

Minster in Sheppey Primary School

Brecon Close, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 2HX

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The vast majority of pupils achieve well, often from low starting points. They reach national averages in English and mathematics, making better progress in English.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress because of effective teaching.
- Teaching is good overall in the school, and effectively supports pupils' personal development and good academic progress.
- Pupils' performance is closely tracked and the school has a clear picture of pupils' progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the school. They have good attitudes to learning and get on well together.
- Bullying is extremely rare and pupils feel very safe.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now at the national average.
- The headteacher is relentless in her drive for continued improvement. This, together with timely professional development, has led to the improvement in teaching and learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching, although good, has some inconsistencies.
- A small proportion of pupils, often girls, do not make the same good progress as boys in mathematics.
- Although governance has improved, the governing body does not gather enough evidence of its own, through monitoring, in order to hold the school to account for its performance as fully as it might.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They visited 18 lessons.
- The inspection team held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The team observed other work of the school, including plans for improvement, recent reviews of the school's provision, safeguarding information, assessment records, attendance information and the school's checks and information on pupils' progress.
- Account was taken of the 40 questionnaires completed by members of staff and the 21 responses from parents and carers to the online Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Gavin Jones, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Lynda Welham	Additional inspector
Fiona Robinson	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school. It has provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in three Reception classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Hardly any pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who are supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is around the national average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The after-school club is not managed by the school's governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching to accelerate pupils' progress further, especially in mathematics and in Years 3 and 4, by:
 - using the best teachers as mentors and coaches to other teachers to improve their practice
 - fine-tuning the monitoring of teaching and the arrangements for professional development so that they have more impact on good teachers
 - marking work in mathematics more effectively so that it is as helpful to pupils as it is in English
 - giving teachers opportunities to observe outstanding practice.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body in holding school leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - putting into effect a regular and systematic programme of monitoring and evaluation
 - formally recording and discussing the results of its monitoring and evaluation at regular meetings and using them to hold senior leaders better to account for the school's performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well as predominantly good teaching ensures that they make good progress in their learning from their starting points.
- Children enter school with skills that are generally below and often well below the expected levels for their age. A minority of children have weak skills, especially in communication, language and literacy. In the Reception Year, they make good progress in their learning although a few do not meet the expected early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. Their attainment has risen, showing an improvement since the last inspection, and is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. In a science lesson, pupils showed good learning as they participated keenly in work on seed dispersal, discussing questions with each other and concentrating fully on the work in hand. Their books are beautifully presented, illustrating the care and interest they take in their learning.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2, although it is stronger in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. Progress across the key stage is better in English than it is in mathematics, as the school has implemented a number of successful improvements to raise standards in English. In the most recent national tests at the end of Year 6, an increasing proportion of pupils reached the expected level, with over a third reaching the higher Level 5. A few attained Level 6, showing outstanding progress from their low starting points.
- The achievement of more-able girls in mathematics by the end of Year 6 is not as good as that of more-able boys. The school is aware of this and has already begun to put into place further interventions, which are beginning to show signs of success.
- Pupils' skills in linking letters and sounds (phonics) and their skills in reading and writing are better now than in the past. This is because the school has successfully employed a more structured approach to reading across the school. As a result, over three quarters of pupils taking the Year 1 phonics test (the links between sounds and letters) met nationally expected levels.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar good progress to their classmates. Many reach the levels expected of all pupils at Year 6, indicating even better progress.
- The group of pupils eligible for funding under the pupil premium also make good progress as funds are spent effectively on, for example, intervention programmes, one-to-one tuition, behaviour mentoring, play therapy and a homework club.
- An effective nurture group for pupils with social and emotional needs meets their needs well. As a result, they gain in confidence and self-esteem, which ensures that their learning is maintained at a good level.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good, and has improved since the last inspection. The school's own monitoring, together with inspection evidence, confirms this. Although there are instances of outstanding teaching, teaching is not yet consistently good. Not enough opportunities exist for teachers to observe outstanding teaching to enhance their own practice.
- Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and as a result, lessons are typified by good behaviour, which is managed well. This supports a calm and purposeful feel to lessons, with pupils working hard without the need for constant adult intervention.
- Most teachers and their assistants are good at questioning pupils to check their progress. Very occasionally, this is not the case and teachers miss opportunities to reshape their teaching and make learning more effective.

