

Mill Rythe Infant School

Havant Road, Hayling Island, Hampshire, PO11 0PA

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics requires improvement as it is not yet good. Boys, in particular, do not achieve well in writing. Teaching over time has not been good enough to enable good progress.
- Teachers do not always set work at the right level for pupils and this slows their progress. The most able pupils, in particular, are not sufficiently challenged by their work.
- Feedback to pupils on their work does not always set clear next steps for their learning or ensure they respond. This limits pupils' involvement in improving their work or celebrating their successes.
- Teachers' questioning does not always deepen pupils' understanding or help to resolve their misunderstandings.
- There has been a great deal of staffing turbulence that has disrupted teaching and learning.
- Pupils' progress in reading is hampered by a lack of clear focus on the progressive development of key skills.
- In writing, there is no consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting, the systematic development of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills, or presentation of their work.
- In mathematics, pupils are not secure enough in basic skills, nor do they have enough opportunities to work independently or use and apply their skills in a range of practical activities.
- Senior leaders and managers, including governors, are fairly new to their roles so their impact is limited and the initiatives they have put in place are not fully embedded.
- Middle leaders are fairly new to their roles and so not yet fully supporting or challenging their colleagues to enable rapid improvement. Their action plans are not specific enough or evaluated regularly enough to ensure rapid development.

The school has the following strengths:

- The new headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteacher and governors, is already having a positive impact on behaviour, teaching, achievement and staff morale across the school.
- Effective, well-planned provision in the early years enables children to achieve well.
- Thorough, frequent checks on pupils' progress are now ensuring any pupils falling behind are identified and given the support they need to help them catch up.
- The school keeps pupils safe; they feel safe, behave well and are keen to learn.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 lessons or part lessons, of which two were joint observations with senior staff.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, the headteacher and other senior staff. Additionally, a telephone conversation was held with a local authority officer.
- The inspectors took account of the 46 responses to the online Parent View survey. They also spoke to several parents and carers when they brought their children to school. The inspectors took account of the 21 returned staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and checks on the quality of teaching and assessment, the new curriculum, records relating to behaviour and attendance, the sports premium action plan and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read in Reception and Year 2.

Inspection team

Janet Sinclair, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Cooper

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Mill Rythe Infant School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are looked after or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Pupils attend the Reception classes full time.
- There have been many changes to staffing since the previous inspection, including senior leaders. Two substantive headteachers and an interim headteacher have been appointed during this time. The most recent headteacher appointment was in January 2015. An assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good by ensuring that:
 - work is set at the right level for pupils, particularly the most able, so that they are fully challenged in lessons
 - feedback to pupils sets the next steps for their learning and ensures they respond to teachers' comments
 - questioning deepens pupils' understanding and addresses any misunderstandings pupils have.
- Improve pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - planning systematic development of handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar skills, and improved presentation, particularly that of boys
 - planning reading sessions which systematically teach key skills
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to work independently, so they can use and apply their skills in practical problem-solving activities in mathematics.
- Build the capacity of leadership and management to drive improvement by:
 - developing the roles of middle leaders and ensuring they have clear action plans, the success of which can be measured accurately and evaluated more frequently
 - ensuring that senior leaders fully embed new initiatives in order to eradicate inconsistencies in teaching.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not ensured that teaching has been good enough to enable all pupils to make good progress. However, the new headteacher and assistant headteacher have a clear vision for the school and a good understanding of what needs to be done to ensure rapid improvement. They have worked extremely hard to create a cohesive staff team who share their vision for the school. They have already put things in place to ensure better provision at Key Stage 1, for example a detailed plan for raising attainment and a consistent approach to marking. This, supported by the impact of their actions in a short time, demonstrates the capacity for further improvement.
- Most middle leaders are fairly new to their posts. They are developing well, but are not yet able to offer comprehensive support to their colleagues. While they have action plans for their areas of responsibility, they do not always set clear targets for improvement, nor do they evaluate them regularly enough to secure rapid improvement.
- The school now has a development plan and a raising attainment plan in place with a clear focus on what needs to be done to accelerate progress at Key Stage 1. Senior leaders make checks on their progress in meeting the goals that have been set.
- The new headteacher has instigated robust checks on the quality of teaching and learning. She has supported staff well and given them effective tools to improve their teaching, such as setting clear goals for pupils' learning in lessons and a list of expected outcomes that show whether they have achieved them. As a result, teaching is improving but is not yet consistently good enough to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Prior to September 2014, staff had limited involvement in setting targets for improving their performance that were linked to their pay. Their current targets have been adjusted and strengthened by the new headteacher. They are now well linked to the achievement of the pupils in their class, the quality of their teaching and their wider professional development. Staff spoken to felt that they were well supported to develop their roles.
- Leaders now track pupils' progress carefully and are successfully closing gaps in the achievement of different groups. Half-termly meetings with teachers to discuss pupils' progress focus on ensuring any pupils falling behind are given the support they need. This is helping some pupils to make accelerated progress but this is not yet the case for all pupils who have fallen behind. The checks on progress are helping to improve equality of opportunity, strengthen relationships and eliminate discrimination.
- Leaders have recently introduced half-termly meetings to check the progress of pupils who attract additional funding in order to put support in place to raise their achievement. This is accelerating their progress.
- The school uses the primary sports funding well. It employs sports coaches who help the pupils to develop their skills. It has widened the range of sporting activities for pupils so that they now enjoy tennis and karate as well as taking part in football and gymnastics competitions. There is a clear focus on professional development for staff. These show the school is committed to sustaining these benefits longterm. Pupils say they enjoy physical education as it helps them to get fit.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school's values such as determination and respect are prominently displayed and referred to in assemblies. Pupils are kind and considerate to each other and work well together on tasks. The school promotes British values well through, for example, the promotion of Olympic values in sport, topics such as British heroes, and the promotion of respect and tolerance for other religions and cultures. Their roles as school councillors and playground buddies also prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum has an appropriate focus on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Although subjects are taught through topics, they do not support the wider development of writing and mathematics well. The school's use of visits, visitors and school trips enhances the provision appropriately. The school made good use of the eclipse of the sun to develop pupils' scientific ideas and encourage their imagination through poetry writing.
- The school has effective policies and procedures in place to safeguard staff and pupils. These are checked regularly by governors to ensure they are up to date and enforced.
- Parents and carers are mainly happy with the school and what it provides, although the many changes of staff have caused some concern. They are confident in the new leadership and are looking forward to a period of stability. They receive good information on their children's progress through termly reports and opportunities to attend workshops.
- Until recently, the local authority has provided limited support to the school. It is currently providing

