

Mountbatten School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 132393 |
| Local Authority | Service Children's Education |
| Inspection number | 346658 |
| Inspection dates | 9–10 March 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Margaret Dickinson HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Ministry of Defence |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 161 |
| Appropriate authority | Service Children's Education |
| Chair | Lt Col R Wooddisse |
| Headteacher | Miss Annwen Parry |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 June 2007 |
| School address | Celle BFPO 23 |
| Telephone number | 0049 5141 485320 |
| Fax number | 0049 5141 485327 |
| Email address | head.mountbatten@scschools.com |

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|---------------------------|-----------------|
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Inspectors spent the majority of time looking at learning. They observed 13 lessons involving nine teachers and two consultants from Service Children's Education. Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of the School Governance Committee, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's plan for raising attainment, reports of visits by Service Children's Education advisers, evidence of leaders' monitoring, and samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects in Key Stage 2. They scrutinised questionnaires completed by 51 parents, pupils in Key Stage 2 and staff.

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

- how effectively pupils make progress in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly more able pupils and those who attend the school for longer periods of time.
- the extent to which the school assesses pupils and checks they make sufficient progress in lessons and over time.
- the effectiveness of steps taken by leaders and teachers to develop teaching and learning and promote good achievement for all groups
- how successfully senior leaders and teachers with leadership responsibilities are having an impact on improving the school's provision and pupils' achievement.

Information about the school

The school primarily serves families from the military and civilian community based in and around Celle. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very small. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds originate mainly from Fiji, Nepal and the Caribbean. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are based in two locations. Those in Foundation Stage 2 are taught in two mixed-age classes on the main school site whereas children in Foundation Stage 1 are based at Trenchard Barracks some eight kilometres away. All pupils, including those in Foundation Stage 1, travel to school by bus.

Since the last inspection, there has been significant staff turnover, with a particularly unsettled period during the autumn term 2009. The headteacher has been in post since January 2009. Around 75% of pupils leave the school at the end of this academic year, as part of a regimental change. Many support staff and members of the School Governance Committee also move at the same time.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Mountbatten School provides pupils with a satisfactory education. The headteacher, who is very experienced in leading Service Children's Education (SCE) schools, has a clear and accurate view of the school's effectiveness. She has the backing of SCE and the School Governance Committee who are supportive of the changes she has made to bring about greater consistency and necessary improvement. SCE is currently providing a programme of targeted support for the school, led by a range of consultants, which is being well received by staff.

Pupils' feel safe in school and most enjoy school and find lessons interesting. They enjoy the opportunities that staff arrange to enrich their experiences for example, through visits, residential stays and joint events with other schools. Those who are in school for two years or more, including the relatively small number that remain throughout their primary education, achieve satisfactorily in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching has some good features although learning is not consistently secure for all groups of pupils, and this leads to teaching being judged satisfactory rather than good. There are several features in the teaching that tend to prevent teaching from being good. For example, teachers and teaching assistants focus more on the tasks pupils are asked to do rather than thinking about what they need to learn. Planned tasks are not always pitched at the right level for the ability range in the class. Teachers do not always monitor pupils' learning carefully as lessons progress and adapt their teaching strategies accordingly.

The recent unsettled period, brought about by various changes in staffing during the autumn term, held back the rate of progress to some extent but the school is very much back on track. There have been some notable improvements.

- Provision in Foundation Stage 1 has improved considerably and is now satisfactory.
- Steps have been taken to brighten up the learning environment through attractive and helpful displays as well as the outdoor play equipment, which pupils enjoy using.
- The School Governance Committee is more organised with a new committee structure established. Members are receiving pertinent information from the headteacher, which is giving them a greater understanding of the school's provision and pupils' standards.
- A consistent approach has been set up to track and, importantly, monitor pupils' progress. This is being used increasingly to identify any pupils who are at risk of underachieving, or who have underachieved in the past.

