

# Minterne Community Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118455
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	358352
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Hutchings

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	384
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Freeman
<b>Headteacher</b>	William McGrory
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Minterne Avenue Sittingbourne Kent ME10 1SB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 472323
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons involving 19 teachers and observed assemblies. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning documents, assessment information and pupils' work. In addition, inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 169 parents and carers, and scrutinised others from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well the recent improvement in pupils' attainment and progress is being sustained.
- How well teaching interests and challenges pupils of all abilities, particularly more-able.
- The effectiveness of provision for pupils in the speech and language unit and the impact of the facility on whole-school provision.
- The impact of the school's partnerships in enriching the curriculum and promoting pupils' core skills and aspects of their personal development. The impact of the school's partnerships in enriching the curriculum and promoting pupils' core skills and aspects of their personal development.

## Information about the school

The school is bigger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. The school has an attached unit for pupils with speech and language difficulties. Currently 22 pupils are taught within the unit and in mainstream classes. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The school has a number of awards for its work, including Artsmark and Eco School awards.

**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: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Staff work very effectively to meet the school's aims to promote 'Learning for a Lifetime' by developing 'successful, confident and responsible individuals.' One parent, reflecting the views of others, commented on the school's success in providing a high-quality education which gives children a solid foundation in learning, while supporting their physical and emotional development. The excellent levels of care, guidance and support promote a school culture where pupils have strong, positive relationships with each other and with adults. Excellent use is made of outside partners to enrich pupils' experiences, and the input of specialist advisers and local businesses helps to keep the curriculum fresh and stimulating.

The school prides itself on the many opportunities to engage with parents and carers so that, regardless of circumstances, they have access to information about their child's progress, welfare and development. The reporting system has been changed in response to parents' and carers' requests to receive detailed information earlier in the academic year. There are fewer opportunities, however, for parents and carers to share their views about wider school developments.

The school's calm, welcoming ethos is very successful in encouraging pupils to be well-mannered and polite. Pupils feel exceptionally safe and secure because they are confident that if they have problems these are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils' keenness to contribute to society is another of the school's many strengths, for example in the way the Eco Club members monitor and report back weekly on energy consumption.

The rich, varied curriculum is full of memorable experiences that excite, stimulate and challenge pupils. This is recognised in the school's Artsmark award and in pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is this outstanding curriculum that leads to pupils reporting that learning is so much fun. They therefore want to come to school, behave outstandingly well and work hard. The innovative approach to curriculum design ensures that pupils engage with in-depth learning.

Pupils take pride in their learning, for example, shown in the high-quality presentation of their work. They make good progress through the school. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average in English and mathematics and is improving quickly. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have speech and language difficulties, receive effective additional support and also make good academic progress. Teachers in the unit use a wide variety of methods to help pupils understand and communicate their ideas. This effectively helps them to overcome barriers to their learning and builds their confidence well.

Good links between staff in the unit and in mainstream classes mean that planning for pupils when they join mainstream lessons is focused and they benefit greatly from

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working alongside their peers because of the expert and sensitive support they are given. The expertise of staff in the speech and language unit is used well to broaden the range of strategies used across the whole school to support pupils finding learning difficult from time to time.

Teaching is consistently good across the school, and sometimes better. Teachers work well in year teams to plan interesting and focused lessons with challenge for all groups of pupils. Teachers benefit from the regular opportunities they have to discuss the effectiveness of their teaching with senior leaders. They have identified that they would find it helpful to have more opportunities to reflect on their own practice by observing and coaching each other, but the school has not yet implemented its plan to achieve this.

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher ensures that there is a shared vision for the school. He is ably supported by a skilled team of senior and middle leaders, who have a clear understanding of the school's current strengths and areas for further development. The governing body provides good support and challenge.

Over the last few years, the school has strengthened its systems to monitor pupils' progress against increasingly challenging targets. This information is used particularly well to target additional support and to plan work which is closely matched to pupils' differing needs. As a result, attainment has risen rapidly throughout the school which gives it a strong basis for ongoing improvement. Since the last inspection, the school has consolidated and improved substantially on its many strengths which shows that it has an excellent capacity to improve even further.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning by implementing the plan to share the most effective practice more widely.
- Provide more opportunities for parents and carers to share their views about whole-school development.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**1**

The school's approach to making learning as practical as possible makes sure that pupils are confident and creative thinkers. In recent years, the emphasis on monitoring progress and setting higher expectations has resulted in increased progress rates, particularly in writing in Years 3 and 4. For example, in Year 3 when pupils were developing their use of speech marks, they also learnt about using quotations. By the time pupils reach Years 5 and 6, they have mastered the foundations of grammar. They then use their skills with imagination and creativity to produce writing of considerable length and quality. Because pupils are writing about topics of real interest to them, they apply their skills very well, as seen in vivid poems about Aztec rituals.

Pupils' excellent behaviour and enthusiasm for learning contributes positively to the good progress they make. This enables boys and girls to do equally well. School assessment data show that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds do well. The good and sometimes outstanding progress made by pupils with complex social, emotional and behavioural needs and those in the speech and language unit is due to the carefully focused support given to them. Pupils' effective development of their basic skills in other subjects is

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reflected in the rising attainment in English and mathematics. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson when pupils developed their oral skills well while preparing their presentations about the elements of Passover celebrations to share with their parents and carers at the end of the day. Pupils' good achievement across a wide curriculum prepares them well for secondary education.

