

# Millfields Primary School

Bowes Road, Wivenhoe, Colchester, CO7 9RD

**Inspection dates** 12–13 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher leads exceptionally well, and has created a very positive culture shared by all who have a stake in the school. As a result teaching and achievement have improved since the last inspection.
- Adults have excellent relationships with pupils, who talk very positively about how much they enjoy school. Staff and parents are proud to be part of the school.
- The school ensures pupils' safety very well, and promotes outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Pupils have made exceptional progress for the last three years, leaving Year 6 with very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Parents are very positive about how the school supports and extends their children's learning. They have a clear understanding of the high expectations for all aspects of school life, including attendance, which is well above average.
- Leaders have improved teaching by rigorously checking the quality and making very effective use of well-chosen training.
- Teachers ensure lessons challenge pupils, especially those who are most able. The result is some exceptionally high quality work in a range of different subjects. One member of the support staff described teachers as 'inspirational'.
- Pupils generally find the new system for marking and feedback helpful in improving their work in English and mathematics, but not all teachers are using it effectively, especially in other subjects.
- The governors are extremely knowledgeable, and use their skills to excellent effect in supporting and challenging leaders to maintain high standards.
- The Reception class provides children with an exceptional start. High-quality teaching and a sharp focus on social and emotional development prepare them very well for their future schooling.
- The school is playing an important role in supporting and working with another local school. Staff have excellent opportunities to improve their skills by working closely together and observing each other's lessons.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 12 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, a representative from the local authority, members of the governing body, staff, pupils and parents.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined, some with the headteacher present, and pupils read to the inspectors.
- Inspectors took into account the 93 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View. The inspectors also talked to parents outside school and took account of the 30 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents produced by the school, including data on pupils' progress and attainment, procedures for safeguarding, the school's own evaluations of its work, reports to the governing body and minutes of their meetings, and the action plans for raising attainment.

## Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Diana Songer-Hudgell

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Millfields Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average, at around 11%.
- A below-average proportion of pupils, around 10%, are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher is also headteacher of Alresford Primary School in a nearby village. The two schools work together collaboratively but retain their own governing bodies.
- Children attend the Reception class on a full-time basis.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils whose parents are working.

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

- Improve the effectiveness of marking and feedback by ensuring that:
  - the new system is used by all teachers, and pupils are routinely expected to respond to the guidance
  - the new marking scheme is extended in subjects other than English and mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leadership is outstanding at all levels. The headteacher has created an extremely positive culture which is at the heart of everything the school does. All members of the school community, including the parents, share a vision which puts 'children at the heart of a learning community'. This ensures a consistency of approach in the way staff support the pupils.
- The strengths in the headteacher's leadership have been recognised outside the school and she has taken on the leadership of a nearby school for half of each week. This has been made possible because she has created an extremely strong senior leadership team who are able to maintain the school's positive progress in her absence.
- A wide range of training has been used to develop the skills of senior and subject leaders, and those of the teachers. This has led, for example, to very rapid improvements in the teaching of phonics (the linking of letters and sounds). As a result of this, reading standards are well above average and pupils' love of books is impressive. Staff share the most effective practice by observing each other's work. High-quality support and challenge are very effective in supporting teachers new to the profession.
- High-quality training in other aspects of the school's work ensures a consistent approach by all staff that leads to pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning. This is evident in the very effective supervision arrangements at lunchtime, which make it a time pupils look forward to and enjoy.
- Because of the school's success, the local authority uses an appropriately light-touch approach when checking on its work. Even so, the support and the challenge provided by the local authority have had a good impact on the school's work.
- The school's evaluation of its work is accurate and detailed, and the resulting improvement planning sets out appropriate priorities. Teachers' good understanding and use of assessment data mean they rapidly identify and address weaknesses or signs of underachievement. This is true for all the different groups in the school, including the disadvantaged pupils and those who are the most able. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met, and the arrangements are effective.
- Leaders check data on pupils' progress and attainment regularly. Internal and external checks are carried out to confirm the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work. The school is preparing well for the changes in assessment necessitated by the removal of National Curriculum levels.
- The pupil premium is used extremely effectively to help disadvantaged pupils take a full part in school life and benefit, where appropriate, from additional help from adults. The impact of this is evident in the significant narrowing of gaps in attainment between eligible pupils and other groups.
- Good use is made of national funding to promote physical education and sporting opportunities. High-quality coaching leads to pupils' often excellent progress and helps develop other teachers' knowledge and skills, such as in gymnastics or dance. Pupils participate in a wider range of clubs and sporting activities, and this is contributing to their healthier lifestyles.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well. They have outstanding social skills and participate in a wide range of cultural activities. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are given an equal chance to succeed, and are prepared extremely well for life in modern Britain.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is very effective in both supporting and challenging the school's leaders. A rigorous review of governors' skills has had a beneficial impact on their work.
  - Governors check the school's work through a good range of visits, such as to observe and monitor the teaching of science. In addition, they have close links with the school council and take a full interest in

pupils' views.

