

Mill Lane Junior Infant and Early Years School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107639
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	395591
Inspection dates	29–30 May 2012
Lead inspector	Declan McCarthy

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	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Megahy
Headteacher	Noreen Dunn
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy
Jean O'Neill

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Parts of 10 lessons were observed taught by eight teachers: most of these were observed jointly with the headteacher. Meetings were held with parents and carers, a group of pupils, five members of the governing body, including the Chair, and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation, school improvement planning, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's tracking data for pupils' progress and samples of pupils' work. Questionnaires returned by staff, pupils and 23 parents and carers were scrutinised.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a morning Nursery and a full-time Reception class, which admits children in September. The proportion of pupils known to eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The majority of pupils are of Asian heritage, with many speaking English as an additional language. A significant minority are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils supported by School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. A high proportion of pupils enters or leaves the school at other than the usual times of admission or transfer. The school provides a breakfast club for its pupils. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and senior leadership team have been appointed. Approximately half of the members of the governing body are new to their roles. The school has achieved a number of new awards, including Healthy Schools status and the Inclusion 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	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. It is not yet outstanding because not enough teaching is outstanding and marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work.
- Achievement is good. Children enter the Nursery with attainment below the expectations for their ages, particularly in communication language and literacy, where their skills are well below those expected. As a result of good teaching, they make good progress, which continues in the Reception class. The school's accurate and detailed tracking of pupils' progress confirms that all groups of pupils make good progress throughout the school to reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good overall. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan interesting activities and provide a range of well-chosen resources to stimulate learning. Good feedback is provided on how well pupils are achieving, although there are some inconsistencies in marking to inform pupils of their next steps for learning and learning tasks are not always matched to different levels of ability.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils, parents and carers agree. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Bullying is rare and pupils have good relationships with one another.
- Leadership and management are good. The effective management of performance has led to good improvement since the previous inspection in tracking pupils' progress and closing the gap in pupils' performance. Good leadership of teaching has ensured that a higher proportion of teaching is outstanding each year. Leaders have successfully developed strong partnerships with local schools and within the local community, which enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on pupils' good achievement and improve teaching to outstanding by:
 - matching tasks always to the different learning needs of pupils
 - ensuring consistency in marking to inform pupils of the next steps for learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement throughout the school is good. All groups of pupils, including pupils who speak English as an additional language, those who enter the school at times other than the usual time of admission, and those known to be eligible for free school meals, achieve equally well. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they receive good support for their learning from teaching assistants. They break tasks down into smaller steps and carefully explain technical vocabulary by modelling practical examples to increase pupils' understanding.

In the inspection questionnaires and in discussion, parents and carers believe their children are making good progress. At Key Stage 1, pupils build on good progress from the Early Years Foundation Stage by reaching average attainment in reading, writing, and mathematics. Pupils develop and use their good knowledge of letter sounds to read and spell unfamiliar words. Given the small group sizes and a wide variation in particular groups each year, national assessment results over the last three years are variable, but show that, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics from their below average starting points. By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading is slightly above average because the school has successfully implemented its policy for guided reading and promoted pupils' enjoyment of books through its lending library. The gap between attainment in reading and writing has narrowed considerably in the past year because of the strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills to support writing and many opportunities within different subjects for extended writing.

Learning and progress in lessons are mostly good and, sometimes, they are outstanding. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils developed a good understanding of division by sharing out different objects together and relating this to solving a real-life problem. In a Years 4 and 5 English lesson, pupils developed an excellent understanding of prefixes by exploring their meanings in pairs and matching them to key words. On a very few occasions, a very small number of pupils either found learning too difficult or too easy because tasks were not matched well enough to their learning needs.

Quality of teaching

The rigorous and accurate monitoring of teaching has led to a steady rise in the proportion of good and better teaching during the last three years. Inspection findings confirm the views of pupils, parents and carers that teaching is good. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and successfully develops children's language and communication, mathematical development, and social interaction skills, through the use of well-chosen resources and activities to stimulate their learning, indoors and outdoors.

Lessons proceed at a brisk and lively pace, with teachers making good use of well-chosen visual resources, such as technology, to stimulate learning. That was seen in the excellent use of technology in an outstanding mathematics lesson, to ensure pupils in Years 4 and 5 understood the concept of doubling and the properties of flat shapes. The skilled use of questioning by the teacher ensured learning was extended, so that more-able pupils made rapid progress in doubling three-digit numbers. Equally, excellent support from the teaching assistant in modelling the differences between different shapes to clarify misconceptions enabled a few pupils who were struggling with the concept to make equally outstanding progress in the lesson.

