

Muddeford Community Infants' School

Queen's Road, Muddeford, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 3HH

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and other school leaders demonstrate high expectations for all members of the school community. They lead the school with an unwavering belief that all pupils in the school can, and will, achieve their full potential.
- The headteacher, supported by a highly skilled governing body, has dealt with staff underperformance and historical weaknesses in the quality of teaching swiftly and efficiently. Consequently, current pupils in the school are making strong progress from their starting points.
- Across the school, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers use information about what pupils can and cannot do to plan learning which develops their knowledge and skills. The teaching of reading is a strength. In 2018, the vast majority of Year 1 pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check.
- In mathematics, teachers have secure subject knowledge and apply the school's mathematics curriculum with precision. However, on occasion, planned activities lack purpose. Additionally, teachers do not routinely provide opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical understanding. This is weakening the progress of pupils, especially that of middle-prior-attaining pupils capable of working above the expectations for their age.
- Leaders' work to raise the quality of writing across the school has paid dividends. Pupils write with creativity and an accurate application of basic skills. However, the gap between the writing outcomes of boys and girls is wider than that found nationally.
- Children get off to a good start in Reception. From low starting points, children make strong progress across all areas of learning.
- Leaders and governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require further improvement. Development plans contain the appropriate priorities, but success criteria often lack the required level of precision.
- Leaders use a range of information to build a picture of pupils' progress. However, until recently, their processes have lacked sufficient rigour. As a result, leaders have not identified swiftly enough where pupils have fallen behind.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. All the parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- At the time of the inspection, the governing body had not ensured that the school's website met statutory requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen rates of progress for pupils by:
 - ensuring that all planned activities have a clearly defined purpose
 - providing pupils, and especially middle-prior-attaining pupils working at greater depth, with more opportunities to think about their mathematics and apply their understanding in a range of different contexts
 - ensuring that writing activities engage boys so that their writing outcomes are closer to those of girls.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers have a secure understanding of the school's assessment procedures and apply agreed assessment criteria with a high level of accuracy.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - school development planning, including that for the spending of pupil premium funding, contains precise and measurable success criteria
 - monitoring systems allow leaders to check the accuracy of the information they are given and identify more swiftly any potential underachievement
 - governors put systems in place to check the website's continued compliance to statutory requirements.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, displays passion, ambition and a steely determination that all pupils will succeed regardless of any barriers they may face. This drive for excellence is exemplified by the headteacher's belief that the school 'can and will teach every child to read – no matter what'.
- Since taking up post in February 2017, the headteacher has worked tirelessly to eliminate weaker teaching from the school. Where he has identified staff underperformance, this has been tackled swiftly and uncompromisingly. The headteacher has provided staff with appropriate levels of support. However, he has not shied away from making difficult decisions where this has proved necessary. Although there is still a legacy of some weaker teaching in pupils' attainment, pupils currently in the school are making strong progress from their starting points.
- Senior leaders demonstrate a strong understanding of teaching and learning. They use this knowledge to hold teachers to account for their practice and to provide well-targeted support and challenge. Leaders encourage staff to be active participants in their own professional development. They provide opportunities for staff to develop and share best practice through undertaking a range of action research projects. This is proving effective in realising the school's philosophy that 'everyone is a learner'.
- Until recently, leaders' systems for monitoring pupils' outcomes have lacked rigour. As a result, leaders have not, in the past, identified early enough where pupils' progress has stalled. An example of this is in early years, where leaders did not recognise that children's writing outcomes were falling short of expectations in time to affect end-of-year statutory assessments. Leaders have now strengthened their systems so they can identify concerns sooner and act more swiftly.
- When leaders have recognised that pupils are at risk of falling behind, they have put in place a range of interventions to support pupils and strengthen their progress. Inspection evidence confirms that these interventions have proved highly effective in getting pupils back on track. This has been instrumental in ensuring that current pupils make strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders and governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas requiring further improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and identifies the appropriate areas for development. Leaders use this information to inform development planning, which is focused on the correct priorities. However, the criteria used for measuring the success of actions lack precision. This is limiting the ability of governors and leaders to check the impact of their actions and is, consequently, reducing levels of accountability.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to support both the learning and pastoral development of disadvantaged pupils. The introduction of individual profiles for each pupil has ensured that staff have a secure understanding of the barriers that pupils face. Through these profiles, leaders track academic outcomes, as well as pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour and attendance. This holistic view of pupils' progress allows leaders to celebrate success and to tailor future provision. In the last academic year, effective use was made of pupil premium funding to ensure that all

disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The priorities and actions within the strategic plan for pupil premium spending are appropriate. However, as with whole-school action planning, the criteria for measuring the plan's success lack precision.

