

# Millfield Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	104203
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	377031
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Hugh Protherough

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	187
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dave Senior
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michelle Sheehy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24–25 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Catshill Rd Brownhills Walsall WS8 6BN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 452513
<b>Fax number</b>	01543 454516
<b>Email address</b>	postbox@millfield.walsall.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	8–9 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	377031



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Hugh Protherough

Additional inspector

Denise Dalton

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching in every class, with a particular focus on reading, writing and mathematics and how well pupils apply these skills in other subjects of the National Curriculum. Eight teachers were observed teaching as well as the work of teaching assistants. Twenty-four lessons and parts of lessons were visited totalling nine hours and 45 minutes. The inspectors met with parents and carers, members of the governing body and staff. They spoke with pupils about their work and listened to some read. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, improvement plan, curriculum framework, safeguarding arrangements and records of behaviour and incidents of racist behaviour. They also considered the responses to questionnaires made by members of staff, pupils and 36% of parents and carers.

## Information about the school

The school is of average size. The great majority of pupils are White British. Other groups represented include Irish and Irish Traveller backgrounds. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Nursery and a Reception Class. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. This includes physically disabled and visually impaired pupils and those with specific learning, speech and language, and emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school where pupils achieve well. Effective leadership has successfully addressed the issues identified in the previous inspection report. Pupils arrive at school with low levels of achievement. They make good progress so that by Year 6 attainment is broadly in line with the national average. This is not an outstanding school because, although teaching is good and some lessons outstanding, important aspects are not yet consistent across the school.
- By the age of 11, pupils of all backgrounds and abilities have made good progress. They attain broadly average standards in English and mathematics. As a result of improved teaching in Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress is accelerating and attainment rising significantly from previously low levels to be in line with the national average. Imaginative topics and the effective use of outdoor learning enable pupils to achieve well in other subjects.
- The core of teaching is good. Reception children benefit from well-organised and imaginative provision. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 has improved since the previous inspection and is securing good pupils' progress. While achievement has improved, there is scope to accelerate further the pace of learning by improving the questioning skills of teachers and their assistants. Lessons in Years 2, 3 and 6 frequently proceed at a rapid pace as a result of exemplary teaching. While the marking of pupils' work in English is detailed and helpful, that in mathematics lacks similar rigour.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are good. Without exception, pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. As a result of the school's consistent expectations and close working with families, their behaviour is good.
- Staff and governors successfully communicate an ambitious vision for the school and strive for continuous improvement. While senior leaders successfully hold staff to account for the performance of the pupils they teach, there remains some variation in teaching quality. A rich curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

- Improve the school's good teaching so that even more is outstanding and attainment by Year 6 rises to above average levels. In order to achieve this, greater consistency is required in:
  - adults' use of probing questions that challenge and deepen pupils' learning
  - the quality of marking in mathematics so that pupils are helped to consolidate learning and improve their work.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage arrive with levels of skills and abilities very much lower than those expected of three-year-olds nationally, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. As a result of effective induction arrangements and close working with families, the current classes are confident in school routines. Children are making good gains in their learning so that in Reception the proportion on course to achieve the levels expected of five-year-olds by the end of this year is only slightly less than the national average. Children work enthusiastically in the indoor and much-improved outdoor classrooms. They are inquisitive about the world and enjoy practical activities such as preparing to sow Farmer Brown's potatoes, drawing maps to explain how missing animals may have escaped from the farm yard and pretending to be vets.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are cared for very well across both classes. A wide variety of additional provision ensures their learning proceeds at a good rate and that they are fully integrated within the class. In the Nursery, children enjoy books and listening when adults read them stories. By Reception, many have made a good start to learning the sounds of letters and are beginning to apply this to reading simple texts and their own writing. They are excited when Farmer Brown writes letters to them and eager to write back with their ideas and suggestions.

Inspection evidence strongly supports the parents' and carers' unanimous views that their children are doing well at school. Conversations with pupils show them to be happy and enthusiastic, especially during the many opportunities provided for outdoor learning where they are able to demonstrate increasing independence and resilience. They work diligently in lessons, are keen to do well and enthusiastic about the school's thematic curriculum. Historic attainment at Year 2 has been low, but this is no longer the case as a result of improved teaching. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are making good progress and achieve well. Pupils in Year 2 are enthused by the characters in a story by Roald Dahl. Their subsequent discussion is perceptive and shows a relish for language that enables them to make a brisk start to their writing. In Year 3, pupils are eager to learn more about the measurement of liquids in mathematics because the lesson is linked to earlier work in English where the

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pupils have been inventing magic potions. Pupils throughout Key Stage 2 continue to make good progress from their starting points, including several who have arrived at school midway through the year. Although the profile of attainment of the current Year 6 is slightly below average, the school's rigorous tracking and target setting shows that the attainment of future cohorts is on course to rise.

By the end of Year 2, the standard of pupils' reading is much improved and close to average. As a result of dynamic and imaginative teaching, pupils are reading with increasing expression and fluency. Those pupils at the earlier stages frequently make effective use of their knowledge of the sounds of letters (phonics) to help them work out unfamiliar words as well as making sensible contextual guesses. Attitudes to reading in Key Stage 2 are positive and pupils benefit from the good variety of texts available within the school library. Pupils talk intelligently about their preferred choice of book, and know a little about the work of a range of authors and poets. Important activities such as pupils recording what they read and their responses to a range of texts are not yet firmly established.

