

Milborne St Andrew First School

Hopsfield, Milborne St Andrew, Blandford Forum, DT11 0JE

Inspection dates 19–20 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is good school.

- All groups of pupils achieve well. Over the last year pupils have made rapid progress and as a result their attainment is rising especially in writing.
- By the time pupils leave the school in Year 4 many are reaching levels above those expected for their age most notably in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school with some outstanding aspects such as the way teachers engage pupils' interests. Very effective relationships help to create an excellent learning atmosphere.
- Reading is taught well so that most pupils make strong progress. Any pupils whose progress dips are helped to catch up quickly.
- Pupils are motivated in lessons and enjoy their learning. They behave well and feel safe because the school provides a secure learning environment.
- The curriculum is organised well to provide better opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their writing skills. Pupils who need extra help with their learning receive effective support.
- The new headteacher has taken firm steps to improve the quality of teaching by supporting teachers through appropriate training and the rigorous monitoring of their work. He is supported well by a knowledgeable and very effective governing body.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough to ensure all pupils' progress is rapid and sustained across all subjects.
- Middle leaders, including subject leaders, do not make a full enough contribution to whole-school evaluation.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, some governors, and the school's senior staff. Also, the inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and a written response, as well as consulting informally with parents and carers before school.
- She observed the school's work, looked at a range of documents including the school's improvement plans, data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring files, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to special educational needs, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector heard pupils read, talked to them in lessons and evaluated samples of their work.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average size first school.
- The very large majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The new headteacher took up post in January 2012.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children with a parent or carer in the armed forces, is below the national average. Currently there are very few children with a parent or carer in the armed forces and very few children in local authority care.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school is part of the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership and also the St Mary's Middle School mini pyramid partnership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure teachers always demonstrate explicitly to pupils the steps they must take to produce their best work
 - tailoring activities to become even more precise in extending the thinking of some pupils and deepening their understanding.
- Further develop the roles of middle leaders by:
 - ensuring that they have more opportunities to check on teaching and evaluate the impact of their work on pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children join the school in the Reception class with skills that are typical for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning, especially in writing. The large majority of children are now at or above the expected levels when they start Year 1.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school in Year 4 attainment is above average especially in reading and mathematics. Over the past year faster progress in writing has resulted in more pupils attaining above the expected levels.
- The school's own data for 2013 show that progress has accelerated rapidly over the previous year so that progress is good in all subjects.
- Pupils' achievement is tracked very carefully so that any pupil whose progress slows is identified quickly and then helped to catch up. This has helped to increase progress rates especially across Key Stage 2. Occasionally pupils' learning is hampered by the lack of explicit guidance in their learning activities.
- More-able pupils are making good progress in line with their classmates, especially in mathematics where they have the opportunities to work with older pupils in school to accelerate their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress due to the very well-organised and effective additional support they receive.
- In 2013 the school's information on the attainment of pupils who benefited from the pupil premium shows that they attained as highly as other pupils in the school in reading and writing and were two terms behind in mathematics. This is better than national figures. Compared to other pupils with similar starting points they make better progress in reading and writing and slightly less in mathematics.
- Attainment in reading has been above average for most pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 over the previous three years. Pupils acquire quickly the skills they need to become fluent readers and develop a keen love of literature.
- The school has worked effectively to improve the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and results show that the majority of pupils pass the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good with elements of outstanding practice such as the way teachers plan imaginative activities to engage and motivate pupils.
- Teachers have increased their knowledge of what makes an effective lesson through the sharing of good practice. This has resulted in a rapid rise in the proportion of good and outstanding teaching. However teachers do not demonstrate routinely to pupils how to produce their best work.
- In all lessons relationships are very strong, creating an excellent learning environment. Teachers question pupils effectively and make clear links to previous learning. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss and share their ideas with each other.
- Frequent assessment enables teachers to track progress carefully and plan work that will move the learning on quickly. Marking and feedback to pupils are clear and helpful, giving pupils good guidance to improve their work.
- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, including the more able, and plan work to extend their thinking. Sometimes tasks lack a clear structure and do not always enable pupils to develop their ideas and deepen their understanding.
- Following improvements to the curriculum teachers provide extensive opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their writing skills. This is promoting faster progress and standards in writing

are rising.