guidance for the English and mathematics leaders in order to support them in improving pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors, many of whom are new, receive good guidance and support from the Chair of the Governing Body that helps them to carry out their roles. The use of a skills audit has ensured an appropriate range of expertise. Clear procedures and an effective clerk ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Governors are developing a clearer understanding of what the data on pupils' progress are telling them as they are now receiving half-termly reports from the headteacher and have had training to help them interpret the data. They can also check the more clearly themselves due to improved presentation. They now have a better idea of the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1, due to a clear report from the headteacher. They are fully involved in the process of rewarding staff for good performance and the need for support where necessary. They carefully scrutinise all applications before signing them off.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They behave especially well in assemblies and in lessons that fully engage them. Only occasionally, when lessons do not meet their needs well, do they become fidgety and lose interest.
- They know the expectations for their behaviour and do not like to be put on the 'bad behaviour' cloud as it means they will lose some of their golden time, which they value highly.
- The school has clear policies and procedures to promote good behaviour and follows up any incidents of misbehaviour promptly and thoroughly.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being school councillors or assembly monitors. They are proud that they help to make a difference.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They work hard, cooperate well and share resources sensibly.
- Pupils know what bullying is and say that there is very little in the school. They are confident that if it does occur, staff will deal with it effectively.
- Pupils are happy to come to school and attend regularly. The school follows up any absences carefully in order to limit persistent absenteeism. There have not been any exclusions.
- The school ensures that lunchtimes are sociable, well-organised occasions. The food is healthy and staff support pupils well to promote healthy eating.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school has effective procedures to ensure that the school site is secure and keeps pupils and staff safe.
- Pupils feel safe in school and confident that adults will help and support them if they need it.
- Staff ensure that pupils know how to use the internet safely. Pupils were involved in the recent international e-safety day that raised their awareness of its importance.
- The school ensures pupils know how to stay safe through, for example, stranger danger talks and the use of goggles for woodwork.
- The school takes very good care of its disadvantaged pupils and ensures that they and their families get the help they need, including both in school and external specialist support, where necessary.
- Parents and carers are confident that the school keeps their children safe and ensures they behave well.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching over time requires improvement. It has not been good enough to ensure pupils make good progress during their time in Key Stage 1. Staffing disruption has hampered the development of a consistent approach to teaching.
- Teachers do not ensure that work is set at the right level for pupils so that it is sometimes too hard for some and too easy for others. This is particularly so for the most able.
- Although teachers question pupils to involve them in their learning, they do not use questioning effectively

to deepen pupils' thinking or address misunderstandings. This slows learning and sometimes results in loss of interest in the task.