- In many lessons, good quality planning highlights how the learning is adjusted to cater for the various ability groups in the class.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and make a valuable contribution to learning. This is especially the case for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, who receive good support, often in small groups.
- The assessments that teachers make are now more accurate than in previous years. They are used carefully by teachers to plan activities at the appropriate levels in order to challenge all ability groups.
- Marking is generally good. It is better in English, where it helps pupils to see how they might improve. It is not as helpful in mathematics. Pupils do not always respond to the helpful marking, neither do they have regular opportunities to assess their own work or that of their classmates, even though they often have good guidance to help them judge how they are getting on.
- Teaching is best where lively and enthusiastic presentations, supported by well-chosen resources, meet the needs of all pupils and inspire them to want to learn. These features were clearly seen in an outstanding Year 6 lesson where the buzz of excitement was tangible as pupils prepared their story outlines for writing at length later in the week.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- The school has a bright and vibrant atmosphere which pupils find attractive. There are many opportunities for pupils to extend their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, for example, during the school's Christingle services or through writing about life in other parts of the world in topic work.
- In lessons, pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They work well on their own and in groups. As a result, their behaviour is a positive factor in the good progress they make in their learning.
- Pupils respect one another and racial incidents and bullying are extremely rare. Pupils are confident when they say they cannot remember any recent incidents. They are fully aware of the different types of bullying, as this has been the subject of both assemblies and class discussions. They know how to keep themselves safe and know to whom to turn if they need support.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and say that adults look after them well. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the Parent View survey supported this view.
- Leaders have taken a firm stance on holidays taken in term-time. Together with the close links made with outside agencies and the wide range of rewards and sanctions in place, the school's approach has resulted in improvements in attendance, which is now broadly average.

The leadership and management are good

- The highly focused leadership of the headteacher has inspired staff to improve their teaching and raise pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- The strong management of the performance of teachers and the well-developed programme of training have brought about improvement to the teaching. The monitoring of teaching in lessons is sharply focused and identifies clearly how teachers might improve. More emphasis has been placed on improving the small proportion of relatively weaker teaching than moving consistently good teaching to becoming outstanding.
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress are robust and used successfully to highlight pupils in danger of falling behind. They are also used at meetings to review pupils' progress and to hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make in their class.
- Priorities for development arise from the school's good quality self-evaluation. Subject leaders in English and mathematics contribute well to the school's self-evaluation as they have a good knowledge of their subject's strengths and areas for development. After the attention placed on

improving English, the mathematics leader is now focused on bringing about further improvements in this subject.

- The curriculum is broad and increasingly creative, so that pupils do not just focus on the key subjects of English and mathematics. The use of key skills in both subjects is evident in topic work and in work linking other subjects together.
- Safeguarding practices are secure. For example, checks on staff appointments are regularly updated, covering all adults spending time in the school.
- The school effectively promotes equality of opportunity in all its work. It is constantly alert to any variations in achievement and quickly devises initiatives, including support, to overcome weaknesses.
- The local authority keeps a watching brief on this improving school and provides appropriate support when required.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows what is happening in the school and the quality of its overall provision. It has recently spent considerable time restructuring its committees in order to be more effective. As a result, it is not as far advanced as it might be with putting into effect a systematic monitoring programme. Governors have had training to help them understand the school's data, including how it compares with schools nationally, and have a good knowledge of the budget. They know about the use of pupil premium funding, recognising how it is being used successfully to close the gap between specific groups of pupils and other children in the school. They know the results of the performance management of teachers and understand what has been done to recognise and reward good teachers.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118344
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	401744

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	476
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Ingleton
Headteacher	Debbie Wheeler
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 June 2010
Telephone number	01795 872138
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Email address	headteacher@minster-sheppey.kent.sch.uk

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