



Mill Rythe Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116490
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290551
Inspection dates 18–19 September 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Thrussell

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Havant Road
School category	Foundation		Hayling Island
Age range of pupils	4–7		PO11 0PA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392465531
Number on roll (school)	216	Fax number	02392461353
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Paul Chapman
		Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Lock
Date of previous school inspection	17 February 2003		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 18–19 September 2006	Inspection number 290551
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Mill Rythe is a popular infant school. There is little deprivation, with a small proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A very small proportion comes from minority ethnic backgrounds with none at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Mill Rythe is a satisfactory school with some good features. Pupils are very well cared for by the staff who ensure their safety and well-being. Pupils behave well, are polite and keen to learn. Good links with parents, other schools and agencies effectively support pupils' well-being. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. This enjoyment is fostered through a lively and enriched curriculum which helps pupils see the links between different subjects. One class chose to turn their classroom into a submarine, providing an imaginative background and focus for their learning, addressing the teacher as 'captain'. Pupils help out in school doing small jobs willingly. They cooperate well in devising ways to raise funds for charities, for example by making and selling cakes. Good provision for physical activity and an encouragement to eat healthily contribute well to pupils' adopting a healthy life style.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Children enter the school with skills and understanding which are broadly average. Good teaching and a lively curriculum in the Foundation Stage result in children achieving well. When they enter Year 1, the majority have met the learning goals expected at this age. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties discuss their targets with teachers, have a good understanding of them and consequently make good progress in meeting them. The school's tracking shows that pupils make satisfactory progress and at the end of Year 2 standards are broadly average. More able pupils do not achieve well enough in writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching and learning in years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Teaching assistants are used well, particularly in the recently created mixed Year 1 and 2 classes where they competently take responsibility for groups. Warm relationships result in pupils wanting to learn. Assessment procedures are thorough. 'First of the month' assessments are shared with pupils and give them effective guidance on how well they are doing. This information is also used well to form weekly ability workshops in literacy and numeracy, which provide an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils. However, in class lessons teachers do not always take sufficient account of the particular levels at which pupils need to be working to make the best progress possible.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders are particularly successful in promoting pupils' personal development and in creating the caring ethos of the school. The headteacher has a clear idea of what needs to be improved and has introduced innovative and exciting approaches to pupils' learning. However, the school's improvement planning does not keep a sufficient check on the actions being taken, their impact on pupils' learning and how their success is to be measured. Consequently, the school's self evaluation shows a capacity to improve that is currently only satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of more able pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics.

- Ensure that teachers challenge all pupils to achieve well through better use of the school's assessment.
- Strengthen leadership and management through a more rigorous approach to improvement planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average and achievement satisfactory. Children get a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. They make satisfactory progress throughout Years 1 and 2 and standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average. Standards have fallen in mathematics, however, because some more able pupils do not achieve well enough. The school is seeking to improve the achievement of more able pupils through weekly workshops, based on ability, in literacy and numeracy. However, their effect, along with the different levels of work set in classes, needs to be more carefully checked to ensure improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being are good. They relate well to one another, working and playing happily together. One pupil commented, 'I love school'. They behave very well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe and know how to deal sensibly with any unpleasantness that may occur. Pupils have a good understanding of the effect of diet and exercise on their health, and take part regularly in physical activities. They enjoy school and are keen to do well. Attendance figures are broadly average with very little absence for trivial reasons. Pupils' mature attitudes are evident in the way they help out in lessons and take extra responsibilities, such as register monitors or 'toilet inspectors'. In its plans to establish a school council, the school has recognised the willingness of pupils to contribute further to school life. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the wider world, participating enthusiastically in projects such as 'No funds, no food'. Their basic skills in literacy and numeracy are broadly average and they are satisfactorily prepared for junior school and the world beyond.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They respond sensitively to opportunities for reflection in assemblies and in lessons. Pupils' keen involvement in fund raising for charities shows a strong empathy for people in less favourable circumstances.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers and teaching assistants are working very well together to ensure that pupils are settling in well. This is especially evident in the Foundation classes, where all children are new to the school. Underpinned by warm relationships between children and adults, children are already secure enough at this early stage to choose from the wide range of well organised activities on offer and to work cooperatively.

