

Milton Hall Primary School and Nursery

Salisbury Avenue, , Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 7AU

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher and senior leaders have successfully maintained and improved teaching, learning and pupils' achievement, so that progress for all groups is good.
- As a result of the good support they receive, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well.
- Those pupils eligible for support through pupil premium also achieve well, as do those who speak English as an additional language.
- Teaching is mainly good with some outstanding. Leaders check its quality regularly to be sure that pupils are learning as well as they can. Teachers use questioning effectively to promote understanding and staff build positive relationships with pupils, helping them to do their best.
- As a result of the interesting and welcoming environment provided, children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress.
- Pupils are proud of their school and are keen to learn. They feel safe and well cared for. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good. Attendance has improved and is now average.
- Parents and carers have a positive view of the school and the opportunities provided for their children.
- Governors know the school well and work closely with leaders to hold the school to account for its work. They visit the school regularly and are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make as much progress in mathematics as they do in reading and writing.
- Pupils do not always act on the advice they are given when teachers mark their work.
- Not all teachers with additional responsibilities use information about pupils' progress to check the quality of provision in their area.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 27 lessons, seven of which were observed jointly with the senior leaders. All teachers present during the inspection were observed as well as teaching assistants working with groups of pupils or individuals.
- In addition, the inspectors made a number of shorter visits to lessons, looked in on pupils during lunchtime and visited break times. There was a Year 1 concert during the inspection so no assemblies were held.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' work in all year groups, listened to pupils read and looked at the displays around the school.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, teachers with additional responsibilities, learning mentors, the school family worker, attendance officer and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke formally with two groups of pupils and informally with other pupils in lessons and around the school.
- A variety of the school's documents were examined. These included: the school's own evaluation of its performance and its development plan; the school's information about pupils' progress and the support given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs; evidence about the quality of teaching; and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 67 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own parents' survey, together with views expressed by parents at the beginning and end of the day. They analysed 80 questionnaires returned by staff.
- The lead inspector also visited the breakfast club.

Inspection team

Christine Mayle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Karen Heath

Additional Inspector

Philip Scull

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school and has, in addition, four Nursery classes.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium is well above average. In this school, this extra government funding is for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- A significant number of pupils leave and join the school at times other than the usual entry year in Nursery.
- The school has recently undergone a substantial building programme to provide additional classrooms and other facilities.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that pupils understand and act on the advice they are given when teachers mark their work.
- Make sure that pupils make even better progress in mathematics by providing training to help teachers to organise activities that encourage pupils to practise their mathematical skills in different ways and in a variety of situations.
- Ensure that all teachers with additional responsibilities are trained to use the information about pupils' progress to check the quality of provision in their area of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are well below those typical for their age group. They settle quickly and happily into school routines because the adults are welcoming and provide a good range of activities that engage and interest them.
- Children, from a variety of different cultures, work well together reflecting good development of their personal and social skills.
- From their different starting points, children make good progress in Nursery and Reception. However, by the time they enter Year 1, attainment remains below average because of their very low starting points.
- Throughout the year, a significant number of pupils leave or join the school in different year groups. Many of these pupils are recent arrivals to this country or have additional learning and social needs. The school identifies these pupils' needs quickly and provides very effective support, so that they achieve well and continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1.
- The results of the Year 1 national phonics check in 2013 were below average, in part because many pupils are in the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language. Phonics is how the letters in words relate to their sounds. Well-planned and targeted programmes are in place that support these pupils' learning and develop their language skills so that they make good progress year-on-year.
- As a result of the school's focus on improving the teaching of phonics, standards in reading have improved so that, by the end of Year 6, they are broadly average. The importance of reading is promoted well both within the school and at home. Pupils enjoy reading and are happy talking about the books they have read.
- Adults have high expectations of what pupils will achieve from the moment they arrive, so that they make good and sometimes outstanding progress. This means that the gap between the school's results and the national average at Key Stage 2 is closing rapidly.
- Inspectors' observations in lessons and of pupils' work, and the school's own data, indicate that, despite the dip in Key Stage 2 results in 2012, this pattern of rising attainment and improving progress is set to continue. The actions the school has taken to improve reading and, since 2012 writing, have been particularly effective. Although also improving, the progress that pupils make in mathematics is not keeping pace with their progress in reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress. These pupils do well owing to effective, well-targeted support provided individually, in small groups and in class.
- Pupils whose circumstances mean they are at risk of not doing well and those who need extra help make good progress. There is a very effective team of trained adults who work specifically with these children and their families, providing a bridge between home, school and external support services. This ensures they achieve well.
- Pupils from different ethnic heritages all make similarly good progress and the school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunity to succeed.

- Pupil premium funding is being used effectively to reduce class sizes and provide additional support staff to work within classes and with small groups. Those pupils known to be eligible for support through this funding make the same progress as their classmates, and sometimes do better. In 2013, eligible pupils in Year 6 achieved as well as their peers in reading, were about two terms behind in writing and a year behind in mathematics. The gap between their progress and that of others is reducing.