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- Senior leaders now review pupils' progress with individual teachers on a regular basis, which is developing a shared sense of responsibility for the progress pupils make from term to term.

The headteacher has rightly identified that the responsibility for driving and sustaining the school's improvement is not yet fully shared across all staff. This is developing but teachers with leadership roles are not yet in the position where they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in their areas, lead change and have a clear impact on pupils' outcomes.

The headteacher has introduced a more consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour which is being adopted by all staff. However, this is not yet reflected in consistently good behaviour. Most pupils do behave well but pupils, parents and staff commented adversely on the behaviour of a small minority. Very little inappropriate behaviour occurred during the inspection but pupils reported this does occur from time to time and applies to a small group of boys in Key Stage 2, mostly in Years 3 and 4. In their view, although the school's policy for managing behaviour is used consistently by teachers, their perception is that it has a limited effect on this particular group and they would like to see greater improvement.

The results from the parents' questionnaires, issued shortly before the inspection, show that not all parents are supportive of the school's work. A small but significant minority responded negatively to eight out of thirteen questions. This contrasts sharply with the questionnaire issued by the school in November 2009 which covered similar areas and gave a much more positive picture across the board. Nevertheless, the additional written comments from parents during this inspection show that the school has work to do to identify the roots of their concerns and take steps to address them.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the behaviour of the group of pupils in Key Stage 2, particularly boys, whose behaviour and attitudes sometimes fall short of pupils', teachers' and parents' expectations.
- Improve teaching so that more is consistently good and all pupils learn successfully, by ensuring that:
 - pupils are clear about what they are going to learn and that teachers check their learning and understanding during the lesson and make any necessary adjustments
 - the work planned is appropriate to the ability range in the class and, in particular, extends the learning of the more able pupils
 - teachers are fully aware of any pupils who have made slow or little progress in the previous year, or term(s), and take effective steps to help them catch up
 - teachers draw upon a range of strategies to build variety into the lesson,

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- maintain pupils' interest and concentration, and avoid situations where pupils sit and listen to the teacher for extended periods
- learning support assistants are alert to every opportunity where pupils' learning can be supported, including when the whole class is gathered together.
- Develop the leadership capacity across the school by ensuring that teachers with leadership responsibilities play a clear role in evaluating the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes in their area(s) and in contributing to the school's further improvement.
- Work closely with parents to ensure methods of communication are effective, gauge their views on the school's work, explore with them the issues that cause them concern, and take appropriate steps to address them.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils show reasonable levels of interest in lessons although there is some variability. Pupils' attention and interest is generally captured where activities are interesting and involve them, for example in one lesson, pupils used a range of coins to work out totals marked on different piggy banks and recorded their calculations. In another lesson, pupils used role play to imagine what it would be like to be an evacuee. In contrast, pupils sometimes sit for long periods on the carpet and teachers talk for too much of the time. This limits the opportunities pupils have to share their thoughts and ideas and leaves many too passive.

By the end of Year 6, pupils reach broadly average standards. Reading results dipped in 2009 but are predicted to recover this year in line with results in recent years. However, in mathematics and writing, a number of pupils in Year 6 have to make up quite a lot of ground if they are to reach their targets in this year's tests. The school has identified this and is providing additional help for this group. Scrutiny of the school's tracking show that most pupils make satisfactory progress but there is some variability and some anomalies where pupils appear to have made astounding progress in a short time. The pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall but this is an aspect of the school's work that is being developed further, with the support of the SCE consultant for inclusion.

Pupils participate in a range of activities to promote healthy lifestyles and show satisfactory commitment to keeping healthy. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are welcoming when new pupils arrive in the school and most have good social skills. These personal qualities, along with their broadly average standards show the school prepares pupils satisfactorily for their next steps in education.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 3 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |

How effective is the provision?

