

Bromsgrove, Millfields First School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 116663 |
| Local Authority | Worcestershire |
| Inspection number | 358001 |
| Inspection dates | 23–24 November 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Patricia Potheary |

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

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| Type of school | First |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–9 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 207 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Alastair Moseley |
| Headteacher | Paul Gibbs |
| Date of previous school inspection | 31 January 2008 |
| School address | Swift Close Bromsgrove B61 7BS |
| Telephone number | 01527 831885 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who observed fifteen lessons, taught by seven different teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, a representative of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work, looked at information about pupils' progress, staff and pupil surveys and safeguarding procedures, and analysed 74 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- How well do more able pupils, boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress?
- How effective are the curriculum, teaching and the use of assessment in meeting the needs of the more able, boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How much impact have the actions taken by leadership had on the progress being made in reading, writing and mathematics?

Information about the school

Millfields is a broadly average sized first school. A very few pupils are from ethnic groups other than White British. A few pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has several awards including the International Schools Award, as well as recent national and local recognition for a variety of arts activities. There is privately run before and after-school care provided on the school site which was not part of this inspection. The head teacher has been in post since September 2009.

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

Millfields is a good school. Pupils make good progress in their academic and personal skills and achieve well. This results from good, enjoyable teaching and a good, motivating curriculum. The school has a most welcoming atmosphere, with bright interesting displays, many showing the wide range of high quality, creative activities that pupils are involved in. The progress pupils make has increased securely in the last academic year because leadership has focused effectively on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Issues with boys' learning have been addressed through a more active curriculum and they now make at least as much progress as girls. More pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making good progress as their work is better matched to their needs and is providing them with more challenge.

Although the great majority of more able pupils do well and make good progress, not enough pupils are yet reaching the higher levels in English and mathematics. In a small minority of classes too few pupils are identified as being more able and so, for a very few pupils, their individual targets lack sufficient challenge. This small group of pupils then do not always reach the levels of which they are capable. The way assessment is used to match work to pupils' different abilities is effective in most subjects and classes. Pupils appreciate knowing their individual targets and what they need to learn in each lesson. What is sometimes missing is the link to what is to be learned next and how this can help pupils to move to another level. For this reason a few do not move on in their learning as soon as they are ready.

Teaching is skilled and lessons contain plenty of interesting activities to keep pupils engaged and wanting to do well. Pupils try hard in lessons and are good at working in groups, confidently sharing their views. This ensures that progress in mathematics and English is good overall, although, in mathematics, progress is satisfactory in a small minority of classes. The school has rightly identified that this is due to shortcomings in the way mental calculation skills are developed in some groups, which hampers pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems.

Pupils' good attendance is a reflection of how much they enjoy school, but also of the good care, support and guidance they receive. They think their school is 'brilliant' and several report how much they appreciate the way 'We help run the school with the head teacher,' and 'We get to plan what we are going to do.' The way in which the pupils are helped to make such a valued contribution is a key strength in provision.

School leadership, well supported by the governing body, has improved considerably, in particular by developing much more reliable information on pupils' progress. This has enabled senior staff to undertake a more accurate self-evaluation of how well pupils are doing. The resulting priorities for improvement have meant that several issues, including the rate of progress in reading, writing and mathematics have been addressed

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successfully. Senior leaders analyse information about pupils' progress regularly. The school recognises that this analysis is not yet detailed enough to enable comparisons to be made between classes regarding the progress of different ability groups. This hinders early intervention to prevent some groups, such as a small proportion of the more able, from making satisfactory rather than good progress during the year. The school's effectiveness, nonetheless, has moved from being satisfactory to good over the last year and the capacity to improve is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more pupils reach the higher levels in English and mathematics by:
 - setting more challenging targets for a wider group of pupils
 - developing more effective use of individual targets, so that pupils are clear about how to move to the next level as soon as they are ready
 - increasing the level of detail used by leadership to analyse the progress of different ability groups in each class.
- Ensure that pupils make as much progress in mathematics as they do in English in all classes; in particular by improving pupils' mental calculation skills and their use in problem solving.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' strong contribution in planning what they will learn has resulted, in particular, with boys being much more engaged with their learning. Pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects which include science, information and communication technology and the arts. Lessons are typified by lively, well behaved pupils who are keen to reach their targets and put forward their ideas. They clearly enjoy learning. Attainment is average but rising as there is good progress now being made in all subjects, but particularly in reading and writing. A few pupils are not clear about the strategies they need to use for working with numbers in practical situations, which is why their problem solving skills are less well developed than, for example, measuring and handling data. This is why in one or two classes progress in mathematics is satisfactory rather than good. Pupils are enthusiastic about the helpful steps they are given to help them remember how to do things. In one typical lesson, the whole class expertly performed amusing actions for each punctuation mark in unison. All pupils regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or learning difficulty are making the same good progress. The issue with a few more able pupils not reaching higher levels is beginning to be overcome and it is clear that in most classes this group is making good progress more recently.

In lessons behaviour is never less than good and is sometimes outstanding, pupils always work hard and want to do their best. A few can still be unkind at times on the playground, although this is improving and pupils do feel safe. Pupils' good contribution to the school and wider community is demonstrated well by the involvement of the school council in working with staff to begin to address this issue. Pupils lead healthy lives and several eat more fruit and take more exercise as a result of what they have learned. For example some are spending much more time outside instead of sitting indoors. There are several uplifting spiritual moments in everyday school life. For example pupils were mesmerised in

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appreciating a beautiful, live dance demonstration, during one lesson. Pupils also show a good understanding and respect for those who are different to themselves.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 2 |
| 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 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

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

How effective is the provision?