- The pupil premium funding has been used to provide well-targeted teaching and support so that these pupils are making faster progress than their classmates, especially in reading and writing. This is helping to narrow any gaps in attainment effectively.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is a strong feature of the school's work. Teaching assistants are very skilled in supporting these pupils so that they are successful in their learning and are included fully in the life of the school.
- Teaching is good in the Reception class where adults provide interesting activities which engage the children. They intervene at appropriate points to enhance children's learning and accelerate their progress. There is a strong focus on the teaching of phonics skills so that children are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is typically good because of the very positive relationships that exist in school. As one pupil said, 'Everyone is very kind to you here.' Standards of behaviour are judged to be good by pupils, their parents and carers and staff and this is borne out by the school's records of behaviour over time.
- Pupils enjoy their time in school and are very appreciative of the school's excellent outdoor facilities. They have a keen desire to learn which contributes greatly to their good achievement.
- In most lessons pupils apply themselves well and work together effectively in groups, organising themselves efficiently even from a young age. However behaviour is not yet outstanding because occasionally concentration dips when tasks are not structured clearly enough.
- Parents and carers have great confidence in the school to look after and keep their children safe. Those who responded to the online questionnaire or spoke to the inspector agree that this is the case. Also pupils state that they feel very safe in school.
- Discussions with pupils show that they understand about different sort of bullying, such as racist name calling and cyber bullying. They are clear that bullying is rare at this school and although there may be occasional fallings-out, these are resolved quickly.
- Pupils play an active part in ensuring a happy, well-organised school. They undertake responsibilities such as peer mediators, school councillors and assembly leaders which contribute well to their personal development.
- Behaviour is managed consistently well and disruption in lessons is uncommon. Effective support is in place for those pupils with emotional needs and staff extend great patience and care. This tolerance is mirrored by classmates who lend the same consideration.
- Attendance shows improvement over the past year for all groups of pupils and current rates are above average. Generally pupils are punctual to school.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection the school has experienced a period of turbulence in its leadership and staffing. The new headteacher has instilled a renewed sense of ambition and has been very effective in setting out strategies to improve teaching and learning. He has brought an increased clarity to self-evaluation and so improvement plans are focused sharply on the correct priorities.
- The local authority has helped the new leadership team establish thorough checks on teaching. The school has been swift to access pertinent training for teachers from local authority consultants and from colleagues in the local partnerships.
- The rigorous checking and reviewing of pupils' progress has enabled senior leaders to judge the impact of new strategies effectively and hold teachers to account more readily for their pupils'

progress.

- Teachers' targets for improvement focus on accelerating progress and are linked to the new Teachers' Standards. Effective feedback and support are ensuring that the quality of teaching is rising quickly.
- Middle leaders have the opportunities to work alongside colleagues to implement new initiatives but are not yet involved fully in checking on improvements to the teaching and learning.
- Decisive actions to improve attendance have been successful. The school has been effective in reducing term-time holidays and persistent absence. Consequently the large majority of pupils' attendance is above average.
- The curriculum has good breadth and balance across subjects and provides an interesting range of experiences for pupils that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are clear plans in place for use of the new primary physical education funding to increase pupils' participation in physical activities, improve their performance levels and encourage a healthy lifestyle.
- Transition into and out of the school is well managed. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of the improved induction procedures for children entering the school.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. There are no recorded incidents of harassment. The pupil premium funding is managed effectively so that eligible pupils make good progress.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding are met and health and safety are managed well. Training for staff and governors in areas such as child protection and safer working practices are up to date.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The well-informed governing body, comprised of extremely knowledgeable and self-reflective governors, supports and monitors the work of the school rigorously. Governors understand the school's performance information well and recognise the significant improvements the school has made over the previous year. They ask searching questions of the school's leaders in order to understand the quality of the teaching and learning. They check regularly on the school's performance for themselves. This has led to good decisions being made about the pay awards that teachers receive, the allocation of the school's finances and the use of the pupil premium funding. They audit the effectiveness of their work and this has helped them to sharpen their practice. They keep their knowledge and skills up to date through good quality training provided by the local authority.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113672
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	413358

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Connolly
Headteacher	Neil McDermott
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2009
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