- The school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has an in-depth understanding of her role. She has well-established systems in place to identify precisely pupils' needs. As a result of the high-quality support and carefully targeted provision that they receive, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make strong progress towards their individual targets.
- Leaders make effective use of sports premium funding to enhance pupils' experiences of physical education (PE) and sport. Successful initiatives include increasing pupils' participation in after-school activities, as well as supporting teachers in delivering specific areas of the curriculum, for example dance and gymnastics.
- Leaders have designed and implemented a curriculum that is progressive, relevant and evaluative. Pupils develop their knowledge, understanding and skills through a range of engaging and enriching activities. A focus on topics such as dinosaurs and 'Creepy Christchurch' have been carefully tailored to interest and engage all pupils, especially boys. Pupils are confident in sharing the knowledge they are gaining. For example, a boy in Year 1 told an inspector in detail about how, when dinosaurs lived, the land masses of Africa and South America were joined together.
- The school promotes the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding both in classes and through assemblies. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of British values and how these relate to their school and community values.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Parents spoken with on the playground, and those who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were unanimous in their praise for the school. One parent, summing up the view of many, wrote, 'A wonderful school! All the staff are approachable and interested in the children and parents. My daughter loves school, she is appropriately challenged and comes home with great stories from her day. A lovely community school.'

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, as well as those of the governing body. They are strategic in their work and evaluate their practices reflectively, honestly and pragmatically. Although governors recognise that, in the past, they could have reacted more swiftly to concerns about pupils' outcomes, when they have acted, they have done so with determination and decisiveness.
- Governors are actively involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of the school's improvement planning. They hold leaders to account for their actions and test the information they are given through gathering their own first-hand evidence, for example through learning walks and discussions with pupils.
- Minutes of governing body meetings demonstrate that governors provide leaders with suitable levels of both challenge and support. Additionally, governors pay high regard to ensuring that staff workload is manageable. However, governors' minutes also show this is not at the expense of accountability.

- At the time of the inspection, governors had not ensured that the school's website met statutory requirements. A number of documents were missing or out of date. This included information about the curriculum, equalities, SEN and/or disabilities and the school's safeguarding arrangements. Many of these omissions had been rectified by the end of the inspection.

Safeguarding

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils say that they feel happy and safe in school. This was a view shared by every parent who spoke with inspectors or responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The headteacher, as the designated leader for safeguarding, has ensured that a strong culture of safeguarding pervades the school. All members of the school community – staff, pupils and governors – understand the role they play in keeping children safe.
- Staff and governors' training is up to date and in line with the latest guidance issued by the government. Staff understand the need to always be vigilant and are aware of the signs they need to be looking out for. Staff have a secure knowledge of the school's safeguarding policies. All staff spoken with during the inspection were able to describe the procedures they would follow should they have a concern about the safety of a child in the school.
- Leaders have established strong working relationships with a range of external agencies and services. For example, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are regular visitors into the school. Additionally, leaders work closely with social care colleagues to ensure that the school's most vulnerable families receive the support, care and guidance they require.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and other staff know their pupils well. In early years, teachers make accurate assessments of what children can and cannot do when they join the school. They then tailor provision to address the identified areas of need. As pupils progress through key stage 1, teachers use previous assessments, for example from the end of early years, to ensure that work is matched appropriately. This ensures that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, make strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have established a detailed assessment strategy that is linked closely to national curriculum objectives. They use the assessment information generated to check pupils' progress and to hold teachers to account. However, the work in pupils' books highlights some inconsistencies in how teachers are interpreting the agreed assessment criteria. This is affecting the reliability and accuracy of leaders' monitoring.
- Staff have high expectations of their pupils, both of their academic achievement and their behaviour. Pupils say that they enjoy their learning. This is because the school's rich and engaging curriculum is geared to meeting pupils' needs and interests. For example, the school's current curriculum topics of 'Dinosaurs' in Year 1 and 'Creepy Christchurch' in Year 2 are grabbing pupils' attention and motivating them to become active participants in their own learning.