The quality of teaching is good

- Since the last inspection, the school has successfully focused on improving the quality of teaching, so that most is now good or outstanding.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding and always expect pupils to do their best. Pupils are keen to learn, work well together, and with adults who support them in their classes.
- Where teaching is most effective pupils are fully engaged in creative and practical activities. Teachers and teaching assistants draw up success criteria for these activities in collaboration with pupils so that they are clear what, how and why they are learning.
- Expertly timed activities allow pupils, including the more-able, to learn at an appropriate rate for them, in a supportive yet challenging atmosphere. Adults model their high expectations of pupils' behaviour and maintain a good pace for learning by linking different phases of the lesson effectively.
- In a guided reading lesson, pupils in Year 3 worked in groups with a teacher or teaching assistant, or on their own. Those pupils working independently used tablet computers, to answer a series of questions on the books they had been reading. This helped them to check their understanding and comprehension. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about reading and their favourite books. They said they read frequently at home and at school.
- In the same lesson, the teacher and teaching assistant, using their excellent subject knowledge of grammar and punctuation, supported different groups. Both adults encouraged pupils to use their own skills of research, talk to their peers as well as asking them questions. The teacher assessed pupils as the lesson progressed so that future work could be targeted to their needs. All pupils made excellent progress.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, a good range of resources is provided, both inside and outside, that excites the children's imagination and supports their learning. The activities are well designed to encourage children to use their speaking and listening skills. This is particularly effective for those children who speak English as an additional language.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because teaching assistants are effectively deployed to work closely with them, in and out of lessons. This work is facilitated by the close, trusting relationships between staff and pupils. As a result, there is equality of opportunity in all classrooms and no sign of discrimination of any kind.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and most teachers' written comments help pupils to know what they have done well and what they need to do next to make their work even better. Teachers do not always make sure that pupils understand and act on the advice they are given.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, which is a calm and welcoming place. They are keen to learn and this helps them to listen and concentrate in lessons, so that they make good progress.
- The overwhelming view of parents and carers, who responded to Parent View and to the school's own survey, is that behaviour is good and that their children are well cared for. The caring ethos of the school is promoted effectively through the positive relationships between pupils and staff.
- A key feature of the school is its strong promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness so that pupils work well together. Pupils feel part of a school community that respects and values people's different backgrounds and cultures. They treat each other and adults with respect and are polite, well-mannered and courteous. They are justifiably proud of their school.
- Attendance rates have improved so that they are now average. This reflects the extensive and effective work that the school does with its families and the local community.
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and parents agree. Pupils understand the different forms of bullying that may take place, including name-calling, cyber-bullying and racism. Pupils understand how the school deals with these incidents, which rarely occur.
- The school is successful at establishing close links with its community. Parent and carers are regularly welcomed into school to attend the Library Café, talk about their own cultures and traditions, attend concerts or meet with staff. This 'open door' atmosphere extends to the beginning and end of the day when parents and carers collect their children and are able to chat to teachers, learning mentors and other adults. Parents and carers view this as a very positive aspect of the school's work and recognise its importance in enabling their children to settle quickly into the school and make good progress.
- The breakfast club is very well attended and provides pupils with a calm and nutritious start to the school day. Pupils play happily in a supportive environment which provides excellent preparation for the pupils' learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have a shared commitment and passion for all pupils to succeed. The whole school community share these high expectations. The work of the school successfully helps fulfil these aspirations.
- There have been changes in the structure of the leadership team since the last inspection and these have strengthened the school's capacity for further improvement.
- The school tracks the progress of individual pupils in detail, identifies their needs early and quickly puts in place effective support. This tracking also looks at the progress of different groups to make sure they are making good progress from when they join the school. However, not all teachers with additional responsibilities use this information to check the quality of provision in their areas. The school has identified this as a training need.
- The senior leaders' and governors' own evaluation of the school's performance is accurate.

Development planning correctly identifies the priorities for the school and actions taken have been effective in improving the quality of teaching and achievement.

- Teachers' performance and the quality of teaching are checked regularly by leaders. Decisions regarding their pay and promotion are directly linked to whether staff have met their targets and had sufficient impact on pupils' achievement. Professional training is matched very closely to teachers' needs and its impact is reflected in the improving quality of the teaching and adult support observed in lessons and around the school.
- There is a wide range of learning experiences that the school provides to engage and enthuse pupils in their learning, whilst also celebrating the school's cultural diversity, such as Pirates' Week, the Media Suite and Languages' week. This extends to outside-of-school activities such as sports clubs, dancing and musical performances, including the choir singing at the O2 Arena.
- Arrangements for protecting pupils are good and safeguarding procedures meet all statutory requirements.
- The school works well in partnership with the local authority and uses its support appropriately.

■ **The governance of the school:**

Governors regularly visit the school to monitor its performance and hold the school's leaders to account for the quality of teaching and the progress that different groups of pupils make. They attend appropriate training based on an audit of their own professional skills. As a result, they have an astute awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are not complacent. There is a good understanding among governors of what the school's tracking of pupils' progress tells them about pupils' achievement compared to schools nationally, particularly in relation to the pupil premium funding and its impact on pupils' progress. They maintain a good oversight of the effectiveness of arrangements for managing teachers' performance and its link to pay. The financial budget is managed well, including the allocation of the additional funding for primary sport, which is being used to provide training for teachers from a specialist teacher and to broaden the range of sporting activities for pupils such as Tag Rugby.

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	115313
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	425430

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	584
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Niki Lamont
Headteacher	Debbie Priest
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2011
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