The school's thorough approaches to identifying any pupil with additional needs and the closely monitored use of 'catch-up' activities successfully accelerates the progress of those who are struggling to read, write or count.

### **Quality of teaching**

Inspection evidence strongly supports the views of parents and carers that teaching is good. Teachers' high expectations are reflected in lesson planning that is detailed and incisive. The purpose for learning is precisely identified and, in English and mathematics, successfully breaks down the steps that pupils of different abilities need to take to ensure success. Most lessons have brisk, well-focused openings where the skilled use of new technologies frequently captures pupils' interest. Teachers are adept at helping pupils make links in their learning. In several outstanding lessons, teachers questioned pupils acutely so that they spoke at length and had to explain their thinking. This is important because many pupils struggle to learn to manage this level of conversation. Sometimes, teaching is less successful in this respect, such as in a science lesson where the pupils were simply trying to guess the teacher's solution to creating an investigation into how sound travels rather than thinking about their own.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Good provision for music, information and communication technology, and outdoor learning such as gardening and bird watching effectively supports the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The school has rightly focused upon improving boys' achievement in literacy. Conversations with the pupils reveal that an emphasis on using texts that engage boys' interest is paying dividends. Alongside this, the highly structured teaching of phonics from Reception to Year 2 is helping to equip younger readers with the skills they need to tackle the books they want to read. The school's strategy benefits from

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the successful deployment of teaching assistants which enables the pitch of teaching to be closely matched to pupil needs. While much of this work is of good quality, inspectors noted occasional inconsistencies in the modelling of letter sounds that may hamper pupils' progress.

Teachers know their pupils well and the effective use of day-to-day assessment ensures pupils receive good-quality feedback on their work. As a result, pupils know their targets and what they have to do to succeed. In the most effective lessons, teachers consistently refer to these in their oral feedback and in their marking of pupils' work.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The staff team work extremely effectively with pupils in establishing consistent expectations for considerate behaviour and mutual respect. The work of the school's parent support adviser is hugely successful in engaging with the many families who sometimes find it difficult to engage with school.

Adults are successful role models and enjoy positive rapport with the classes they teach. As a result, pupils behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning. They are encouraged to take responsibility from an early age, and members of school council show good levels of engagement, courtesy and cooperation, both in class and around the school. Those pupils with complex needs, such as emotional, behavioural or specific learning difficulties, are successfully supported and contribute positively to the school community.

Parents and carers express highly positive views about behaviour and safety at the school. Although one or two express concern about bullying, pupils say there is very little. Racist behaviour is uncommon and this is confirmed by school records. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and are confident about what to do if this should occur. School records show only very occasional instances occur and pupil questionnaires show high levels of satisfaction with the way it is tackled.

Conversations with pupils and their questionnaire responses show that they feel very safe at school. They understand potentially unsafe situations and have a strong awareness of how to keep each other safe. Over the past three years, the school has taken effective action to improve attendance and punctuality from very low levels, to broadly average. Effective arrangements ensure that the school tracks the whereabouts of the few pupils from Traveller backgrounds. The pupils' commitment to regular attendance was evident at the community assembly when the awards for the week's best attendance were announced and recorded.

### **Leadership and management**

Since the previous inspection, new leadership has focused on improving pupils' progress and improving teaching quality across the school. All staff view themselves

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as leaders and managers, and hold a strong sense of accountability in their areas of responsibility. Senior and middle leaders have a keen oversight of pupils' attainment and progress, and demonstrate an accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievements. For instance, improved assessment has led to staff being held to account for the performance of the pupils they teach. As a result, weaker teaching in Key Stage 1 has been eliminated and pupils' achievements in literacy and numeracy are rising sharply. All of this confirms that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

The school takes concerted action to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. An unrelenting focus on tracking pupil achievement means that those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, and those with special educational needs or physical disabilities, are swiftly identified. The teacher responsible has highly effective oversight of the provision for each individual and its impact on accelerating progress and meeting needs.

The governing body contains a wide range of experience and expertise. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and offer good support and constructive challenge.

The school continues to adopt thorough approaches to all aspects of risk assessment and the safeguarding of pupils. The headteacher and staff work productively with other agencies, such as health and education welfare, to support the specific needs of individual pupils and their families.

The school's thematic curriculum has a positive impact on learning which allows pupils to apply the skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology in a range of contexts and to make valuable links in their learning. This breadth of opportunity provided inside and outside the classroom ensures good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.



## 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Millfield Primary School, Walsall, WS8 6BN**

Thank you very much for your friendly welcome during the recent inspection of your school. It was a pleasure to meet you all and to see your school community getting on so well together. You told us you feel safe, and we agree that the staff take good care of you. You behave well and treat each other with care and respect. The work of school council members at breaks and lunchtimes is very important and helps the school run smoothly. We are pleased to see that your attendance is improving. We would like to see more classes reaching the 100% which Reception managed recently.

You and your parents and carers all told us how pleased you are to be at Millfield. You work hard in lessons and are making good progress. By the time you reach Year 6, the standard of your work is usually close to the national average. However, teaching is getting better and better, especially in Years 1-3.

In order for the school to improve further, we have asked your teachers to make sure that even more of your lessons are outstanding. In particular, we want them to ask questions that make you think hard so that you have to explain your answers, rather than use one or two words. We have also asked them to improve the way they mark your work in mathematics so that you have to read their comments and always do corrections – like you do in English.

You have an exciting few months ahead as you prepare your gardens for planting and await the arrival of your new canal boat. The inspectors wish you all every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Hugh Protherough  
Lead inspector

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