

# Minterne Community Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118455
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	312946
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Orpin

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	398
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Julie Burns
<b>Headteacher</b>	William McGrory
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 January 2005
<b>School address</b>	Minterne Avenue Sittingbourne ME10 1SB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 472323
<b>Fax number</b>	01795 475223

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Minterne Community Junior School is a large junior school, which is oversubscribed. Pupils are mainly White British. There are fewer pupils eligible for free school meals than usual. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, as there is an attached speech and language unit. Pupils from the unit join other pupils for some lessons.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Minterne Community Junior School is a good school that has made significant improvements since its last inspection. It also has some outstanding features. Overall, standards when pupils join the school are average. Achievement is good and by the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Pupils' achievement has improved in writing, mathematics and science because of more effective teaching and a much improved curriculum. The speech and language unit also provides its pupils with a good standard of education because the provision closely matches pupils' individual specific needs through interesting and stimulating activities.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is exemplified in assemblies and special events such as Buddhism Week, when a classroom was turned into a Buddhist Temple and Year 5 pupils learned how to meditate. Pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding because the lessons and activities are so interesting and stimulating that pupils are keen to learn. Their attendance is above average and they behave well, although sometimes a few pupils lose concentration. Pupils feel safe, know how to stay healthy and understand the importance of regular exercise. They have many varied opportunities to take responsibility, which they eagerly undertake. They contribute well to the wider community, organising local events and raising funds for a wide variety of charities.

Effective and enthusiastic teaching and learning are founded on good relationships between adults and pupils. Activities are interesting and stimulating and capture pupils' imagination and interest. For example, all pupils were involved in the creation of a large monster, which was later burnt, as part of their work on Beowulf. In a few lessons, the tasks and questions are not quite as challenging as in the better lessons. Occasionally, pupils have to listen for too long, so they lose some concentration. The outstanding curriculum contributes much to pupils' enjoyment and underpins their good progress, particularly the enrichment gained from a range of exciting trips, visitors and themed weeks. Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel safe, secure and well cared for. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and there are good support systems for pupils who are vulnerable to underachievement. Academic guidance for pupils is good. They know their targets and use them well to check how well they are doing. However, some teachers' marking does not show pupils clearly enough how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management are good. Careful tracking of pupils' progress and rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching have led to marked improvements in pupils' learning and progress. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development, and its targets are suitably challenging, based on good records of pupils' previous performance. Outstanding governance ensures that school leaders are asked challenging questions to help make sure all aspects of the school's work are improving. Recently appointed year group leaders are not yet fully involved in evaluating the impact of the school's work.

### What the school should do to improve further

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- Improve the pace and challenge of some lessons to ensure consistently good teaching throughout the school.
- Develop the roles of year group leaders by ensuring they are more fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the impact of innovations.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards in Year 6 are above average and assessment records show that pupils make good progress throughout the school. Pupils' standards when they join the school are average, although their abilities in reading are better than this. Although they progress well throughout the school, there are slight differences between classes because occasionally some teaching is not quite as good as the rest. Improvements to teaching have had an impact, particularly in boys' writing, the progress of more able pupils and achievement in science. Pupils do particularly well in reading and in science. Standards in writing are lower than those in reading but they are steadily improving. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the speech and language unit, make good progress because they are given carefully planned programmes that are based on their individual targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils in the school and the speech and language unit are confident and communicative. They thoroughly enjoy school because of the exciting and stimulating activities that they experience. Pupils' behaviour is good, especially in lessons that involve them actively in learning. However, in those few situations where they are listening for too long, a few pupils become distracted. Pupils work and play together very well, and bullying is extremely rare. They care for each other and for people in the wider world, as demonstrated in an assembly when pupils reflected on how it might feel to be a refugee fleeing to another country. Pupils know how to stay healthy and keep safe, as shown in their exceptionally keen participation in physical activities. Pupils readily undertake a very wide range of responsibilities, such as peer mediators and playground monitors. They also support an exceptional range of charities, such as organising a balloon race for 'Cardiac Risk in the Young'. However, in a few lessons, they are not given enough opportunities to develop independence. Pupils' ability to work constructively with others and their good progress in literacy and numeracy prepare them well for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Relationships between teachers and pupils are very productive, caring and warm. Teachers generally plan their lessons well and design tasks that are suitably challenging for pupils' differing abilities and needs. They know their subjects well and generally ask questions that make pupils think, although in a few lessons, the questions do not always involve all pupils and are not sufficiently challenging. Occasionally, pupils have to sit and listen to teachers talking for too long so that they have too few opportunities to contribute to their own learning. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and plan interesting and stimulating lessons. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, when pupils were collecting and interpreting data about favourite colours, they were fascinated and fully engaged in complex mathematical thought processes. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to explain and explore ideas. Teaching assistants are well trained and make a good contribution to the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities both in classes and when working with small groups of pupils on specific programmes. Teachers in the speech and language unit employ a