Teaching and support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good because teaching assistants take into account the prior attainment of the pupils they support to adapt methods, approaches and the use of resources to enable full access to learning. For example, in a well-planned Year 2 lesson on letter sounds, the teaching assistant used multi-sensory methods by encouraging pupils to sound out the key word, while simultaneously writing it in a sand tray. That increased their skills of blending sounds together accurately and reading the words with similar sounds confidently. Teachers provide good feedback on how well pupils are doing in lessons, although, when the pupils' work is marked, sometimes, they do not always inform pupils of the next steps for learning. Teachers, mostly, use their good knowledge of pupils' prior attainment to plan activities which build on knowledge skills and understanding for different groups of pupils. However, on a few occasions, learning tasks are not always matched well enough to pupils' different abilities and aptitudes.

The teaching of literacy, numeracy and technology skills within different subjects is good and seen in many examples of pupils' written work. For example, pupils made good use of technology in literacy, using word-processing skills well to produce attractive accounts about the legend of Robin Hood. Literacy was also promoted well in science work as pupils wrote definitions of key words such as 'seed' and 'carnivore'. The teacher marked the work and moved pupils learning forward by advising them to use the words 'plant' or 'animal' in their definitions. Numeracy was promoted well in history work when pupils compared the differences in historical time lines between the Aztecs, the Tudors, the Romans, and the Vikings.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers believe that pupils are well behaved and are safe in school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage feel safe and secure and play safely

with others. Pupils move around the school safely, handle equipment properly and stay safe. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, such as cyber-bullying and name calling and how to avoid it. Bullying is rare and pupils and their parents and carers confirm that any of the very few incidents which occur are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils have good relationships with each other and are courteous, polite and respectful towards adults. On school trips, parents and carers and staff note that pupils' behaviour is often outstanding and they are excellent ambassadors for the school.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good because they respond well to the classroom rules and staff management of behaviour. In lessons where teaching was outstanding, pupils' behaviour was also outstanding, as they focused consistently on their learning and tried their very best. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, which is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality and enjoyment of extra activities to enrich their learning, including the well-run breakfast club.

Leadership and management

The strong and purposeful leadership of the headteacher and senior leadership team has ensured a team commitment by all staff to school improvement. All leaders are involved in school self-evaluation, which is accurate and is based on the rigorous management of performance and monitoring of teaching. The outcomes are used to identify clear priorities for improvement and provide professional development and support to facilitate these. That has led, for example, to significant improvements in the quality of teaching, especially the teaching of reading, writing, and mathematics, where the gaps in the performance of different groups are narrowing. As a result, the school promotes equalities well. That is also seen, for example, in the good bi-lingual support for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which enables them to make good progress in communication and language skills.

Leaders provide a broad range of relevant learning opportunities through good curriculum planning. That includes a strong emphasis on the promotion of literacy, numeracy, and technology skills across subjects, a range of intervention programmes to enable pupils who are falling behind to catch up, and the development of a range of well-chosen resources to stimulate learning. The curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development well, through consideration of the plight of children working in factories during Victorian times and whether it is right for children under 16 years of age to work. Good opportunities to celebrate and promote different cultural traditions through, for example, close links with mosques and local churches, develop pupils' understanding and appreciation of diversity. Teachers provide many opportunities in lessons to develop pupils' social skills, through taking turns, independent learning, and listening to and respecting the views of others. Good links with parents and carers include their participation in school trips, classes to support learning at home, and school events, which reflect their positive views of the school.

The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met and provides good support and oversight of the school's work. That is particularly evident in the promotion of safeguarding, where all requirements are fully met. Vetting procedures for staff and visitors are rigorous, all training is updated and policies are reviewed

regularly. Staff are vigilant in their supervision of pupils to ensure their well-being and safety. The school has made good improvement since its previous inspection and demonstrates a strong capacity for improvement.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



31 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mill Lane Junior, Infant and Early Years School, Batley, WF17 6EG

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed watching your achievement assembly and we were particularly impressed with your good behaviour and how you all celebrated each other's success. Thank you for telling us about your school and for filling in the questionnaires. We agree with you and your parents and carers, that Mill Lane is a good school. Here are more good things we found out.

- You all achieve well and make good progress in your learning.
- Teaching is good, you receive good support when you need help in learning, and teachers make learning interesting for you.
- Your behaviour is good, you have good attitudes to learning, you help each other, you respect adults, and you are polite and courteous to visitors.
- Your school is led and managed well by your headteacher and staff and members of the governing body visit your school regularly to see how well you are doing.

To help your school become even better, we have asked all leaders to make more teaching outstanding. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that you are always given different tasks in lessons, which are neither too hard nor too easy, because you learn differently. Your teachers always talk to you about how well you are doing, but we have also asked them to make sure you always know the next steps for learning when they mark your work. You can help by telling your teachers if your work is too hard or too easy.

Yours sincerely

Declan McCarthy
Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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