

Millfields First School

Swift Close, Bromsgrove, B61 7BS

Inspection dates 12–13 March 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. The progress of all pupils, including the most-able, those eligible for free school meals and those with disabilities and with special educational needs is good.
- Teaching is of good quality. Pupils enjoy their lessons. Children in Reception get off to a strong start that ignites their love of learning.
- Pupils' good behaviour and attendance make an important contribution to their good learning. Pupils feel safe in school. They are friendly and welcome newcomers.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, set high expectations of themselves and pupils. As a result, actions to improve teaching and pupils' achievement have been effective.
- Good quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities widen pupils' understanding of modern Britain and make a strong contribution to pupils' education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The pupils have too few opportunities to influence what they learn.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils follow the guidance given them in their marking.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 part-lessons, including five with members of the senior leadership team. Many classes were visited briefly to look at specific aspects of the work of the school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour both in and out of lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils, parents and carers, members of the governing body, the two headteachers who are part of the collaboration to which the school belongs and representatives of the local authority.
- The views of 42 parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, were considered.
- Inspectors analysed data about pupils' performance and progress. They reviewed a range of documents, records and development plans. These included minutes of governing body meetings, staff's performance management targets and records about safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and exclusions.

Inspection team

Michelle Parker, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Spencer Cartwright

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Millfields is the same size as the average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. A small number of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds; a few pupils join the school speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional funding provided by the government for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The school is a Leading Aspect School for dance and collaboration. It is part of an informal collaboration with Blackwell and Charford First schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop more opportunities for pupils to have a bigger say in their learning.
- Ensure that pupils are given opportunities to act on teachers' comments in their exercise books and to complete corrections.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Many children start Reception with knowledge and understanding that is below that typically expected for their age. Teachers and teaching assistants swiftly and accurately identify children's needs and this enables all children to make good progress in early reading, writing and number. The vast majority of children meet the early learning goals and are well prepared for the learning in Year 1.
- For the last three years, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been significantly above the national average. This is now reflected in the proportion of pupils in Year 4 working at Level 4 and Level 5. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils making expected progress by the end of Year 4 has increased year on year.
- Attainment in reading dipped in Key Stage 1 in 2013. This has now been improved. Opportunities to read with an adult have been increased. Weaker readers in Year 1 enjoy having a reading box, which has a non-fiction and a story book of their own choice, as well as some aids to helping them improve their reading of letters and sounds. The re-furnished library is well used and pupils love to read and choose their own books. This is encouraging pupils to read more widely and frequently. Younger pupils use their understanding of letters and sounds well to de-code unfamiliar words. Older pupils have good skills of inference and deduction and read with good expression and understanding.
- Attainment in writing is improving. In Year 1, pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds effectively in their writing. Pupils have many opportunities to write in all subjects and use their writing skills well. Older pupils are beginning to use dictionaries and thesauruses to improve their understanding and develop their vocabulary. This is improving spelling. Handwriting and presentation of work are good.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics is good. All pupils have opportunities to apply their understanding of number and mathematical skills to solve real life problems. They are confident in attempting more problems that are difficult and can choose the best method for working out how to solve the problem.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium are making good progress. The gap between their performance and that of other pupils in reading is closing, and they are less than one third of a term behind in writing and mathematics.
- Through the effective support from teaching assistants, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. This is because the school identifies their needs early, their learning is planned effectively and their progress regularly and carefully checked.
- The progress of the most-able is at least good and many are beginning to make accelerated progress. This is because they have opportunities to choose a higher level of challenge, which they relish.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in all classes is typically good. The weaknesses in teaching that school leaders identified last year have been eradicated. This is because of the concerted actions by leaders to improve teaching throughout the school. Many lessons observed had aspects that were outstanding.
- Teaching in Reception is consistently good. This is because teachers and teaching assistants quickly establish good habits of learning. Staff have high expectations and respond swiftly to children's responses to learning. Children enjoy the well-planned activities and are encouraged to learn in groups and pairs. All staff model appropriate behaviour and language. Children copy these behaviours in their independent work.
- Teachers model their thinking effectively. They explain how they solve problems and write

opening paragraphs that help pupils improve their own work. For example, in a Year 3/4 lesson the teacher and the teaching assistants worked together to help pupils extend their vocabulary and develop their writing. This showed pupils how to develop their own sentences. Pupils were excited to start writing and had a good bank of imaginative words to use.

