



Mill View Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111123
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 294273
Inspection dates 13 March 2006 to 14 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Sarah Drake CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wealstone Lane
School category	Community		Upton-by-Chester
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Chester, Cheshire CH2 1HB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01244 381443
Number on roll	200	Fax number	01244 382334
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs G Andrews
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs S Walters

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Mill View is an average sized school serving an area to the north of the city of Chester. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around half the national average and low numbers are eligible for free school meals. Below average numbers belong to minority ethnic groups or have English as an additional language. The headteacher took up post two weeks prior to the inspection, after the early retirement of the long-standing former headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Mill View is a satisfactory school with some areas of strength. It provides sound value for money. Pupils' skills on entry to school are above average. They make satisfactory progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 6 standards are above average. Good quality provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children make good all round progress in the Reception class and start Year 1 with very good attitudes to learning, which they sustain throughout the school. Pupils' personal development is good and their behaviour is excellent, helping to create a happy community. Parents are supportive of the school and actively engage in their children's education. Close partnerships with other schools and the local authority enhance the provision. Hardworking and committed teachers organise lessons that engage pupils' interest; together with support staff they provide good levels of care for pupils.

Recently the school has taken great strides forward in improving its effectiveness. All staff demonstrate commitment and professionalism, which have helped to improve standards. Sharply focussed analysis of strengths and weaknesses is leading to strong action and improvement is clear. Staff have clear direction and pupils' progress is speeding up. However, assessment information is still not being used sufficiently well and the links between different subjects are not strong enough. Staff have already identified these as areas for improvement, showing the school knows itself well, although its overall judgement of its effectiveness and provision is too positive, given pupils' satisfactory levels of achievement. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory; with strong leadership now in place, the school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

Improve pupils' achievement throughout the school by:

- involving all staff in using the information gained from assessing pupils' work to identify and cater for their individual needs, and involving pupils in the process so that they know what to do to improve their work
- strengthening the links made between subjects to exploit the opportunities to extend pupils' skills across a range of areas and increase their enjoyment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Their attainment on entry to the school is above average and they make good progress in the Reception class so that the great majority achieve, and many exceed, the expectations for their age by the end of the year. Standards achieved in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have been above average for the past five years. In 2005 the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level in writing was particularly impressive. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average in all subjects and have risen over the past five years. In 2005 English standards were

particularly high, an improvement since the last inspection. The school exceeded its targets in all areas.

Since September 2005, the school's actions to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics have had good effect. Pupils are now making good progress in this subject. However, pupils' progress overall is satisfactory. Too few pupils are making the good gains in knowledge and skills of which they are capable. Learning for them is too slow. This is largely due to an inadequate use of assessment information. The school now has strategies in place to improve this situation and achievement is set to rise. Pupils of different abilities, gender and ethnicity all make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Relationships throughout the school are strong which creates an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in which each individual is valued. Pupils say that the reason they enjoy school so much is because everyone is friendly and 'children are important here.' Their attendance is good. Outstanding behaviour both in and out of the classroom creates an orderly, happy environment. Pupils are helpful and polite; they collaborate very well and show good awareness of others' needs. They confidently engage in conversation and are keen to contribute to the community. For example, the school council is currently running a competition to reduce water wastage. In lessons pupils concentrate well and are persistent when, for example, using information and communication technology (ICT) for research. In assemblies and at other times they make good use of opportunities to reflect on matters beyond the mundane. Year 3 pupils showed real wonder at the patterns found in natural objects while Year 6 pupils' expressive portraits capture different emotions very well. Pupils' overall cultural awareness is good, although there is room for further development of their appreciation of cultures beyond those of Europe. Pupils act safely and have a good knowledge of healthy living. Their mature interpersonal skills, above average academic standards and very good attitudes to learning equip them well for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Whilst lessons are of good quality throughout the school, teachers' use of assessment information is at an early stage of development and this has slowed pupils' progress. Work has not been sufficiently challenging to ensure good progress. This is because until recently there has been insufficient analysis of information to highlight and cater for those pupils, of all abilities, who could be moving on more quickly. Marking is regular and supportive but does not always pinpoint sufficiently closely the pupils' next steps of learning. Mathematics targets are now in place but pupils' understanding of their role in improving their work

is hazy. Good quality assessment in the Reception class underpins those pupils' good progress.

