

Mill Lane Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123036
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	380576
Inspection dates	13–14 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Bartleman

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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Moody
Headteacher	Tineke Van Der Ploeg (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 July 2007
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited class assemblies and 20 lessons, observing eight teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan. Inspectors analysed 89 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

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

- Are all pupils, particular the more able, making sustained progress in their writing?
- What impact has the changes in Early Years Foundation Stage arrangements and provision had on outcomes?
- Is the quality of teaching and of the use of assessment consistently good enough to secure good pupil achievement and further raise attainment, particularly in writing and mathematics?
- How effectively are all leaders, including governors, driving improvements in teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes?

Information about the school

Mill Lane Community Primary School is an average-sized primary school. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below that found in other schools nationally. The school has eight classes, two of which are for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school is currently led by an acting headteacher who was appointed in September 2010. There is an after-school club managed by the governing body. The school has achieved the Eco-Schools bronze award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Mill Lane is a good school where pupils thrive in a nurturing environment and every pupil is valued as an individual. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and have an excellent awareness of how to stay safe. Parents and carers are unanimous that their children are safe and are extremely supportive of the school. As one commented: 'My children love the school. They are treated with respect in a place they feel safe. They are given every opportunity to excel in an environment that nurtures and values each and every child.' Staff want the best for each child and, through working closely with families, strive to achieve this goal.

By the time pupils reach Year 6 attainment is above average in mathematics, reading and writing and is now rising across the school. All groups of pupils, such as girls and boys, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress and achieve well. Improvements in provision and initiatives employed by the school have accelerated pupils' progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in mathematics in Year 2. Progress in writing is not as strong as in reading with fewer pupils attaining the higher level in writing by the end of Year 6. This is mainly due to the fact that pupils have not always been given sufficient opportunity to practise their writing skills in a range of subjects, using first-hand experiences as a basis for their written work. Teaching is good. Assessment information is used well to identify pupils who need extra support and help. Marking is regular and encouraging and provides pupils with advice on how to improve the content of their work.

The school is a stimulating and secure learning environment. Behaviour is good and relationships are positive. The school has improved attendance so that it is now above average and continuing to rise. The curriculum ensures that pupils receive a good variety of exciting activities and experiences through visits, residential stays and visitors to school. A striking feature is the way that the school exploits its natural environment. Staff, pupils and their parents and carers have created a wildlife area and nature trail which is used to develop pupils' learning well. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and are happy to take on responsibilities within their school community. Pupils particularly enjoy the wide range of after-school activities and clubs. Arrangements for the pastoral care and safeguarding of pupils are good. The school takes good care of its pupils and has a proven track record of helping pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make the best of their education.

Leadership and management are good. Recent work has ensured that a tangible

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enthusiasm and pride in the school are evident among pupils, staff, and parents and carers. The acting headteacher provides a very clear sense of purpose and direction, clearly linked to school improvement. She has, rightly, focused on developing a senior leadership team although not all members are, as yet, as fully involved in the good monitoring and analysis as she is. The governing body is knowledgeable and supportive, taking the lead in monitoring the ongoing building work. Good partnerships with parents and carers, support agencies and local schools enhance provision well. The school has a good understanding of how well it is doing and what needs to be done next, and has a good capacity to maintain and sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable all members of the leadership team to use their skills to track and to monitor progress and provision across the school.
- Increase the number of pupils who achieve the higher level (Level 5) in writing by giving pupils more opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects, using firsthand experiences.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils at Mill Lane enjoy school greatly and are enthusiastic about all aspects of their learning. When children enter the school, their knowledge and skills are typical for their age in all areas of learning except communication, literacy and language, which are often below typically expected levels. The progress made by all groups of pupils, including the more able is good. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, attainment is above average due to the good quality teaching they receive. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the pupils' knowledge of written methods of calculation was challenged well through good interaction with the teacher's questioning. The well-planned lesson proceeded at a rapid pace, challenged all pupils and ensured good development of independent skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress due to a range of highly tailored and well-managed support programmes. These are exceptionally well delivered by teachers, support staff and outside agencies.

The pupils feel extremely safe. Parents and carers are confident that their children are very safe and enjoy school. Pupils have an excellent knowledge and understanding of what it means to eat healthily. The school council offers the chance for pupils to exercise leadership roles within the school community, to actively support charities and to participate in 'pupil voice' conferences with other schools. Pupils contribute well to the school community as buddies for younger children and by organising fund raising, and to the local community through their cultural and inter-school activities. They are taking a lead in developing recycling across the school, which is reflected in Mill Lane's Eco-school status. For example, the recycled bottle greenhouse makes a welcome addition to 'Gruffland' – the school's garden and environmental area. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural

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development is clearly evident in lessons in the way they appreciate the arts and music, and through the mature way in which they relate to, and communicate with, other pupils and with adults, including visitors to the school.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching was observed across the school, with some exemplary practice in a few lessons leading to a high level of motivation and enthusiasm. In a Year 2 lesson pupils developed descriptive sentences based on a recently heard story. As a result of the teacher’s excellent lesson management skills, high expectations and good subject knowledge, pupils remained strongly motivated throughout the lesson and made very good progress in their understanding of the use of sentences and adjectives. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively to engage all pupils in learning. They display strong subject knowledge and this enthuses and challenges pupils and contributes to their good progress. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives that are routinely shared with pupils. Good classroom management skills ensure that pupils work well together and there are no marked differences in the responses of boys or girls. Carefully targeted questioning draws out pupils’ ideas and develops their thinking and reasoning skills. Throughout the lessons pupils are given opportunities to assess their own work.

