

Mytchett Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125035
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315130
Inspection date	21 January 2008
Reporting inspector	George Rayner

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Patterson
Headteacher	Mrs A Zucker (interim)
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Hamesmoor Road Mytchett Camberley GU16 6JB
Telephone number	01252 544009
Fax number	01252 378728

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following areas of its work: pupils' personal development; achievement and standards; teaching and learning; and leadership and management, including the capacity to improve. Other aspects were not inspected in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves a suburban area. Pupils' socio-economic circumstances are generally advantaged. A broadly average proportion have learning difficulties and disabilities. The great majority of pupils have White British heritage and very few are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Following the recent resignation of the previous headteacher, the school has had an interim headteacher since the start of this term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Most parents agree, saying that their children are happy here and make good progress.

Pupils achieve well. Their overall standards are above average by the end of Year 6. The Year 6 national test results, while remaining above average in 2007, were not as high as in previous years. Pupils' progress was affected by significant staffing turbulence, due to a much higher than normal instance of staff absence. The school's assessment records and pupils' work show that most of the current pupils are on target to meet their challenging targets. Pupils' standards are highest in English. Most can write confidently in a range of styles. Progress is satisfactory in mathematics, resulting in standards remaining average at the end of Year 6. Pupils develop a sound range of mathematical skills, but many find it difficult to use these to solve problems independently, because they do not have enough opportunities to practise them. All pupils, including those who learn at a slower rate than others, make similar progress because their needs are carefully identified and effectively provided for.

Teaching and learning are good, so that pupils make good progress in most lessons. The staffing situation is more stable, resulting in good consistency in teaching. Pupils say, 'Our teachers work hard to make lessons fun'. Observations confirm this, with lesson plans providing a good variety of stimulating activities. This makes pupils eager to learn. Pupils were highly engaged during a particularly effective Year 5 lesson on information and communication technology. Pupils' experimentation with sounds, and the recording of their findings in a database, made a very good contribution to their numeracy as well as their computer skills. Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively to ensure that pupils are engaged in their work and to provide help for those who are having difficulty in keeping up. In most lessons, teachers use assessment to plan for different needs and ability levels. This is generally effective, but does not always identify clearly enough what teachers expect from the most able pupils. This means that, while these pupils generally achieve as well as the others, their progress occasionally slows. Teachers use marking well to encourage pupils, but do not always tell them clearly enough what they need to do to improve.

In most respects, the curriculum meets pupils' needs well. The interim headteacher is aware that, while there is a good range of clubs, there should be more enrichment of the curriculum through stimulating visits. Plans are in hand to improve this.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils show this by their attendance, which has improved since the last inspection to be above average. The great majority behave well, although a small number do not always do so, or treat others with full consideration. Pupils feel safe and know why rules are necessary to ensure this. They live active lives and understand the importance of a healthy diet. Pupils contribute well to school life, carrying out roles such as school councillors with commitment. Care procedures are well organised. The school is currently reviewing these and is developing them further, by for example, improving supervision in the playground, in response to concerns expressed by a few parents. Several parents of pupils who have received additional support to help them to learn commented upon how well the school has supported their children's needs. Some used words like, 'special' and 'wonderful' to describe the impact that this has had on the integration and confidence of their children. The school maintains good links with outside agencies to ensure that pupils always receive the help that they need.

Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have succeeded in maintaining good achievement. The school is managed well. The experienced interim headteacher has quickly identified what the school needs to do to improve. The school's effective self-evaluation procedures accurately identify the areas needing improvement. However, a significant minority of parents think that the school should listen more to their views, for example, on their ideas for improving the curriculum.

Because the members of the senior leadership team are currently absent, the headteacher has put in place a temporary team whose members are working together cohesively, to give her effective help. Capacity to improve is satisfactory, because of the interim nature of the leadership. Work is progressing well, for example in improving systems for tracking, making them increasingly effective for identifying pupils in danger of falling behind their expected progress and quickly giving the help that they need to catch up. This involvement is giving middle leaders valuable experience in extending their leadership skills. Overall, though, subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their areas, which is limiting their participation in work to improve standards. One result has been that, while achievement has remained good since the last inspection, standards have not improved further, so that improvement has been satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge at expected levels for their age. The adults plan stimulating experiences. These provide a good balance of adult-led activities and opportunities for children to find things out for themselves through play and exploration. Children respond well to the opportunities for learning to be independent, by making their own choices in the stimulating indoor and outdoor areas. They often work together on tasks such as finding out how many play cars they can fit into a 'car park'. These help them to make good progress in using language to communicate and using numbers. Good teamwork between the teachers and teaching assistants ensures that children are well cared for and happy. By the time they enter Year 1, children are working securely at the expected levels in all areas of learning. Teachers carefully record each child's progress and are becoming increasingly effective in using this to plan work so that it meets all needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by helping pupils to become better at using their skills to solve problems.
- Increase the role of subject leaders in monitoring, so that they can be more involved in improving standards in their areas.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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?	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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

31 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mytchett Primary School, Camberley, GU16 6JB

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you. I am grateful for the help you gave, by talking to me and showing me your work. I was able to see that yours is a good school. I enjoyed seeing that it is also a happy school. You help this a lot because you are cheerful, well behaved and willing to join in.

You make good progress in your learning. You are best in English and I enjoyed reading some of the things that you wrote. I could see that most of you develop a good vocabulary and use this well to write in interesting ways. You are not quite so good at mathematics. This is because, although the teachers help you to develop the skills that you need, they do not give you enough chances to practise using these to solve problems. I have asked them to improve this.

It is clear that the unavoidable absence of several teachers has recently made it difficult for your school to continue to do well. Until you have a permanent headteacher again, the adults are making sure that the school is well led by an interim headteacher. She is quickly finding out how to make your school even better and starting to introduce her ideas. She is making it easier for other teachers to join in with this. So far though, the teachers in charge of subjects do not have enough chances to check how well these are taught. I have asked the headteacher to improve this.

Well done to you all for your successes so far and very best wishes for your futures.

Yours faithfully,

George Rayner

Lead Inspector