks are not consistently matched to the differing abilities of the pupils, particularly the more and less able. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, there was insufficient focus in planning for more-able pupils, who consequently made inconsistent progress.

Marking of pupils' work is regular and verbal feedback informs pupils how they can

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improve. Consistent systems for written feedback to pupils are a current focus for development, and are steadily improving.

Reading records show that some lower-attaining pupils do not read often enough in school or at home. Teachers do not consistently ensure these pupils are heard to read in school on a regular basis. While there are some good examples of teachers stressing the importance of pupils using their phonic skills to tackle unfamiliar words, this practice is not as consistent as it should be. The school has already identified this and started to take action. The broad and satisfactory planned curriculum is used appropriately to widen pupils' experiences and to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The best practice sees practical activities being used to bring academic learning alive and to arouse curiosity.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is good overall. There is a calm and happy atmosphere in lessons, as pupils move around the school and at playtimes and lunchtimes. Pupils of all backgrounds work and play together in harmony, and they are friendly and courteous to each other and adults. In Reception, children gradually learn to take turns and share resources, for example, when playing imaginatively together in the playhouse or building life-size models together using large blocks. Pupils' ability to distinguish right from wrong is well developed through staff's consistent approach to behaviour management.

Parents and carers agree that there is a good standard of behaviour and safety, although a few expressed concern that a few pupils occasionally interrupt the learning of others. The inspection finds that the incidence of poor behaviour is unusual. It is very rare by Year 6, because pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are helped very well and adjusted to school. However, in some lessons, pupils occasionally lose concentration when their work is not fully matched to their needs. Pupils enjoy the playground and say that they feel and know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils say that behaviour is good, that there is very little bullying and they trust adults to deal with any boisterous behaviour that may occasionally occur. They understand different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills, for example through enlightening outside visits such as to the Palace of Westminster. Pupils are punctual. Attendance is average and improving, due to the school's robust procedures and close working with parents and carers. The breakfast club provides a happy and caring start to the school day, and this helps those who attend to be ready for lessons.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher is managing the school well on a day-to-day basis with strong support from the knowledgeable Chair of the Governing Body and help from a local leadership school. There is a clear leadership structure with defined roles and responsibilities for managing the school. The leadership of teaching is satisfactory

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and improving but has yet to ensure it is consistently good in all years to bring about rapid improvements, especially for particular groups of pupils or aspects of literacy such as phonics. The focus on professional development has led to some areas being successfully tackled, including the accuracy of teachers' assessments. Middle leaders' roles have developed well since the previous inspection and are now becoming more focused on evaluating teaching across the whole school. Regular checking of the assessment of progress of individual pupils involves teachers as well as leaders, and the school has rightly identified the need for a more focused evaluation of the impact of provision on the achievement of whole groups, for example, pupils who join the school other than at the usual times. The curriculum provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills across a range of subjects. It supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well because of the opportunities provided to discuss national and international issues of moral and social consequence, and to learn much about a wide range of different cultures, traditions and beliefs. Systems for listening to pupils read vary in different classes and are not always robust enough for lower-attaining pupils.

The governing body works effectively with senior leaders and is suitably challenging to make sure plans remain on track. School leaders and governors ensure there is a strong focus on keeping safe, and safeguarding arrangements securely meet statutory requirements. Leaders and staff promote equality satisfactorily and there is no evidence of discrimination. Pupils' attainment has been steadily improving over time, and robust provision for lower-attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 is ensuring the attainment gaps between these pupils, and pupils nationally, are closing. This and improvements in aspects of teaching, leadership assessment, professional development and other sustained strengths since the last inspection shows the school has the capacity to improve.

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).

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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mundella Primary School, Folkestone CT19 5QX

I would like to thank you for the very warm welcome that you gave to my colleague and me when we visited you recently. You were keen to show us your work and talk about your school. We enjoyed our time with you. Your good behaviour, positive attitudes and helpfulness make an important contribution to the success of your school. You told us how much you enjoy school and feel safe, and how everyone is kind and friendly; we agree.

Mundella is a satisfactory school. It is improving, and the headteacher and staff are working hard to do their best for you and provide an interesting range of activities. You make good progress in Reception, Year 2 and in Years 5 and 6, and by the time you leave school, your attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average and improving.

We have asked the headteacher, the governing body and the staff to:

- make sure that more of you in Year 6 reach higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics
- improve the progress you make in Key Stages 1 and 2 and make sure you know all your sounds and use these in your reading.
- make sure that your work is at just the right level and never too easy or hard for you
- ensure school leaders, teachers in charge of subjects and members of the governing body keep a closer check on how well you are doing.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and carry on working hard in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick
Lead inspector

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