The support provided by teaching assistants is well focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning, especially for individual pupils with additional learning needs. Through their assessments teachers are acutely aware of their pupils’

¹ 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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capabilities and of their prior learning and understanding, and plan very effectively to build on them. Pupils understand how they can improve their work and are supported in doing so. The curriculum is enriched with a good range of visits and visitors and extra-curricular activities which are much enjoyed by the pupils. Collaboration with other schools further enriches the pupils' learning. Links with specialist services support the development of the wider curriculum well. The school's good arrangements for the care of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, contribute to their good development and well-being and support their learning very well. Transition arrangements ensure pupils are well prepared to move easily into and out of school and between classes. The after-school provision offers a welcoming and safe environment for collaborative activities and is much appreciated by parents and carers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher has successfully communicated her high expectations about continuing to improve provision. She has identified and tackled areas requiring improvement with rigour, while building effectively on the school's existing successes. She has galvanised the enthusiasm of staff and developed a strong team, although not all leaders are, as yet, fully involved in the good monitoring and tracking processes. However, as a result of effective management of classroom practice, teaching is good and planning is founded on robust evidence and based on good quality data.

The effective liaison with parents and carers and other partners contributes significantly to improvements in pupils' achievement and well-being. The school promotes equality of opportunity in all its work and is constantly alert to any variation in achievement. The performance of pupils is tracked closely, with particular attention to the performance of different groups. The school uses a wide range of strategies and interventions to support pupils identified as being in danger of underachieving. All groups achieve equally well from their starting points, and they all have opportunities to take part in the excellent enrichment programmes including whole-class music tuition and 'Junior Enterprise and Apprentice' activities. As a result, Mill Lane is a highly inclusive school and all pupils are able to take full advantage of all it has to offer.

The governing body's effectiveness is good and has developed well since the last

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inspection. Its members have a good level of involvement in the school and are involved in making important strategic decisions, particularly about the ongoing building programme. They carry out monitoring visits but still wish to develop this further. The school gives a high priority to training for safeguarding and child protection and this exceeds statutory requirements. Leaders pay very close attention to checking the suitability of adults to work with children, and record keeping is meticulous.

There is a good partnership with parents and carers. The school provides ample opportunities for them to be kept informed of their children's progress, and invites their contribution to topics and developments. It responds well to parents' views and provides a wide range of opportunities for family learning. The school's provision for promoting community cohesion is good, with effective plans constructed that help the school to engage with a range of community groups beyond the school and the immediate community. The pupils' heightened awareness of the plight of other people around the world through their charity fund raising work is one of many examples of the impact of the school's approach in this area.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a good education. Well-planned induction arrangements help most children to settle quickly into school life. Children achieve well from starting points that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. By the time they leave to join the Key Stage 1 class, most are confident and independent learners. Children thrive in an atmosphere of care, nurture and support. The Nursery/Reception class has an important role in the local community and is valued by parents and carers. Children enjoy being at school; they have highly

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positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is typically sensible and considerate of others. Because their welfare is well provided for, they flourish in the secure and safe environment. Parents and carers are unanimous in saying that they are happy with their children's experience at the school, and that their children enjoy school. One wrote: 'My son has thoroughly enjoyed his time in the Nursery and I have found staff to be exceptional in their approach and in the high quality of Early Years education provided.'

Children enjoy a range of carefully planned and exciting activities, based on their own areas of interest. The stimulating and welcoming indoor environment and the outdoor provision provide rich experiences that meet the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, well. Children are able to make their own choices as well as working under the guidance of an adult. Mostly good teaching and effective leadership and management mean that children learn at a good pace and make good progress in all the areas of learning. Adults record and assess pupils' progress well and the resulting information is used to plan the next steps for each child. Children confidently and independently move between the indoor and outdoor areas. Accurate evaluation of the school's provision and performance lead to actions that are well considered and effective in seeking to refine provision. The teachers are helped by a strong and experienced team of support staff.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was above average for a primary school. The overwhelming majority declared themselves to be extremely satisfied with the school, an exceptional response reflecting the school's good links with parents and carers. All agreed that their child enjoys school, that the school keeps their child safe, that teaching at the school is good, and that the school encourages a healthy lifestyle; all declared themselves happy with the school's leadership and overall provision. Inspectors found all aspects of the school to be good, thus endorsing these views. There were many positive comments and very few minor concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mill Lane Community Primary 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 89 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	71	24	28	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	68	78	19	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	41	47	46	53	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	48	41	47	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	52	40	46	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	39	45	45	52	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	56	36	41	0	0	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)	52	60	31	36	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	47	54	36	41	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	45	44	51	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	43	46	53	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	64	31	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	59	68	28	32	0	0	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



15 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mill Lane Community Primary School, Chinnor OX39 4RF

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. Thank you also to those who completed questionnaires to say what you thought of your school and also to those of you who talked to us. You said it was a good school and we agree. Mill Lane is a place where you feel extremely safe, and enjoy taking part in the interesting activities and school trips.

Here are some other important things about your school.

- You make good progress in lessons thanks to good teaching.
- You enjoy school, and your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- You show respect for each other and help each other around school.
- You respond positively to activities and interesting lessons.
- You make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school.
- You have a good understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating.

To make things even better for you, we have asked the headteacher and staff to make sure that:

- the new leadership team is fully involved in monitoring and tracking your progress
- more of you achieve Level 5 in writing by the time you leave the school.

We wish each one of you every success in your future education and hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now. You can all help the school by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Michael Bartleman
Lead inspector

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