

Mill Field Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135162
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	381821
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	Keith Bardon

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Keefe
Headteacher	Stephen Watkins
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2009
School address	Potternewton Mount Leeds LS7 2DR
Telephone number	0113 2620021
Fax number	Not applicable
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Introduction

Inspection team

Keith Bardon
Bobbi Mothersdale
Elaine Maloney

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, observed 13 teachers, held meetings with staff, members of the governing body, and pupils, and talked informally with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including policies, the school's improvement plans, pupils' work and the school's records indicating pupils' progress and attainment. Also, they analysed 63 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Mill Field is a slightly larger than average-sized primary school, formed after the amalgamation of two smaller schools. About a half of the pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds with pupils of White non-British and African heritage the two largest groups. Approximately a quarter of all pupils speak English as an additional language and often speak little or no English when they start at the school. A very high number of pupils join or leave the school part-way through their primary education. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average but very few have a statement of special educational needs. The school did not meet the government floor standards in 2011 (the minimum attainment and progress expected by the government). A significant number of new teachers have joined the school quite recently, some permanent but several covering the long-term illness of other teachers. The school has achieved the Activemark award. Breakfast- and after-school clubs are available to pupils each school day.

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

Key Findings

- This is a good school which responds decisively and effectively to the individual and diverse needs of its pupils. It is not outstanding because attainment is too low and some teaching is not well enough matched to pupils' needs.
- Pupils achieve well. As a result of the rigour with which pupils' attainment and progress are tracked, the responsibilities leaders and managers place on teachers to ensure their pupils learn effectively and the creative and lively learning programme that has been introduced, pupils' attainment and progress are rising quickly and the school is securely on track to meet the government floor standards this year.
- Teachers provide interesting lessons in which pupils acquire knowledge, understanding and skills at a good pace. Occasionally, innovative approaches generate high levels of enthusiasm and pupils use a great deal of imagination in their work. While many lessons are taught well, outstanding lessons are the exception rather than the norm.
- Pupils enjoy lessons thoroughly, telling inspectors, 'You can also have fun while you are learning.' They show respect for adults and each other, pay attention in class and behave well. Pupils from different home backgrounds get on extremely well together and feel safe and secure in the school's warm and friendly atmosphere.
- The exuberance of the headteacher and the confidence he shows in staff generate a strong team spirit. His strong leadership and the effective way he and the deputy headteacher manage the staff's performance have resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching. Throughout the school there is a clear sense of purpose and a determination to meet any new challenges the school may face. Members of the governing body visit the school regularly and are well informed about its strengths and areas for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue the upward trend in attainment and accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - building on the creative curriculum to extend pupils' use of literacy and numeracy across all of their work
 - widening pupils' strategies for reading unfamiliar words.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that in all elements of a lesson the work is matched closely to pupils' differing abilities
 - developing pupils' ability to answer questions fully, explain their reasoning and share the strategies they have used when arriving at an answer.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children often enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with understanding and skills that are significantly lower than those typical for their age. The close attention that staff pay to each individual child ensures they make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Reception children's attainment has risen but for a significant minority is still some way short of expectations for their age.

Although the school has not met the floor standard, pupils nonetheless achieve well during their time there. Attainment in national tests is low because the school has high proportions of pupils who join or leave part way through their primary education, of pupils who arrive speaking little or no English, and of pupils who have special educational needs. Irrespective of their starting points, pupils of all ages make good progress. However, a significant minority do not have sufficient time at the school or a strong enough foundation of learning to reach national standards by the end of Year 6. In the current Year 6, by contrast, those pupils who joined the school in Reception have made good progress to attain standards that are broadly average.

Although attainment in reading in Years 2 and 6 has been low, good teaching of sounds and letters and a more interesting curriculum are having a very positive effect and many pupils are reading at or close to the standard expected for their age. While pupils of all ages sound out words confidently they are often limited to this one strategy to help them decode new ones. Because their writing is purposeful, by Year 6 most pupils are producing work that is interesting to read and logically structured and which makes effective use of vocabulary. Imaginative phrases such as, 'Suddenly he was caught in a colourful vortex.' are becoming a more regular feature of pupils' stories. Achievement in mathematics is also showing improvement with many pupils calculating accurately and the lower-ability pupils having the confidence to tackle simple division problems.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in their learning. Pupils with little or no English receive targeted support and quickly gain in confidence. As a result the progress made by this group of pupils and by pupils of minority-ethnic heritage is good. With few exceptions, parents and carers who returned the

inspection questionnaire or spoke to inspectors expressed satisfaction with the progress their children are making, reflecting the inspection findings.