Pupils have an excellent awareness of the dangers they may encounter outside school and a common sense approach to avoiding them, such as when using the internet. They participate keenly in a variety of sporting activities, embracing physical exercise enthusiastically and achieving much success in local and county competitions. Pupils' good awareness of healthy eating is seen in the recently renewed Healthy School award. Pupils carry out numerous roles of responsibility diligently, helping to make the busy school day flow smoothly. Pupils initiate and engage in many fundraising activities, seen during the inspection in keen participation in a wide range of events relating to Red Nose Day. Pupils engage in an exceptionally wide range of artistic and cultural activities with enthusiasm and reflect maturely upon their experiences. They respect different views and listen with interest to each other's views and ideas.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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## How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are consistently at least good across the school, with gifted teachers providing some examples of outstanding teaching. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will listen carefully. Explanations are clear and good use is made of modern technologies to introduce and illustrate learning. This also contributes well to pupils' confident computer skills. Resources for learning are well chosen and of a high quality, seen in a lesson when pupils were successfully estimating the weight of objects because they had examples of known weights readily available for comparison.

Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and regularly, and give good advice about how work can be improved. Often, pupils are required to follow this up, but this is not fully consistent across the school. The emphasis placed on talking ideas through, often with a partner, means that pupils have considered their own ideas well before embarking on independent work. This is one of the most significant reasons for the improvement in writing. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and advance learning well through their probing questioning and insistence that the pupils they support do things for themselves.

The vibrant displays in classrooms and around the school give pupils a constant reminder and record of the rich, varied curriculum. This was seen during the week of the inspection when additional events included the Minterne Olympics Launch linked to learning about different countries, participation in a Singing Day locally, hosting a Dance Festival with other schools, involvement in a county Orchestra Day, and culminating in Red Nose Day. Many good sports partnerships and coaching enrich pupils' experiences and promote additional opportunities for active learning. Pupils' views are sought and acted upon and they know that they have some control over their own learning and the development of curriculum topics.

Pupils flourish and learn effectively because they are well known by staff who meet the needs of individuals exceptionally well. The inclusive ethos gives pupils a strong sense of belonging to a community. New pupils to the school are supported outstandingly well by buddies. Transition arrangements into Year 3 and into secondary school ensure that there is minimum interruption to pupils' learning. As a result, pupils settle in quickly and make new friends easily. The school works with and supports families who may experience difficulties so that their children are well placed to learn and develop in school and make good progress.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The key strengths in leadership relate to a whole-school commitment to ensuring that learning is exciting and effective. Morale is high and staff work as a united and settled team to further increase pupils' achievements. The governing body is equipped well to meet the school's needs because it combines the experience and knowledge of long-serving governors with the different skills of newer governors. They play a key role in strategic planning, working in partnership with the headteacher and staff to identify areas to improve and in securing that improvement.

The safety and welfare of pupils is of paramount importance within the school. The systems to safeguard pupils are rigorous and meet statutory requirements, and policies and practice are regularly reviewed and developed. Safety awareness is successfully integrated into the curriculum and pupils have a good understanding of managing risks for themselves.

The success of the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is seen in very few racial incidents and little difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils. The opportunities pupils have in the curriculum, such as learning a series of Indian dances and performing them at a local festival, are evidence that this school lives its inclusive philosophy and makes an effective contribution to community cohesion. Developing links with schools in other countries is promoting pupils' understanding of global citizenship.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Views of parents and carers

An above average proportion of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. Almost all responses were positive about the school's leadership and the success of staff in



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making learning interesting and enjoyable. Parents and carers feel secure that their children are safe. Although positive about the school overall, a few parents and carers expressed a concern that they did not have sufficient information about their child's progress. Inspection evidence indicates that the school communicates frequently with parents and carers through regular newsletters, text messages and the well-used website, and provides numerous opportunities for parents and carers to discuss children's achievements with staff. ♦

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Minterne Community Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 169 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 384 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	95	56	74	44	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	93	55	73	43	2	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	52	31	96	57	19	11	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	38	91	54	9	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	85	50	80	47	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	63	37	88	52	15	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	71	42	90	53	8	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	66	39	81	48	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	73	43	89	53	6	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	76	45	79	47	8	5	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	32	94	56	8	5	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	98	58	65	38	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	97	57	65	38	3	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and 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 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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.**



21 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Minterne Community Junior School, Sittingbourne, ME10 1SB**

Thank you for being so helpful and welcoming when we visited your school. It was a privilege to meet you and to see how much you enjoy all the things you do in school. We found that Minterne is an outstanding school. Here are some of the things the school does well.

- Your behaviour is exemplary and this helps you to enjoy learning and make good progress.
- By the time you leave school, your attainment is above the average expected for your age.
- Your teachers give you really interesting things to do in lessons and you show your appreciation of the wide range of clubs by your active participation.
- You have an outstanding appreciation of how to stay safe and understand what you have to do to keep fit and healthy.
- Adults take exceptionally good care of you and make sure that you have extra help and support if you need it.
- The headteacher, staff and the governing body are hard-working and know exactly what to do to make the school even better.

To help you to make even faster progress, we have asked staff to share with each other the types of lessons which help you to learn most effectively. Your parents and carers have many opportunities to come into school to see what you are doing. We have asked staff to give them even more opportunities to share their views about the things that could be developed to help the school to improve even more.

We know that you already share your views in a variety of ways and will continue to do this, including about the lessons where you learn best. Please thank your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires. It was helpful to know their views.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings

Lead inspector

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