- In a Year 4 mathematics lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to criticise her method for working out the problem. This encouraged pupils to explain how they would solve the problem. One most-able girl leapt ahead in understanding because she had grasped the link between repeated addition and multiplication. Pupils working together as partners contribute well to improving their understanding of how to solve problems and generate ideas.
- Teachers have a secure view of the levels at which pupils are working. Work is set at an appropriate level of challenge for all groups of pupils. Teaching assistants are given clear direction. They understand their role and work effectively in one-to-one situations and small groups. They support all groups of pupils effectively. This is because of the high quality training they have received.
- Marking is consistently detailed and helpful. Pupils are told what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Teachers identify tasks to help pupils consolidate their learning, but do not ensure that they are always completed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Behaviour around school and in lessons is good. Pupils are not able to take sufficient opportunities to have a say in their learning. There is little off-task chatter in lessons. All pupils walk sensibly along corridors. Pupils display high levels of respect and tolerance towards each other, staff and visitors alike. Pupils have exemplary manners and say 'please' and 'thank you' to each other without prompting. They wait and hold the door open for others. At break times, the play buddies help pupils get along together.
- This is a friendly and happy school. Parents commented on how, when out with their child, older children from the school say hello and know their child's name. Newly-arrived pupils quickly find friends. 'Friendly Fridays' are popular because pupils enjoy working with different-aged pupils across the school and they learn together well. Parents commented on how much their child benefitted from learning with a different group of pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and do not think there is any bullying. Their relationships with peers and adults are good and they are confident that if they have a concern staff would deal with it quickly. Parents appreciated the support from school about e-safety that was arranged at the same time as a story evening for their children and enabled them to attend. Pupils understand how to use play equipment safely and take care of each other. In a forest-school lesson pupils made a mud-slide and understood how to behave safely and with care towards others.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. They like coming to school, are punctual and settle quickly to learning. The school works well with other agencies to support families. Any absence is quickly and effectively followed up.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are strongly determined to make the school even better. This is shown in the improvements to teaching and the effective deployment of staff across the school. The headteacher is ably supported by all staff.
- School leaders have an accurate view of the school. This is supported through the collaboration. The headteachers evaluate each other's schools, challenge and moderate each other's judgments. This informs their school development plans and ensures they have an accurate view. Training for all staff is arranged as part of the collaboration. This allows good practice to be shared and staff to work with colleagues from the other schools to plan and teach lessons. The newly-qualified teachers have particularly benefited from a joint approach and training from

the collaboration. This has enabled them to make good progress in developing their professional expertise.

- Currently subject leadership is part of the role of the senior leadership team. This is because there are several new teachers, three of whom are newly qualified. This is not having an adverse impact on pupils' progress because senior leaders are doing this well. The school has put appropriate measures in place to broaden leadership. The improvements in teaching and pupils' progress, together with the closing of the gap for those who are eligible for the pupil premium, demonstrate the school's good capacity for improvement and its commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The headteacher and governors quickly identified weaknesses in teaching last year and took appropriate actions to rectify it. They understand the school's data and use this to tackle any underperformance of pupils and staff. Performance management systems are strong and clearly linked to the national standards for teachers. Objectives are set for each teacher and clearly link to pupils' progress and whole school targets. Governors have oversight of this.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. The school is aware that pupils meet few others from different cultures, ethnic groups and religious backgrounds and actively seeks out opportunities for pupils to widen their understanding of modern Britain and learn about the world. Pupils enjoy the rich variety of trips and visits such as to an art gallery and a mosque. They offer thoughtful responses when given the opportunity to reflect on spiritual or moral issues.
- The school does its utmost to ensure that pupils remain healthy and physically active through a wide range of physical and sporting activities during and after school. The school has successfully implemented its plan of action to use its primary sports funding. This has allowed it to enhance training for teachers and to widen its use of specialist sports coaches. More pupils are now involved in sporting activities and inter-school competitions.
- The school gives high priority to ensuring pupils' safety and that all safeguarding requirements are met.
- The local authority maintains a positive relationship with the school. It regularly meets with the senior leaders and governors to challenge and check progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very committed to the school and its success and have a thorough and accurate knowledge of its strengths and areas for development. They make regular visits to school and look at learning. They understand the school's progress information, including the data dashboard, and use them to check how effective teaching is.
 - Governors support and challenge the school and keep a sharp eye on pupils' progress, especially on how effectively the income from the pupil premium and primary sports funding is used to give good value for money. They understand the link between teachers' performance management and the progress of groups and increasingly link salary progression to teachers' performance. They rigorously support the headteacher in tackling weaknesses in teaching. They carefully assess the headteacher's performance annually.
 - The governing body have benefited from the strong links in the collaboration to develop its skills in data analysis and evaluate its own effectiveness and that of its committees. All statutory duties are fulfilled.

What inspection judgements mean

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

School details

Unique reference number	116663
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	440541

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alistair Moseley
Headteacher	Paul Gibbs
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2010
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