

# Inspection of a good school: Mill Rythe Infant School

Havant Road, Hayling Island, Hampshire PO11 0PA

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

## Outcome

Mill Rythe Infant School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy the vibrant and happy atmosphere that leaders cultivate. Pupils love the opportunities provided to learn outdoors. Throughout the year, they eagerly attend 'beach school'. This enhances both their personal development and academic knowledge. Pupils explore the coastline, where they study marine life and environmental awareness. They are also taught water safety, with leaders ensuring that all children can begin learning to swim in Reception Year.

Community spirit is part of Mill Rythe's ethos. Leaders teach pupils to help others in need through charity fundraising. The school actively takes part in the island's big events, which everyone adores. The pupil-elected council members make a difference. They set up a 'friendship' bench on the playground to ensure everybody has someone to play with. Pupils are also keen to perform, as recently shown in the Year 1 production.

Leaders expect pupils to work hard, try their best and treat each other with respect. Pupils can list many ways to be a good friend. This means that bullying is kept at bay. If pupils do feel that others are not acting kindly, they tell an adult. In lessons, and on the playground, pupils behave well and feel safe.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The headteacher has determinedly steered the school through staffing changes and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. New teachers who have joined the school feel empowered and well supported. They praise the family feel of Mill Rythe. Leaders are ambitious in making this school even better. Their strategic planning is prioritised smartly because it does not try to achieve too many things at once.

Governors lead with conviction. They provide expert support and challenge to school leaders. The experienced governing body has an excellent grasp of its role. Governors get underneath the skin of what is happening. They ask insightful questions to test the impact for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The school's curriculum has been wisely reviewed to check that each subject is coherently sequenced with what pupils need to know and do. This begins in early years, where leaders have outlined what children are taught and in what order. Leaders are clear that learning in Reception must prepare pupils for the subjects they will study at key stage 1. Although the curriculum mapping is not yet complete, subject leaders are acting swiftly to ensure the full curriculum is put in place. Leaders also work with local junior and primary schools to identify where pupils need support to be ready for key stage 2.

A new phonics programme is ensuring that pupils learn to read securely. Leaders know that starting straightaway in Reception Year is essential to achieve this. The reading leader mentors staff to develop their confidence and expertise in teaching the programme. Pupils read from appropriate books that match what is taught in lessons. In addition, the library is packed with wonderful, diverse picture books that pupils can take home to share. Catch-up reading interventions are purposeful because they focus on pupils' blending skills. This is supporting pupils to read accurately and with increasing speed.

Teachers model and explain concepts clearly. Pupils have access to practical resources to support their thinking. Teachers ensure that pupils with SEND use these where needed and have additional processing time to reinforce new learning. Teachers recap what pupils have learned before so that key ideas stay in pupils' minds. However, at times, teachers do not set appropriate classroom activities that will help pupils learn the important knowledge. Consequently, there can be a mismatch with what is identified in the curriculum, meaning pupils are not learning as much as they could.

Leaders have set out clear behaviour routines, which they want staff to teach pupils. This is ensuring that expectations are lifted higher. However, staff are not consistent in applying consequences that help pupils understand and improve their behaviour.

Information from pre-school settings is used to great effect to explore whether a pupil may have a special educational need. Leaders work highly effectively with outside agencies to put in bespoke support where needed. This includes any pupils who may struggle to manage their emotions. Leaders closely track the impact of any interventions provided for pupils.

The oldest pupils beam with pride in carrying out their leadership responsibilities. They are committed to doing this diligently. Pupils show care to one another and speak maturely about others who may look different to them. Pupils enjoy being active, and leaders recognise they need to further widen opportunities for clubs.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

An impressive culture of vigilance oversees pupils' safety. Leaders continually drip-feed key training messages to staff. The weekly safeguarding scenarios inform staff and governors, and really get them thinking. Leaders have an excellent understanding of the local context and know where to signpost families for help. Where there are concerns

about a pupil, leaders act fast. They ensure that these concerns are recorded accurately and impartially. Leaders work expertly with other professionals.

Pupils are educated to keep themselves safe, for example in regard to living close to a beach. Leaders communicate regularly to parents about the potential dangers of internet access at a young age.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In setting work for pupils to learn the ambitious curriculum, sometimes teachers' pedagogical choices do not work effectively. This can lead to not every pupil learning and practising the planned knowledge and skills. Leaders should continue with developing teachers' pedagogical knowledge so that the implementation of the curriculum is consistently strong across the school.
- Sections of the school's behaviour policy and processes are not always clear enough in communicating leaders' high expectations. This can occasionally lead to some variation in applying the policy in practice, meaning that not all pupils behave consistently well. Leaders should further strengthen the behaviour policy, so that these behaviour expectations are firmly understood by all.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116490
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240213
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Deborah Burroughs
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lucy Ford
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.millrytheinfants.co.uk">www.millrytheinfants.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	17 and 18 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- One of the two senior leaders is on maternity leave. There is an assistant headteacher, who joined the school in September 2022, in an interim role.
- The school currently uses one alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. He also met with seven governors, including the chair and vice-chair. He held telephone conversations with a school improvement officer from the local authority and the team manager of an alternative provider.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and religious education. To do this, he met with subject teachers, looked at curriculum plans, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Some pupils were observed reading to a familiar adult by the inspector.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector spoke with staff and pupils. He met with the safeguarding team to examine record-keeping and actions. This included sampling a range of safeguarding documentation. He reviewed checks on the safer recruitment of adults.
- The inspector talked to pupils from different year groups about their learning and experiences at school.
- The views of staff, pupils and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school. This included leaders' self-evaluation and school improvement priorities, policies, curriculum documents, published information about pupils' performance, behaviour records, information about pupils with SEND and minutes of governors' meetings.

### **Inspection team**

James Broadbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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