Quality of teaching

Lessons are planned thoroughly and organised well. The creative curriculum introduced since the last inspection has been implemented positively and teachers use well-chosen strategies to add variety and interest to pupils' learning. In a highly effective lesson in Year 5, an innovative combination of poetry and drama brought pupils' learning to life and gave them the confidence to use their language skills imaginatively and to best effect. This lesson exemplified the close attention teachers pay to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, encouraging creativity and promoting an enthusiasm for literature. Teachers give praise regularly, raising pupils' self-esteem so that they value effort and achievement.

In most lessons the activities given to individuals or small groups are matched accurately to pupils' differing abilities. However, this is not always the case when pupils are working as a whole class; this makes it difficult for some pupils to grasp any new ideas. Teachers make their expectations of pupils' behaviour clear, apply school procedures consistently and address any inappropriate actions quickly and effectively. Teachers ask well-judged questions, testing pupils' understanding and promoting their involvement. Some questions encourage pupils to explain their reasoning and share the strategies they are using, but pupils find this a difficult skill to master and not enough time is spent helping them over these difficulties. Teaching assistants work closely alongside teachers often providing valuable and effective support for pupils who find learning difficult or need help with their English. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Staff work closely as a team to provide a 'family' environment in which all children are happy and motivated to learn. Parents and carers and the pupils hold mainly positive views of the quality of teaching, similar to those formed by inspectors.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

While the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed fully that their children feel safe in school a small minority number expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour. Although some pupils need regular help to behave well all of the time, the inspection found pupils' behaviour to be good overall. Lessons are rarely disrupted and pupils respond quickly when reminded what is expected of them. The school has a clear system of rewards and sanctions which are clearly understood by the pupils. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent and pupils feel secure and well cared for. This was encapsulated by a pupil who stated, 'There is always someone there for you.'

Of particular note is the way in which pupils from a wide range of social, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds work and play happily together. Whatever the mix, a lack of any tension is a striking feature of all group work. Pupils readily share ideas and give sensitive evaluations of each other's work when invited to do so. Most pupils attend regularly and levels of absence are falling steadily. The sensitive way in which pupils reflect on important messages during assemblies and the way they grow in confidence and self-esteem is clear evidence of their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Although a very small number of parents and carers expressed concerns about bullying, pupils are confident that any incidents are dealt with very well by the school. Older pupils in particular show a good understanding of what characterises bullying and the different forms

it might take. Regular and carefully structured provision has given pupils a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example, when using the internet or out and about on the roads.

Leadership and management

It has taken some time for the school to stabilise following amalgamation but, under the focused and determined leadership of the headteacher, it is now moving forward quickly and standards of attainment are rising. New staff have been supported well. Through rigorous monitoring, effective support and regular professional development, senior staff have ensured that pupils of all ages have continued to receive good quality teaching. The deputy headteacher holds frequent and sharply focused pupil progress meetings with class teachers, which are helping to raise standards and accelerate progress. Management systems are constantly reviewed, developed and refined and there is clear evidence of the school's capacity to continue to improve.

The curriculum is good and tailored closely to pupils' needs. The move towards a more creative curriculum has been managed well, building on the best of the old but providing a programme that encourages innovation and the linking of subjects in a cohesive way. Pupils' reading and writing skills have improved because of recent initiatives, but the school recognises that attainment is still low and much remains to be done. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school provides an extensive range of experiences from which pupils gain much. Whole-school visits to zoos, craft centres and the seaside, a star-gazers 'sleep-over' for Year 5 pupils and a meal at a local Italian restaurant are typical of the lengths to which the school goes to promote pupils' personal development.

Safeguarding procedures are thorough and meet requirements. Senior staff and members of the governing body carry out regular checks, ensuring procedures and policies are up to date and effective. Staff know the pupils extremely well and maintain a very close watch over any whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The school does not tolerate any form of discrimination. Good teaching and carefully targeted support for those who need additional help ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to learn. The governing body is active and responsive to the needs of the school.

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.
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.



23 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mill Field Primary School, Leeds, LS7 2DR

Thank you very much for the very friendly greeting you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Lots of you smiled and chatted to us, which made us feel comfortable and welcome. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do, and special thanks go to those who talked with us about the school.

Yours is a good school which looks after you well and makes good provision for your personal development. It has a warm and friendly atmosphere, mainly because everyone gets on so well together. Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and it was nice to see so many of you trying hard in lessons – well done! Although at times the quality of the work you do could be higher we found clear evidence that it is getting better. This is because you are making good progress and enjoying what you are doing. It was good to be told that you find learning fun and we need to give teachers credit for the many interesting activities they provide, both in and out of lessons.

We have made some suggestions of the things the school could do to help you learn even more:

- provide even more interesting activities which encourage you to read, write and use mathematics
- now that many of you are sounding out words confidently, teach you other methods of identifying unfamiliar words
- ensure that when teachers are introducing new work the activities they ask you to do are at the right level for everyone
- teach you how to give better explanations of the ways you are working things out.

You can help by always trying to produce your very best work. Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Bardon
Lead inspector

