

# Mill Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108784
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	354359
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Sheridan HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	327
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr W Hamilton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sally Davey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Doxford Park Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR3 2LE
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 5536036
<b>Fax number</b>	05534110
<b>Email address</b>	mill.hill.primary@schools.sunderland.gov.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	5–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 May 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	354359

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 14 teachers in 20 lessons for periods of time of between 20 and 40 minutes. Inspectors had conversations with several parents and carers and analysed the views of 110 parents and carers who completed the inspection questionnaire. Inspectors also analysed 23 questionnaires from staff and 105 questionnaires from pupils. Inspectors met with groups of pupils, staff and governors. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised the school's improvement planning, tracking data, the local authority's reports, work in pupils' books, minutes from governors' meetings, school policies and procedures for safeguarding.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the reasons for the fall in standards of attainment since the last inspection and the effectiveness of any actions taken to reverse this trend
- the effectiveness of leaders in maintaining areas of outstanding provision since the last inspection
- how well the school meets the needs of all pupils.

## Information about the school

Mill Hill Primary School is a larger-than-average school. It primarily serves the areas of Mill Hill, Hall Farm and Doxford Park. Over recent years this area has undergone extensive redevelopment with approximately 80% of the housing stock in Doxford Park being emptied and demolished. The regeneration continues currently with an extensive building programme, creating a community of privately owned homes and rented accommodation. Consequently, the school roll currently fluctuates considerably and the number of pupils who leave or start the school at different times of the year is higher than what is typically found. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low with almost all pupils being White British. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school is in receipt of numerous awards including the Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark and Activemark.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. The personal development of pupils in this school is outstanding, with pupils' attitudes and behaviour being a significant factor in the calm, welcoming atmosphere that is found. Parents and carers, pupils and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the work that it does. The school is an exceptionally cohesive community. Pupils and staff share a mutual respect that is reflected in the way they interact with each other. The school has developed outstanding links with the building company responsible for regeneration and, through this, pupils feel proud of and responsible for their local community. The excellent links with the local police further enhance this work. While local cohesion is strong, pupils' understanding of the wider cultural and social context of Britain is more limited and few opportunities exist for pupils to engage with pupils from different backgrounds to their own.

Standards of attainment fell shortly after the last inspection. For the last three years pupils have left this school with standards of attainment that are broadly in line with the national average. Leaders in the school have worked intelligently to understand the reasons for this and refocused their efforts successfully to reverse this trend. The school's tracking data and work in pupils' books indicate that pupils in Year 6 this year are well on track to meet targets that represent above average attainment. Pupils throughout the school are now making good progress.

The great majority of teaching is good. Teachers carefully guide pupils through interesting tasks that they enjoy and respond to enthusiastically. The curriculum is enriched with a good range of trips, visits and additional activities provided, in part, through the school's excellent partnerships with local businesses, the local council, the local building contractors and other schools. The school does not make full use of technology to enhance pupils' learning experiences. Currently, there is no teacher leading the development of information and communication technology (ICT) and, as a result, the school has not kept fully up to date with developments in this area. Teachers are developing links between subjects but this is yet to be fully effective because the school's curriculum plans do not make clear where these links could be made. As a result, cross-curricular links are somewhat ad hoc and there are missed opportunities to develop core skills further.

Senior leaders have skilfully maintained the enthusiastic commitment of staff, and parents and carers, through a potentially unsettling period of change. They have maintained much of the outstanding core of this school which is reflected in the exceptionally positive relations between staff and pupils and the exemplary behaviour and attitudes seen around school. This, and the calm approach to reversing the slip in attainment, demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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

- Develop the curriculum further by:
  - providing further opportunities for pupils to develop core skills, including ICT, across different subjects
  - producing a long-term plan that illustrates the links between different subjects, topics and areas of learning so that teachers can plan for these appropriately.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop a full and real understanding of different cultures, communities and people represented in Britain.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy school a great deal. They are enthusiastic about their learning and make good progress. In lessons pupils work diligently and are eager to please. Pupils know that the expectations are high and they work hard to meet these. In the majority of lessons seen, pupils make rapid gains because the work they are given is carefully matched to their needs. In the minority of lessons seen that were satisfactory, learning is not as rapid for groups of pupils because the work planned is not as well matched to their needs. In these lessons pupils are no less committed to meeting expectations and the atmosphere remains one of success.

Pupils are almost unanimous in their sense of feeling safe in school. They talk about the ways that the school teaches them about safety and they demonstrate a proficient knowledge relevant to their age about safety in a variety of situations including road safety, safety around building sites, internet safety and dealing with danger from strangers. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in all parts of the school. They are calm, exceptionally polite and incredibly eager to please. Pupils have a strong moral compass and their social skills are impressive. Pupils demonstrate a sense of wonder and are able to ask and ponder questions.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>2</b>
	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

The great majority of teaching is good or better. Lessons are vibrant and engaging. In almost all lessons teachers work hard to build on the already strong relationships that exist. Teachers are respectful of pupils in their words, marking and in consideration of pupils' views. This is reciprocated by pupils who behave in class with commitment and determination. In the minority of lessons that are satisfactory rather than good, teachers spend too much time talking with too little time exploring pupils' own views. In these lessons teaching is less well matched to pupils' individual needs so learning is not as brisk.