- Across the curriculum, teachers display strong subject knowledge. They ask probing questions which explore pupils' knowledge and understanding. Where teaching is strongest, learning activities are designed to extend pupils' understanding and develop their ability to think deeply about different concepts. However, some planned activities lack a specific purpose. In these cases, pupils' acquisition of knowledge and skills is not as strong.
- The teaching of reading is a strength in all year groups. The headteacher holds a resolute belief that the school can, and will, teach all pupils to read. This philosophy is evident throughout the school. Teachers and teaching assistants have an in-depth understanding of the school's adopted scheme and this, combined with high expectations and a secure knowledge of phonics, is ensuring that pupils make strong progress. Pupils develop their phonetic awareness systematically and teachers provide them with well-matched resources. These enable pupils to practise and further develop their skills at home. Where pupils' acquisition of phonics is slower, staff provide bespoke one-to-one sessions to support pupils and help them to catch up.
- The strong emphasis that the school has placed on developing pupils' writing skills and improving handwriting is paying off. A systematic approach to teaching the basic skills of spelling and punctuation has contributed significantly to the quality of pupils' writing. Teachers provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their skills within different genres and subjects. Teachers' expectations for pupils' writing are equally high across the curriculum.
- Nonetheless, there is still a difference in the quality of the writing being produced by boys and girls. Leaders and teachers have worked hard to identify the different ways in which they can engage and stimulate boys into wanting to write. However, leaders recognise that more work needs to be done in this area to ensure that boys' writing outcomes are closer to those of girls.
- In mathematics, teachers provide pupils with tasks that support, develop and challenge their conceptual understanding. As a result, pupils make good progress in their acquisition of mathematical knowledge and skills. Across the school, there is a consistent application of the school's approach to the teaching of mathematics. However, the work in pupils' books demonstrates that teachers do not always move pupils on quickly enough. This results in teachers giving pupils, particularly those capable of working at greater depth, work that lacks sufficient challenge. Additionally, teachers provide pupils with more support than they require. For example, they tell pupils how to complete a task, rather than allowing pupils to work this out for themselves. This is limiting pupils' opportunities to think deeply about their mathematics and apply their understanding across different concepts.
- The quality of teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics is effective and pupils gain a breadth of knowledge. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the school's curriculum and the range of interesting activities which engage them in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils are confident, positive learners. They participate enthusiastically in activities and enjoy talking about what they are doing, both to adults and to their peers. For example, two boys in Year 1 explained to an inspector how they were using a set of balances to compare the weights of different dinosaurs. They were clearly enjoying working collaboratively within a well-planned, engaging activity.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They say that bullying 'never happens' and understand the difference between bullying and fallings out. Pupils who spoke with inspectors were confident that if they have any concerns, they have a trusted adult in school who would help them.
- Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when working with digital technology. They talk positively about visits from external agencies, for example the NSPCC, and can recount clearly the messages these talks contained.
- Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of British values, which the school has defined as kindness, honesty, fairness, lawfulness and respect. Pupils talk knowledgeably about these and how they link with their school and community values.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and adults. They conduct themselves well around the school and demonstrate respect for themselves and others. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils behave well on the playground and in the dining hall. The school is a calm and orderly place to learn.
- Pupils' behaviour in classes is, in the vast majority of cases, extremely positive. They listen attentively to adults, as well as to each other. Pupils work cooperatively with their peers and persevere when work challenges them. Staff set high expectations and pupils respond appropriately. On occasion, however, some groups of pupils easily lose focus and concentration. This is especially the case when learning activities are less purposeful.
- Leaders and governors have made reducing pupil absence a key priority. They have identified the barriers affecting pupils' attendance and are proactive in challenging and supporting parents as is appropriate. As a result, although overall attendance remains slightly below the national average, it is rising rapidly. This is the case for all pupils, including the most vulnerable.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over time, weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have led to variances in pupils' progress as they move through the school. However, as result of leaders' effective actions, all groups of pupils currently in the school are now making consistently good progress from their different starting points.
- The most recently published assessment information shows that in 2017, the attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 1 was broadly in line with that of pupils nationally. However, in reading and writing, this did not represent sufficiently strong

progress from pupils' starting points at the end of early years. This was especially the case for those pupils leaving early years at the expected standard.

