

Millgate School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120362
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	358745
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Morris-King HMI

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

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Norman
Headteacher	Christopher Bruce (Acting Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2008
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Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
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Boarding provision

Social care Unique Reference Number

SC006452

Social care inspector

David Morgan

Age group 11–16

Inspection dates 16–17 March 2011

Inspection number 358745

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, one additional inspector and one social care inspector. Inspectors observed nine lessons taught by eight teachers and a short part of one other lesson. The social care inspector visited the residential provision and observed extended day activities. Inspectors held meetings with the acting executive headteacher (referred to as 'the headteacher' in the main body of this report), one of the assistant headteachers, the head of care, other key staff, groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at students' work, the school's data about students' attainment and progress, information about behaviour and attendance and the school's monitoring and evaluation records. Inspectors also looked at four questionnaires from parents and carers together with questionnaires from students and staff throughout the school.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors evaluated the extent to which the school has improved students' behaviour over the last two terms and how effectively their behaviour is managed.
- They considered whether students' learning and progress is now accelerating as a result of the recent teaching and support initiatives that have been put in place and the improvements in behaviour and attendance.
- They looked at the impact of the new leadership team structure, the strengths of the permanent senior leaders and how well they lead the school, and the quality of leadership at other levels.
- They evaluated how effectively part-time timetables are being used and how quickly time in school is being built up.

Information about the school

Millgate is a school for boys with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. All students have a statement of special educational needs. Only around two thirds of the students join the school in September of Year 7; the other third starts at various points during their secondary education. Around 60% of students are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is very high in comparison with national averages. Under 10% of students come from minority ethnic groups, which is low. Around four students at any one time are looked after by the local authority. Millgate also includes a small residential unit. Four to six students are in residence up to three nights every week. Others take part in an extended day until 6.30pm up to four evenings every week. At the time of the inspection, there was no permanent headteacher in post at Millgate and the school was being led by the headteacher of a neighbouring special school.

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

Millgate provides students with a satisfactory education within a caring environment. During 2010, a period of significant instability at senior leadership level unsettled the school, and students' behaviour and attendance deteriorated as a result. When the new headteacher joined the school in the autumn term, he quickly recognised the need to give the students clear expectations and firm boundaries. His highly purposeful, dynamic leadership has established a calm school in which staff are able to teach and students are able to learn. He has quickly analysed the school's strengths and weaknesses and taken a series of well-focused, effective actions. The staff have risen to the challenge of re-establishing a culture of learning and have formed a cohesive team whose members are supportive of each other. The governing body is committed to the school and its members are establishing their relatively new roles well. The school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. Teachers and learning support assistants work well together to give students a high level of personal attention. This helps to give them the confidence to extend their knowledge and skills. Lessons are generally interesting and sometimes very motivating. In some lessons, staff focus carefully on improving students' literacy and oracy skills as well as their subject knowledge but this is not consistent. The curriculum for the majority of the students is suitably broad and balanced, and beginning to be enhanced by partnerships with neighbouring schools. A small but significant group is currently following a curriculum that is focused solely on stabilising their behaviour and improving their literacy, numeracy and social skills. The school rightly recognises the need to develop a broader complementary curriculum to meet these students' specific needs.

Students' achievement is satisfactory. When students join the school they have often experienced a period of considerable disruption to their education and subsequently they have gaps in their learning. Once they settle into their new environment, some start to make accelerated progress. The majority respond well to the good care, guidance and support that the school provides. As a result, many who have had poor attendance at their previous provision start to attend well. For a significant minority, attendance remains very low but the school works tirelessly to support both students and their families to improve this situation. The school's relatively new strategies to manage behaviour are well thought out and their impact is closely monitored and analysed. These strategies are starting to have a clear impact on the behaviour of the majority of students. Staff are increasingly consistent in their approach to behaviour management and the school recognises the need to increase this consistency further and to embed the new strategies fully.

For those students who attend the residential provision or extended day provision, this makes a positive contribution to their overall experience of school, and has a good impact on their attendance. The school and the residential staff regularly share a number of

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aspects of their practice but both recognise that this could be extended further to maximise the outcomes for the students.

Up to 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed fully the new strategies for managing students' behaviour and ensure that all staff apply them consistently.
- Improve the students' literacy and oracy skills by:
 - developing the use of subject specific vocabulary in every subject
 - consistently encouraging the students to articulate their thinking and explain their answers
 - ensuring that all classroom environments promote literacy skills.
- Develop a suitably broad curriculum, with an appropriate focus on social skills, for those students with the most complex needs.
- Extend the positive links between residential, extended day and school provision to maximise the continuity in students' learning.
- The school must ensure that it meets the National Minimum Standards for boarding which have not been met.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students' progress across the school is accelerating in response to the calm environment and improved teaching, and as a result achievement is satisfactory. In lessons, students generally applied themselves well to their learning and made steady progress. They often demonstrated resilience in the face of challenging new concepts or expectations. Where teaching was good, so was students' progress. All students have challenging targets to meet across the curriculum and are working well towards them. Year 11 students in 2010 did not achieve in line with their targets, and several did not gain qualifications. However, the current Year 11 are on track to gain a range of GCSE and other qualifications, as are Year 10. Students who are attending the new 'intensive support programme' are making satisfactory progress with their mathematics and English and some have started to make good progress with their reading. A few students do not achieve as well as they should, because their attendance is too irregular for them to benefit from the teaching and support that the school offers.