Lessons are well planned and organised, generally progress at a good pace and pay good attention to the different ways that individuals learn. Teachers question well, make good use of subject specific language and allow pupils time to think. Pupils listen well, are keen to volunteer ideas and do not repeat others' answers. Good use of other adults and interactive whiteboards enlivens lessons and ensures that all pupils understand what they should be doing. Good quality relationships allow for humour and mean that pupils make the most of opportunities to share ideas with their talking partners. Pupils are interested in learning so classrooms buzz with purposeful activity.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school makes the expected provision for all subjects and other activities suitable for primary pupils with good attention to their health and emotional education. Visitors, visits to places of interest and extracurricular activities provide good enrichment. Literacy and numeracy lessons are given a high priority. However, not enough is done to link subjects to provide interesting and enjoyable opportunities in lessons through which pupils can better develop their skills. The school's planning procedures are still in development and are not yet fully effective in making sure every pupil is able to make the best of the opportunities provided. The school has recognised this, and suitable plans are in hand for improvement. In the Reception class each individual's needs and progress are carefully planned for so pupils make good progress, learning through play within the well-organised environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Levels of care are good. All the staff work hard to ensure each child is relaxed, happy and ready to learn. The pupils say they feel safe and cared for in school because, 'There is always somebody there to help if you are hurt or unhappy.' This confidence in the staff makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Clear procedures for first aid and child protection are implemented by staff and there are rigorous health and safety checks.

Over recent weeks, the support and guidance for pupils' learning have steadily improved and they are continuing to do so. Teachers now have a better awareness of pupils' individual needs and what they need to learn next. However, in their marking they do not make sufficiently clear to pupils what they need to do to improve. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has recently become effective because targets to improve their skills are now implemented consistently in lessons and other activities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The deputy head, supported by the local authority, has played a key role in maintaining standards during a period of change. Working closely together, she and the new headteacher have drawn up an excellent action plan for improvement and begun to implement changes. Highly efficient analysis of individuals' progress has already highlighted who could be challenged further in each subject. There are early signs that this focus on standards and pupil progress is beginning to pay dividends and standards are set to rise.

The leadership team of headteacher and deputy headteacher has a very clear and detailed overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All staff have identified important areas for improvement. They are beginning to understand their individual roles and actively participate in this process. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good, focused clearly on the learning needs of the children. The new leader of special educational needs is also effective and has quickly organised provision for the specific needs of learners with difficulties and/or disabilities.

The school operates smoothly on a day to day basis and financial management is sound. Governance is satisfactory. Governors recognise that in the past they did not rigorously hold the school to account for pupils' progress. Relationships with the new headteacher are good. Parents are highly supportive of the school and many made positive comments about recent changes in leadership.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We very much enjoyed our recent visit to your school. Thank you for being so welcoming and willing to tell us what it is like to be a pupil there.

Here is a list of things that we particularly liked about Mill View:

- relationships are very good and your behaviour is excellent which helps to create a happy school
- teachers explain things clearly and you listen well so you understand what to do in lessons
- you concentrate well and are interested in learning new things
- visits, visitors and extra activities add extra interest to your learning
- you achieve above average standards for your age
- children in the Reception class make good progress
- staff care for you well so that you feel relaxed in school
- your new headteacher and deputy head have very good ideas about how to improve things and are already making good changes.

This is a list of things we have asked your teachers to do next:

- make better use of the information they obtain from recording your progress to challenge you more and help you understand more clearly how to improve your work
- make better links between different subjects to help you enjoy your learning more and develop your skills across a range of areas.

Your part in this will be to rise to the challenges set by teachers and continue to work hard - we're sure that you will manage to do this since you obviously like learning. Good luck in the future.