- The school's assessment information for 2018 shows that outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 2 continue to strengthen. This is the case for both those pupils working at the expected standard and those working at greater depth. While progress for pupils from all starting points is strong, leaders have identified the need to strengthen outcomes for those middle-prior-attaining pupils who are capable of working at greater depth.
- Although diminishing, the difference in writing outcomes for boys and girls across the school remains greater than that found nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities make progress which is at least comparable to that of other pupils with the same starting points. Teachers and teaching assistants assess pupils' needs and put in place carefully planned targets and teaching strategies to reduce identified barriers. These interventions enable pupils to make strong progress towards their individual targets and, in many cases, to catch up with their peers.
- Phonics is well taught across the school and pupils use their knowledge of sounds to read unknown words. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that books are matched precisely to pupils' reading abilities and this enables pupils to grow in confidence and make good progress with their reading. As a result of high-quality provision in early years and Year 1, a very large majority of pupils achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Children make strong progress in the early years from very low starting points. Despite children entering the school with knowledge, understanding and skills that are well below those typical for their age, over time, the proportion of children leaving Reception with a good level of development has been broadly in line with national comparators.
- In 2018, the proportion of children assessed as achieving a good level of development was considerably lower than in previous years. This was as a result of deficiencies in children's writing not being identified sufficiently early. However, once identified, leaders' immediate actions led to a greater number of children writing at the expected standard by the end of the year. Consequently, the majority of children were well prepared for their transition into Year 1.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the Reception Year with knowledge, skills and understanding well below expectations for their age. From these low starting points, they make strong progress across all areas of the curriculum.
- Children get a good start to their education as a result of strong teaching. Adults use discussion and questioning to develop children's thinking and engagement in learning. They adapt activities quickly to ensure that children maintain interest and good learning takes place.
- The early years leader is highly skilled and knowledgeable. She has a detailed and accurate understanding of the strengths of the provision, as well as where it requires

further enhancement. Where areas for development have been identified, she has acted swiftly and decisively to make the necessary improvements.

- A strong focus on the development of children's reading and writing is having a positive impact on children's outcomes. As in other areas of the school, the teaching of phonics is a strength. In writing activities, adults have high expectations for children's use of language. They model high-quality vocabulary for children to use and, as a result, children develop the ability to articulate their ideas before committing them to paper.
- Children benefit from a wide range of both indoor and outdoor resources that provide exciting and stimulating learning opportunities. Adults encourage children to explore ideas in practical ways to enhance their understanding.
- Children feel safe, and standards of behaviour are good. Despite only being in school for a short period of time, children understand teachers' routines and expectations. They take turns to share equipment and respond readily to adult instructions.
- Adults provide children who have SEN and/or disabilities with good levels of support. This enables children to access their learning and make progress which is at least in line with their peers.
- Leaders and staff regard parents as important partners in their child's learning. Consequently, they provide a range of opportunities for parents to engage in activities alongside their children. Parents who spoke with inspectors or completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were extremely positive about the school's transition arrangements.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are effective. There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements. Children are well supported and cared for, and adults are attentive to their needs.

School details

Unique reference number	113738
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10033158

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Watkins
Headteacher	Daniel Pope
Telephone number	01202 488142
Website	www.mundefordinf.dorset.sch.uk
Email address	office@mundefordinf.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 February 2009

Information about this school

- Mundeford Community Infants' School is an average-sized infant school. There are six classes – two per year group.
- The school is maintained by Dorset local authority. Governance is provided by a local governing body. The current headteacher has been in post since February 2017.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well below that found nationally.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out as a result of Ofsted's risk assessment procedures for exempt schools. This process identified that standards, since the previous inspection, had declined.
- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning. A number of these visits were carried out jointly with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- Discussions were held with school leaders, staff, members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the school's evaluation of its own performance, its improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. They also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection to seek their views and listened to a selection of them read.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents during the inspection and took account of 23 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Jonathan Dyer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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