The majority of students are responding well to the school's increased expectations of their behaviour and many have positive attitudes to learning. Serious incidents have sharply decreased. A few find it very difficult to behave acceptably for any length of time, though this is also improving. Some of the behaviour observed during the inspection was good, for example the students conducted themselves very well in the dining room, and in several lessons. Attendance follows a similar pattern. Around a third of the students attend in line with or above the national average. Many of these students take part in the extended day or residential provision. The attendance of another third is very low. However, this gap is closing as provision improves.

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The improved behaviour has helped students to feel safe in school. The school council's influence is growing and they are able to give good examples of how they have helped the school, for example in supporting the new uniform policy. Students are enthusiastic about physical education. They benefit from a particularly good healthy lunch each day, served in a relaxed family atmosphere, which in turn helps to develop their social skills.

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	4
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. Lesson structures are sound and contain a suitable balance of activities to keep the students engaged and learning. Lessons start promptly and maintain a reasonable pace throughout. The best teaching challenges students to extend their thinking and to be creative. Satisfactory lessons frequently contain good elements, for example in a science lesson the teacher consistently helped the students to extend their literacy skills. At times, staff step in too quickly to help students, rather than encouraging them to be independent. The best classroom environments clearly set the tone for learning, though not all reach this standard. An excellent example is the mathematics classroom which gives the students instant, positive messages about achievement and enjoyment.

Since the last academic year, the school has improved the range of accredited courses on offer. Students are now able to take GCSEs in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, geography, food technology and design and technology.

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Other aspects of their work are also accredited. Where students show particular aptitude for a subject the school is starting to adapt the curriculum accordingly, for example BTEC physical education is being offered in partnership with a neighbouring school. A very well-equipped music studio and a performing arts course give students good opportunities for creativity. Appropriate interventions support students who need additional support with their reading and writing. Personal and social education includes a broad range of topics.

Care, guidance and support are a strength of the school and are very much tailored to each student's individual needs. The tutor and key worker system ensures that each student has a member of staff who knows them well. The inclusion support team rigorously monitors students' behaviour and works with other staff to plan appropriate interventions. Careful attention is paid to students' mental and physical health. The school works with a wide range of agencies to meet students' complex needs. Good systems are in place to prevent bullying. The residential and extended day provision makes a good contribution to the care of students.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Under the headteacher's leadership, the school has grown quickly in effectiveness and capacity. Staff at all levels are very clear about the direction of the school and ambitious for its future. They share a common desire to improve the outcomes for students as quickly as possible once they join the school and this is translated into appropriate action. The headteacher and assistant headteacher have a very accurate picture of the quality of teaching. A systematic, well-led programme of lesson observations and curriculum review has supported teachers and has clarified the next steps for development. The much improved data about students' behaviour and attendance, together with the thorough tracking of their academic progress, is helping the school to tackle any inequalities robustly. For example, students who have not been able to manage a full day in lessons have recently been offered residential provision, which extends their curriculum significantly within a nurturing environment. The school is now a cohesive community. Positive work is taking place to build relationships with the local community, including the school's immediate neighbours. Safeguarding procedures are sound though some documentation is due for revision.

The new Chair of the Governing Body has a good understanding of the school and its context, which is helping him to provide appropriate challenge and support. The governing body has a number of new members, including parent governors. These bring important skills and perspectives. The Chair is rightly keen to ensure that governors visit the school

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more frequently and get to know staff and students. Plans to federate with another special school for students with similar needs are well advanced. These focus appropriately on the opportunities to enhance the curriculum for the students and to share teaching expertise and ideas.

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	3
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

Boarding provision

The overall quality rating for the boarding provision is satisfactory. Good attention is paid to individual students' needs and to managing their behaviour. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Students also benefit from a comprehensive range of recreational and sporting activities which supports students' developing personal and social skills, as well as certain academic targets. These are enjoyed by all the students who attend boarding or extended day provision.

The six recommendations made at the last inspection of boarding have been addressed. The presentation of the flat has improved to a good standard; the governing body's involvement is more thorough; and records are appropriate. An important development is the strong leadership of the school which is now in place after an unsettled period. The new headteacher provides clear and structured guidance and as a consequence staff and students feel secure. They report that the school is now 'calm' and staff feel able to embark on further improvements.

Satisfactory attention is paid to students' health. However, medication administration does not follow the procedures in all instances. This means the risk of mistakes or accidents affecting students is increased unnecessarily. Meals, on the other hand, are of a high quality, with good nutritional content and variety. Mealtimes are important social occasions for boarders.