- Staff mark pupils' work fairly regularly and now more consistently. However, they do not ensure pupils respond to their feedback, nor do they set clear next steps for their learning, which reduces its impact. It also limits pupils' involvement in improving their work or celebrating their successes.
- Teaching assistants mainly work well to support pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs, to ensure they keep up.
- Teachers do not sufficiently challenge the most able pupils because work is not set at the right level for them or they do not have the opportunity to extend their knowledge. Pupils spoken to said that they would like harder work.
- Teachers plan regular reading sessions for pupils. However, teachers are not specific enough in what they want pupils to learn in order to progressively develop their skills or stimulate a real love of reading. Occasionally, effective, well-planned lessons move learning on quickly and pupils achieve well, both in confidence and competence.
- There is no consistent approach or expectation for pupils' handwriting, presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar, so these skills are not systematically and progressively developed. Boys, in particular, do not engage well in writing activities. This is sometimes because the task does not excite their interest but, more often, because there is not enough emphasis on how to structure their writing.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is improving with some effective teaching ensuring pupils use these skills well in their reading and writing.
- Teachers ensure regular teaching of calculation skills in mathematics. However, pupils have too few opportunities to set out their own work or use their skills to explore numbers or solve problems. This limits their ability to use or apply their skills.
- Teachers organise and manage lessons well. Good relationships ensure pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning.
- Sometimes effective teaching encourages deeper thinking, good vocabulary development and rapid progress.
- Teachers use homework appropriately to support pupils' learning in school.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 requires improvement because they do not make enough progress from their starting points in Year 1. Boys particularly do not do well enough in their writing.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs requires improvement. Although the new special educational needs coordinator has begun to put things in place to support their needs more specifically, such as personalised programmes and emotional support, they have not been in place long enough to show strong impact.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Teachers do not provide work that is challenging enough for them and there is no specific provision to stretch or challenge them. Pupils spoken to say that they ask for extra challenge but do not get it.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 in 2014 was two terms behind that of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The gap in attainment between them and other pupils widened. The school is now carefully checking the achievement of these pupils and ensuring their needs are met well. This is raising their attainment and accelerating their progress. Current data show that they now make similar progress to, and sometimes better than, that of other pupils in school.
- Pupils did not do as well as pupils nationally in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2014. Training of staff and new structures have been put in place to address this and there are early signs of an improving picture.
- Pupils' achievement in reading and writing requires improvement. Reading sessions do not focus sufficiently on the development of key skills and there is not enough emphasis on ensuring that pupils develop good habits in their presentation and handwriting. There is no clear structure to ensure that specific aspects of spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught in each year group. This hampers development and progression in key skills.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is hampered by limited opportunities to work independently or practical opportunities to investigate and solve problems.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children start in the early years with skills and abilities that are typically at or below those levels expected for their age. They make good, and sometimes very good, progress so that many achieve a good level of development or better by the end of the year. They are well prepared for their start in Year 1.
- Good quality, well-planned provision, particularly indoors, ensures children progress well and are inquisitive learners and critical thinkers. For example, they were very excited by the eclipse and staff utilised the occasion to develop their knowledge and understanding. They were keen to enact the occasion, showing a growing understanding of the world.
- Children clearly know the routines and respond very positively with good behaviour, kindness and support for each other.
- Good relationships at all levels ensure that children are confident learners who are willing to explore and take risks.
- Effective teaching of phonics helps children to use these skills well in their reading and writing.
- Regular teacher-led sessions ensure children develop their skills well across the areas of learning. However, in self-chosen tasks, boys do not often choose to write, and so an excitement and purpose for writing are not developed early.
- Teachers very carefully assess the children's learning. Children's learning journals provide a very comprehensive record of their involvement and progress in activities across the areas of learning.
- Staff ensure that children are kept safe and teach them to look after their own safety. For example, staff talk to them about staying safe in the sun and using goggles when doing their woodwork.
- The new early years leader is an experienced early years teacher and is developing her role well. She has successfully managed the transition from two Reception classes to three this year and has created an effective place for children to learn. She has ensured staff work very well together as a whole team, sharing expertise and resources.

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	116490
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	448802

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deborah Burroughs
Headteacher	Lucy Ford
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 November 2009
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