The school's curriculum meets requirements and is well supported with a wide variety of additional activities and trips. A good range of after-school clubs are well attended and enjoyed by pupils. Pupils regularly take part in sporting and cultural events locally through these clubs. The curriculum provides some opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and global issues through religious education and assemblies. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to experience cultural diversity first-hand.

The care, guidance and support provided at this school is outstanding. Transition into school is managed very well. Particular care is taken in ensuring that pupils joining the school mid-year are well catered for so they settle and thrive quickly. Well-coordinated systems exist so that potentially vulnerable pupils are identified quickly and effective support is in place. Much of the school's work to care for and support pupils appears almost intangible because it is so much a part of the deeply embedded culture that exists. It was clear that each member of this school community is known and respected as an individual. Staff use this knowledge well to ensure that all feel completely supported, trusted and respected in a culture of shared responsibility and collective pride.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
---	--

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have successfully maintained the core values of their school through a period of significant local change. Middle managers have a strong sense of purpose and, together, they work well in developing the school's provision, tackling areas of relative weakness and maintaining areas of strength.

The school is highly effective at promoting an ethos of cohesion within school and locally. Pupils have a very strong sense of community and understand their responsibility to maintain a positive and respectful atmosphere in school. The school's own evaluation recognises that there is unevenness to their work in developing pupils' experience of the rich cultural diversity beyond their own community.

Leaders at all levels actively monitor and promote the equality of opportunity for all pupils. As a result of their actions, a recent dip in performance of girls has been reduced and, overall, standards of attainment are improving. Racist incidents are exceptionally rare and dealt with quickly.

The governing body effectively meets its statutory duties. Governors are incredibly supportive of the school and are effective at holding senior leaders to account. Many governors individually offer useful expertise to the school. Systems for safeguarding pupils are effectively evaluated and rigorously enforced. All statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are met. The building is secure and staff are well trained in the procedures to ensure that pupils stay safe.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>2</b>
	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children currently transfer from the nearby Nursery school with skills at levels just below those expected for their age. Children make good progress and are well prepared for the next steps in their education. Their learning is particularly impressive in areas of communication and language development. Children quickly learn what is expected of them and behave in a sensible, friendly way. Children develop a sense of confidence as they experience success through carefully planned activities. Children willingly take on responsibility. For example, one child ably answered the internal phone system and accurately relayed the message to the member of staff present. Adults have a clear and shared understanding of what they are striving to achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Leaders effectively monitor and evaluate their effectiveness, influencing practice where needed. Consequently, planning is effective at promoting positive outcomes and resources are well managed.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Most of those parents and carers that responded to the questionnaire were very supportive of the work of the school. Almost all those who responded said that their children enjoy attending this school and that, overall, they were happy with their children's experiences at the school. A few parents and carers raised concerns regarding the speed in which children are identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors found that, when the school is reluctant to place pupils on the special needs register, it is because they are making good progress as a result of the high-quality teaching they receive. A few parents and carers commented about inappropriate behaviour. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mill Hill Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 110 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 327 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	65	33	30	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	82	75	22	20	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	55	50	49	45	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	46	50	45	0	0	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	65	59	37	34	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	53	39	35	6	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	45	54	49	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	47	43	47	43	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	43	53	48	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	58	53	40	36	3	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	52	47	42	38	3	3	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	63	57	38	35	1	1	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	55	45	41	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



01 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mill Hill Primary School, Sunderland, SR3 2LE

You may remember that I visited your school recently with some other inspectors. This letter is to let you know what we found out.

We found that your school is a good school. We found that you work hard in lessons and enjoy your learning. We saw that your teachers are good at helping you improve your work and, as a result, you make good progress. We were particularly impressed with your behaviour. We found you to be real ambassadors for your school – well done.

We have asked your school to improve a few things so your learning is even better. We have asked your school to find ways of helping you meet, work with and learn from people who live in different parts of Britain from you. This is so you have a better understanding of the different cultures, communities and religions that there are in this country. I hope you will see that, while we all have differences, there are many things that we all share in common.

We have also asked your school to improve the links in the curriculum. Sometimes it makes sense to learn and develop skills from different subjects at the same time. We have asked your teachers to plan their work so they make the best use of these opportunities. We have also asked that more opportunities are planned to develop core skills like writing, reading and using technology.

I would like to finish by thanking all of you for making our visit so pleasurable. We really enjoyed meeting with you and talking about your school.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Michael Sheridan

Her Majesty's Inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**