A major strength of provision is in the creative arts. Dance is outstanding and pupils are currently working with great enjoyment on a performance about the circus. The curriculum has been successfully adapted to engage pupils' interest with themed activities such as arts week and plenty of sports. This is further strengthened by an innovative curriculum session on Fridays where pupils follow their interests in mixed age groups. This has not only increased a range of pupils' skills and understanding, but has added to their sense of community. Teachers use technology well to help pupils understand and learn more effectively. Good, knowledgeable strategies are used to ensure that learning is secure and skilled support is provided. Pupils are successfully encouraged to play an active part in their learning. Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and set appropriate individual targets. Pupils of different abilities therefore know what they personally are trying to achieve in each lesson, but they do not always know how to move to the next target as soon as they are ready. This lack of clarity is why progress through the national curriculum levels, for a very few more able pupils, sometimes slows. Good, effective attention is paid to developing literacy and numeracy in all subjects. Pupils with a variety of additional difficulties are given thorough and effective care, support and guidance.

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Teaching assistants, for example, provide skilled physiotherapy. Good quality arrangements as pupils transfer to the middle school further enhance provision, which ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The head teacher, well supported by the deputy head teacher, has successfully implemented several significant changes to the way the school is run. The much improved system for assessing and monitoring the progress of pupils has resulted in senior staff having a clearer and more accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. Staff work closely as a team and share the same ambitions for improving the school. The effective actions which have already been taken to improve teaching and match work more closely to pupils' different needs have led to faster progress for all pupils. This is why boys are now making as much progress as girls and all pupils with learning difficulties are now doing well. Nevertheless, the analysis of progress, especially for the different ability groups in each class, is not yet detailed enough to build securely upon the gains already made. This is why, for example, too few pupils are identified as being more able. The effective governing body fulfils all statutory duties, has a strong presence in the school and holds the school well to account for outcomes.

The school promotes equal opportunity well so that all children play their full part in the school and there is no discrimination. Safeguarding procedures are of good quality, are regularly reviewed and meet all requirements. The promotion of community cohesion is strong, not only locally, but through links with a school in Rochdale and long established links to Gambia for example, which give pupils a greater appreciation of and respect for the multi-cultural nature of society.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Strong links with parents and pre-school providers ensure that children have a smooth start to their school life. Children's skills on entry are usually in line and sometimes below those expected for their age. Children make good progress in all the early learning goals and enter Year 1 with skills which are securely average and sometimes above. There is a strong, effective emphasis on personal, social and spoken language development. Children are encouraged to share, take turns and make choices so that they quickly learn to be more independent for example. Staff recognise that, during activities where children choose for themselves, there are not always sufficient opportunities to provide enough challenge for the more able. Strong team work and a busy and attractive learning environment ensure successful learning and high levels of engagement and enjoyment. The atmosphere is one of happy children who are confident to choose their own learning activities from a wealth of opportunities. In one session children showed improving skills in leading the group when making a shopping list, while those enjoying 'forest school' searched for 'lost' toys and showed a good understanding of how to act safely outside. Children's literacy skills are relatively slower to develop, although good leadership has secured continued improvements, most recently to children's phonic skills. The way individual children's progress is recorded in 'learning journey' books provides a valuable insight into their development. This has provided a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in provision and has enabled good planning for further improvement.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| 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

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They appreciate many aspects, particularly how safe their children are and how much they enjoy school. The main concern, from a very small minority, is about the behaviour of a few pupils and this concern is reflected in the report. Parent and carer comments were almost all positive about many aspects of the school's work, typically reflected by this remark, 'My children love going to school and are thriving personally and educationally in the environment the school has created.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bromsgrove, Millfields First 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 44 | 59 | 28 | 38 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 44 | 59 | 30 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 33 | 45 | 38 | 51 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 41 | 56 | 29 | 40 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 44 | 59 | 27 | 36 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 43 | 59 | 28 | 38 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 39 | 53 | 33 | 45 | 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) | 40 | 56 | 30 | 42 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 41 | 55 | 30 | 41 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 37 | 51 | 24 | 33 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 34 | 46 | 33 | 45 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 48 | 65 | 23 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 47 | 64 | 26 | 35 | 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 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 | 58 | 36 | 4 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 43 | 40 | 9 |
| Secondary schools | 10 | 35 | 42 | 13 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 39 | 45 | 3 |
| Special schools | 33 | 42 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 18 | 40 | 29 | 12 |
| All schools | 11 | 42 | 38 | 9 |

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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">■ 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.



25 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Millfields First School, Bromsgrove, B61 7BS

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons. Yours is a good school. There are many interesting things going on, just as you described. Senior staff work hard to keep developing the school and this is an important reason why your work is getting better.

Enjoyable teaching helps you to make good progress in your lessons and we like the way you always try to do your best. To help this continue we have asked your school to help some of you make faster progress in mathematics, and to ensure that more of you are helped to reach the higher levels by:

- setting more challenging targets for some of you
- making it easier for you to see how to move to the next level
- increasing your skills in calculating to help with problem solving

We are sure that you will discuss these ideas with your teachers and help them by working hard and sharing your thoughts.

The many responsibilities that you take on, as play leaders and with recycling for example, are heartening. You were keen to tell us that the school keeps you safe and looks after you well. It is therefore very pleasing to see that you usually behave well, although we think that sometimes a few of you are not as kind as you should be to others, especially on the playground. You show good respect and understanding towards those who have different beliefs and ways of living, which helps make your school a happy and welcoming community.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Potheary

Lead inspector

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