The school has developed its systems for collating information on pupils' progress since the last inspection and this is being used increasingly to guide teachers' planning. Support from SCE consultants is also giving teachers a broader range of strategies to enable teachers to focus sharply on pupils' learning, based on what they have already achieved. However, while this is developing well, these approaches are not yet fully embedded to bring about good learning and progress for all groups. On occasions, pupils' learning was ineffective during the inspection because tasks were not appropriately aligned to pupils' levels of understanding and they marked time. There are some examples of helpful marking which give pupils appropriate praise for what has been done well at the same time as pointers for improvement. Marking is often good in mathematics. In writing, however, while comments are often very detailed, they are not routinely related to the targets that pupils are working towards or the specific aspects that will help pupils to improve their standards in writing. Many of the learning support assistants are new to their roles. There is some variability in their effectiveness. Some grasp opportunities more than others to interject, encourage and question questions, to help them persevere and learn.

The curriculum provision is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy the opportunities that the school provides for them through living in Germany, practising their knowledge of German, for instance, at community events such as the Christmas markets. Pupils report that they generally like mathematics lessons particularly when they have problems to solve or work collaboratively in groups. Writing is being developed across the school

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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and the work of consultants is developing practice in literacy lessons. It has not yet shown an impact across the curriculum where opportunities are missed help pupils write effectively through, for example, science, history and design and technology. The school has good links with a number of agencies, particularly Welfare personnel associated with the Garrison, to ensure pupils who may be encountering vulnerable times are well supported. Preparations for the major move at the end of this academic year are well under way and senior leaders, in conjunction with the School Governance Committee, are putting plans in place to minimise disruption and enable smooth transition.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 3 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 3 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 3 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher knows the school well and has an astute awareness of the areas where most progress has been made as well as those that require attention to improve the school's effectiveness further. A robust approach to monitoring provision has been set up, which underpins and guides teachers' work and ensures a clear focus on pupils' learning. This is beginning to have an impact but not yet consistently so. As a result, the school's promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Phase leaders and those responsible for other aspects of leadership are developing their roles. The deputy headteacher has improved assessment systems satisfactorily since the last inspection. Despite some clear improvement, the school does not have a fully effective system for monitoring pupils' progress over a longer period than one year. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has rightly been identified as a priority area for development in order to bring about greater coherence to the school's provision for this group of pupils. The school meets the requirements for safeguarding pupils. It has carried out an audit to establish how well it meets the duty to promote community cohesion and has suitable plans in place to broaden this work further.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 3 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities | 3 |

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

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| | |
|--|----------|
| met | |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 3 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Foundation Stage 1 at a level of development which is broadly in line with the expectations for this age although their personal, social and emotional development and early language and literacy development are generally weaker than other areas. Children settle in well in Foundation Stage 1, helped by the welcoming atmosphere, the good adult/child ratio and an established system of grouping children in small groups with a key person who they know well. The key workers have worked hard to develop a 'cosy' feel to the areas where children gather at set points of the day. Plans reflect a suitable balance of adult-led activities and sessions where children can choose and take the initiative to follow their own interests. Staff are suitably deployed to the different areas and are clear of their roles.

Arrangements for ongoing recording of children's learning and development are satisfactory. Notes and observations are collated in a manageable way, to provide an overview of children's progress over time. The nature of the accommodation at Foundation Stage 1 limits opportunities for children to have free-flow access to the outdoor area. This is far from ideal but is managed well by staff, who organise daily access to the outside area for children.