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Overall safety levels are good. However, there is inconsistent attention to safety in the car park where, because of a shortage of space, the level of potential hazard is particularly high. One toilet has an inappropriate lock that prevents emergency access. Reviews of risk assessments for the premises are not up to date, which increases the level of risk to students, visitors and staff. There are effective measures in place to prevent fires, including regular fire equipment tests. However there are no night-time fire drills to sufficiently inform staff and boarders of safe evacuations during night-time hours. Safeguarding students is effective, as is the use of behaviour management procedures. Records of physical interventions are appropriate and allow for the detailed monitoring necessary to meet the needs of the students. Poor behaviour in school does not now automatically prevent attendance in boarding, which is an important improvement.

Students enjoy comfortable and attractive accommodation and they have good opportunities to enjoy their stays and to achieve success. Staff have a good understanding of students' individual needs and provide an interesting range of activities, both on and off site. These include music, fishing, football, cinema and local events. Students are encouraged to be physically active but also learn domestic skills. The residential and extended day services contribute significantly to students' educational progress. However, there is sometimes insufficient coordination between school and residential staff, for example in setting and complying with students' individual targets. It is also insufficiently clear how the school is addressing certain individual issues, such as dietary needs and independence skills. However, there are good systems in place to involve students in decision-making about all aspects of their lives in boarding, including their targets. Residential and other staff make sustained efforts to maintain and develop effective links with parents and carers, for example around students' admissions and subsequent discharges.

Students benefit from satisfactory staffing arrangements. Staff numbers are adequate to meet the day-to-day needs of boarders. However, this level of staffing does not allow sufficiently for training and professional development opportunities for care staff. In some cases, refresher training is not up to date for ancillary staff. Annual appraisal meetings are used to review personal development plans but are not yet up to date for all school staff.

Monitoring is satisfactory overall and is fulfilled by a number of senior staff and the governing body. However, records are not signed to indicate the monitoring of any patterns or issues. This means the potential for shortfalls increases.

National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care

- Ensure that:
- the policy for administering medication is implemented in practice (NMS 14.17)
- children are safe from hazards, with regard to the use of an inappropriate lock on a toilet door (NMS 26.1)
- risk assessments are reviewed regularly, including those for safe car parking and night-time fire safety (NMS 26.3)
- children and staff know the emergency evacuation procedures in case of fire, including those for use at night, and that they regularly practise such evacuations (NMS 26.5)

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- residential, care and teaching staff work together to identify means of encouraging each child's personal, social and educational development and achievement, with regard to individual targets (NMS 12.6)
- each placement plan identifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day-to-day basis, and that this information is clear (NMS 17.2)
- the key worker monitors that the school is complying on a day-to-day basis with each child's placement plan (NMS 17.3)
- the level of staffing is adequate to meet the school's Statement of Purpose, with regard to training and development opportunities for staff (NMS 28.2)
- all staff have their performance appraised annually and their training needs identified as part of their personal development plans (NMS 30.6).

These are the grades for the boarding provision

The effectiveness of the boarding provision	3
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Views of parents and carers

Four parents and carers completed the questionnaire. Their views were largely positive. They did not make any additional comments. The school's evidence suggests that parents and carers generally value the support that the school offers to them and to their children. They feel that communication from the school has improved recently. This corresponds with the inspection evidence. In particular, the headteacher has communicated the new expectations clearly to parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Millgate 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 four completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 47 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	25	1	25	0	0	2	50
The school keeps my child safe	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	3	75	0	0	1	25	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	1	25	2	50	1	25	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	75	0	0	1	25	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	75	1	25	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)	3	75	0	0	1	25	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	75	0	0	1	25	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	75	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	75	0	0	1	25	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



18 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Millgate School, Leicester, LE2 6DW

Thank you for making me and the other inspectors welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed watching your lessons, talking to you about your work and your evening activities, and eating meals with you. We judged that your school is satisfactory. You told us that there have been some problems with behaviour at your school and that these have now improved a great deal. During the inspection, you behaved well and many of you showed that you are proud of your school. You worked steadily in lessons, and some of you worked very hard. Your school cares for you well. It is clear that you all have someone you can talk to when you need to, which is very important. It was good to learn that Year 11 students are all on track to pass some GCSE exams. Some of you attend very well indeed and this helps you to succeed, but some of you need to improve your attendance a lot. I can see from the board that you know this and are trying hard to get into the premiership! We have asked the school to do a few things to improve your education further.

Make sure that all staff expect the same high standards of behaviour from you, all the time.

Help you even more to improve your reading, writing and speaking skills.

Develop some different courses for those of you who find it too difficult to be in the usual lessons and are currently attending part time.

Think about how to make even better links between the time you spend in residential, extended day and school provision so that you can keep learning all the time.

You can help by attending school every day, always cooperating with the staff, and working hard. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Sue Morris-King

Her Majesty's Inspector

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