Staff in the newly established mixed age classes are working hard to devise appropriate work to challenge pupils in both years 1 and 2. More able pupils, however, are not always sufficiently challenged in the work set for them. Lessons are well structured and give pupils opportunities to reflect on how well they have done. Marking is good and usually identifies the next steps in pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Work in the Foundation Stage is very well planned to take advantage of the extensive classroom and outdoor resources. A good balance between structured class sessions and activities chosen by the children enables them to achieve well. All staff have worked extensively with an external consultant to devise innovative ways to promote children's learning. Integrated units of study link subjects effectively through themes. For example, pupils responded well to the 'Litter Bug' topic, which provided good opportunities for them to study science and geography and to use their literacy skills in an appropriate context. This new approach has not yet been evaluated, however, to provide a clear picture of its impact on pupils' achievement. Good links with the neighbouring junior school, particularly the liaison between Year 2 and Year 3 teachers, helps to ensure a smooth transition. Learning is enriched through a wide range of extra activities, including a residential trip in Year 2, and contributions from visitors and outings. The school grounds are used very well to provide practical experiences in science and geography, and to promote conservation.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are very well supervised during lessons and break times. The school places high emphasis on pupils' safety, vetting staff thoroughly and ensuring child protection procedures are secure. Pupils' academic progress is reviewed systematically and they are increasingly aware of what they need to do to improve. Within this positive picture, more able pupils are not always sufficiently clear about the level to which they should aspire in order to build fully on their prior learning.

A particularly strong aspect of care is the detailed recording of all pupils' personal and social development. The 'nurture room' provides a haven for pupils whose underdeveloped social skills or emotional stress warrants support outside the classroom. Such provision has a positive effect, which means, for most of the time, they can take a full part in lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, in partnership with the deputy, provides an effective lead, particularly on the pastoral care and well-being of pupils. Strong initiative and drive have been shown, particularly in the introduction of a new curriculum designed to provide enjoyment and challenge to pupils' learning. Classes have been reorganised to make the best use of teaching staff and assistants within the school's budget; resources are used well to support teaching and learning. Although the school's systems for monitoring its work are satisfactory, they are not yet robust enough. For instance, although lessons have been monitored regularly, there has been insufficient focus on the impact of teaching on learning and the progress made by pupils. The school improvement plan identifies the most important priorities for the school but lacks clear, quantifiable criteria to judge how success will be evaluated, particularly in terms of pupils' achievement and standards. This lack of detail in the school's systems for monitoring and planning improvements hinders the committed governing body in their evaluation of the school's performance. The school has good links with parents who are encouraged to provide active support for their children's learning.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your warm welcome during our visit. It was good to talk to you about how you are getting on and what you like about the school.

Overall, we found that the school is satisfactory. We agree with you about how friendly everyone is and how well you get on with each other. We saw this in lessons and during playtimes. You have a lot of things to play with outside and you certainly enjoy playing on the apparatus and in the wooded areas.

We were impressed by the way you helped your teachers to set up learning zones. You are obviously proud of the way the classrooms look. With the help of your teachers and the other adults you are settling down well in the new mixed Year 1 and 2 classes. Some of your parents were a little worried about this but you told us that you felt fine about it.

We enjoyed looking at your work, especially the folders showing the many things you did on topics such as 'The Selfish Giant', 'No funds, no Food' and 'The Missing Suitcase'. What a lot of fun you had! The 'First of the Month' books gave us a good idea of how well you are doing and you told us how the 'traffic light' system is helping you to improve your work.

Some of you find writing and numeracy hard but we think you could be doing better. We have suggested some ways in which the teachers can help you to improve and you can help too by reading as much as possible and practising your writing. Don't forget to practise your number bonds and tables because this will help you to tackle other number work.

With best wishes,

Peter Thrussell

Lead inspector