The children in Foundation Stage 2 are taught in two mixed-age classes with pupils in Year 1. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, outcomes are broadly average. In Foundation Stage 2, children have easier access to the outdoor area and the resources are used appropriately to promote children's learning across different areas when children are outside. Staff observe children at work and play and make regular notes but this sometimes takes too much of the time meaning they miss opportunities to interact and play with the children to develop their talk and ideas. Additional support for children who need extra help with their learning is satisfactory. However, the information from observations and knowledge of children's stages of development is not always used fully to plan appropriate activities for the more able children. In addition, there are times when children spend too long sitting on the carpet, sometimes for successive sessions, which slows down learning for all children. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It has had more impact on improving provision and outcomes in Foundation Stage 1 than Foundation Stage 2 because monitoring of the latter setting has not yet been sufficiently developed.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

Parents' comments were wide ranging, veering from those that were highly supportive of the school's work to some that were predominantly critical. Positive comments from parents related mainly to how happy they were with the progress their children were making and the leadership of the school. The negative comments, however, outweighed the positive ones by some margin. These centred mainly on the inconsistency in teaching largely brought about by changes of teacher; doubts as to whether children were making enough progress; wanting more guidance on how parents can help at home; the mixed-age classes and how well they catered for children's needs; and pupils' behaviour. Inspectors agree that there is some variability in pupils' learning. Senior leaders have already identified this and are taking appropriate steps to improve the consistency of pupils' learning and progress. Regarding behaviour, pupils generally agreed with parents. They report that behaviour had improved, on the whole, but that there is further to go. For this reason, behaviour has been included as an improvement point for the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mountbatten 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 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 161 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|----|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 21 | 41 | 21 | 41 | 7 | 14 | 1 | 2 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 21 | 41 | 27 | 53 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 6 | 12 | 27 | 53 | 15 | 29 | 1 | 2 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 11 | 22 | 25 | 49 | 10 | 20 | 2 | 4 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 17 | 33 | 22 | 43 | 9 | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 9 | 18 | 28 | 55 | 11 | 22 | 3 | 6 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 10 | 20 | 28 | 55 | 9 | 18 | 4 | 8 |
| 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) | 7 | 14 | 25 | 49 | 9 | 18 | 1 | 2 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 11 | 22 | 28 | 55 | 6 | 12 | 2 | 4 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 9 | 18 | 26 | 51 | 9 | 18 | 6 | 12 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 9 | 18 | 32 | 63 | 7 | 14 | 2 | 4 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 11 | 22 | 22 | 43 | 10 | 20 | 4 | 8 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 13 | 25 | 24 | 47 | 9 | 18 | 4 | 8 |

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 all 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 39 | 58 | 3 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 13 | 50 | 33 | 4 |
| Secondary schools | 17 | 40 | 34 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 18 | 43 | 37 | 2 |
| Special schools | 26 | 54 | 18 | 2 |
| Pupil referral units | 7 | 55 | 30 | 7 |
| All schools | 15 | 49 | 32 | 5 |

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| 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.



12 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Mountbatten School, Celle, BFPO 23

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school and helping us in our work. We enjoyed talking to you, particularly the groups who met with an inspector.

Mountbatten School is giving you a satisfactory education. Your questionnaires told us that most of you enjoy school and find lessons interesting. We have asked the school to bring in different ideas to make more of your lessons good. This will help you to make even better progress while you are at Mountbatten.

The headteacher and staff work hard to care for you and you told us that you feel safe in school. The teachers organise interesting activities such as trips and residential visits for you as well as opportunities for you to join up with other schools and attend special events in the local area. We know some of you, and your parents, are concerned about the behaviour of a small group of pupils who sometimes do or say things which are unkind and inconsiderate. The school has introduced a different system for dealing with any inappropriate behaviour but we have found it is not working for everyone. We have asked the school to work with you, and your parents, to find ways of tackling this together.

Your headteacher has brought in some changes to how the school works which are improving the school. We have asked all the other teachers who have special responsibilities to check on how well the school is doing in their specific areas. In this way, everyone is involved in thinking about how your school can be improved even more. Quite a few parents wrote to say there were things they would like to see changed in the school and we have asked the headteacher and staff to find out more about this and take appropriate steps to improve things where necessary.

We hope that those of you who are staying in school next year will work hard and play your part in helping the school to improve. For those of you moving on to other schools, we send you our best wishes for a successful move and hope you soon settle into your new schools.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Dickinson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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