good range of strategies that ensure pupils' needs are met and maintain their interest and concentration.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is exciting, stimulating and ensures that all pupils are involved and can succeed. Themed weeks, such as China Week, Monster Week and Green Week, make learning more relevant to pupils' life experiences. These have led to more extended writing and consequent improvement in the quality of pupils' writing. All pupils benefit from exciting opportunities, such as a visit to see the Terra Cotta Army as part of China Week and taking part in a production of 'The Jungle Book' (Year3). The school has links with a school in Ghana, and another in France (which pupils have visited). There is a good programme of personal, social and health education. Information and communication technology, physical education and music are all strengths. The outstanding range of well-supported extra-curricular activities, such as the Kit Car Club, is held in high esteem by pupils. Pupils from the speech and language unit are integrated into mainstream lessons well. Although the accommodation restricts the curriculum that the unit can offer, the creative use of available space and opportunities for pupils to join in activities with the main school compensate well for any shortcomings.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school, including the speech and language unit, provides a safe, caring learning environment where all pupils can flourish. Pupils know who to go to if they have any worries and they are confident to do so. Procedures to ensure their safety are robust and regular safety checks are made. Pastoral support for pupils is particularly strong, so pupils develop confidence. Very good links with other agencies ensure that pupils are given the specialist help they need. There are good programmes of support for pupils joining the school and particularly comprehensive arrangements to ease pupils' transition to secondary education. Pupils' progress is regularly assessed, and this information is used well to provide additional help for those who need it. Teachers' marking does not always indicate how pupils can improve their work. Pupils know their targets, which make a good contribution to their achievement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides clear direction for all staff at the school. There is a clear focus on raising standards and achievement, while also providing many varied opportunities for pupils' personal development. All staff are enthusiastic and eager to improve and develop the work of the school. The school has successfully raised standards and accelerated pupils' progress through significant improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching. Effective monitoring of lessons and rigorous tracking of pupils' progress give senior leaders an accurate picture of the school's strengths and priorities for development. As a result, the school sets itself suitably challenging targets, which it generally meets. The school's recent track record demonstrates its good capacity for continuing improvement.

The school works well with parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive of its work. The leadership of the speech and language unit is good, giving clear direction. The work of the unit

is carefully monitored and the leader ensures that all adults give pupils suitable support and challenge, whether in the unit classrooms or when working in lessons in the main school. Year group leaders are developing a good understanding of how to make further improvements, but there has not yet been enough time to see the impact of their work and they are still developing their roles and their skills in judging the effect of new initiatives. Led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic chair, the governing body is making an outstanding contribution to the leadership of the school. Governors are well informed, very thoughtful and ask questions about the school's work that ensure school leaders are suitably challenged.

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## Annex A

## 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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	1
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

26 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Minterne Community Junior School, Sittingbourne, ME10 1SB

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. We enjoyed talking to you and were very impressed by how friendly, polite and confident you are. Your school is giving you a good standard of education and some of its work is outstanding.

These are some of the good points we found out about your school.

- You make good progress throughout the school and reach above average standards by the time you leave. You do particularly well in reading and science.
- You thoroughly enjoy school, especially events such as the trip to see the Terracotta Army.
- You behave well and know how to stay healthy and feel safe at school.
- You contribute well to your school and the local community, for example when you took part in the balloon race for 'Cardiac Risk in the Young'.
- You are taught well and adults take good care of you.
- The topics you learn are outstanding because they are so exciting and interesting, particularly 'Monster Week'.
- The school is led well and is improving; the headteacher and governors know what to do to make the right improvements.
- To help your school get even better, we have asked your teachers to:
  - Improve a few of the lessons to make sure work is not too slow or too easy, so they are all as good as the best.
  - Make sure year group leaders help the headteacher check how well new ideas are improving the school so you can learn more.

You can help by making sure you are always listening and concentrating in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Sue Orpin Lead inspector