- The governors have a clear understanding of teachers' effectiveness. They check how well leaders improve the quality of teaching, and ensure decisions about teachers' pay are appropriately linked to their performance and responsibilities.
- Governors track finances well and take a full part in deciding how to spend additional money, such as that provided to support disadvantaged pupils. They understand and can talk knowledgeably about the pupils' performance, of which they are rightly proud.
- Governors ensure that the school promotes key values such as tolerance and understanding of the beliefs and culture of others. They ensure the school's links with parents are effective and that parents' concerns and opinions are carefully listened to and acted on.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This has a very positive impact on their learning and progress. In all lessons observed, and in other settings such as assembly, the dining room and at playtimes, pupils were very well behaved and fully engaged in their learning. Their exceptional engagement is a major reason for their outstanding progress, and this was supported by what pupils told inspectors about how much they enjoyed school.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about lessons and other aspects of school life. They clearly like school a lot and say that teachers and other staff 'are all really kind'. One described how well he had learned new things because 'the quality of education is brilliant'. Pupils show great respect for the environment. They do not drop litter and they impressed inspectors with the pride they show when talking about their work.
- Pupils' response to the school's expectations of their behaviour and social development is consistently excellent. Their horizons are widened through good opportunities to take on responsibility, such as on the school council or the eco committee. Older pupils take their 'infant leader' role very seriously when they work and play with the youngest children, and often a really tight bond is built between the children and their leader.
- Pupils are extremely polite and interested in other people. They work together well when solving problems, or when evaluating each other's work. Pupils show a very caring and accepting nature and are very supportive of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Leaders and governors give the highest possible priority to the safeguarding of pupils in their care.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, and all parents confirm this view. A good range of activities help pupils learn to stay safe, and they are taught how to safely use computers and the internet at levels appropriate for their different ages. The pupils say that there is little bullying but if it occurred, they are confident it would be dealt with effectively. The school has worked hard to ensure they have a clear understanding of different types, including racist and homophobic bullying.
- The breakfast club provides the pupils who attend with a calm and productive start to the day, as well as a healthy snack, and good opportunities to develop social skills. In addition, the school has a clear view of the challenges faced by some of the more vulnerable pupils and keeps a careful eye on how well they are doing academically and socially.
- Attendance is well above the national average. Persistent absence is almost non-existent. Parents appreciate the importance of their children's full attendance. Pupils are punctual, both to school and to lessons.

**The quality of teaching is outstanding**

- The school's own evaluations, together with inspectors' direct observations of teaching and pupils' work, show that the teaching of literacy and numeracy is outstanding. Since the previous inspection, leaders have further improved teaching through recruitment, well-targeted training and effective use of appraisal. The high-quality teaching caters consistently well for pupils' different needs and capabilities, and is responsible for pupils' outstanding progress and high standards.
- Teachers ensure that pupils' attitudes to their learning, and their interest and engagement in their work, are excellent. They do this by providing interesting and appropriately challenging activities. Pupils are often encouraged to learn through imaginative tasks and well-chosen resources. For example, in Year 2, creative use of an outdoor activity with beanbags provided an excellent way to extend pupils' learning of direction and position.
- The learning environment throughout the school is kept very tidy, with most material resources easily accessible for pupils. Outstanding displays of pupils' work are used well to reinforce their understanding, learning and vocabulary, and also to celebrate their high-quality work.
- Pupils throughout the school talk positively about how they enjoy lessons, especially through the themed approach to their topics. For example, one boy talked enthusiastically about how he enjoyed learning about Native Americans and Bigfoot. They describe the progress they have made and talk with pride about their work. This pride is reflected in pupils' books, which are largely tidy and well presented.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate and used carefully to group pupils by ability and provide work that is well matched to their different capabilities. Teachers are very aware of how different groups, including the most able pupils, are learning in lessons, and adjust the tasks set to make sure that everyone does well. Their very effective deployment of the high-quality teaching assistants has a very positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment, particularly for those who find learning more difficult.
- Teachers have recently changed the way they mark pupils' work. The new system for marking and feedback is not yet used consistently, or in subjects other than English and mathematics. Not all teachers insist that pupils respond to their comments or suggestions in order to improve their work.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive outstanding support. This ensures they are able to take a full part in school life and make excellent progress, regardless of their starting points. Teachers also provide well for other groups, such as the most able, by ensuring that they set them appropriately challenging work.
- The school developed a thematic approach to the curriculum a few years ago. Teachers plan challenging activities that link subjects and the use of different skills. For example, in Year 5, pupils learning about the Greeks retold the myth of Perseus and Medusa, using film as a resource to extend their vocabulary. Teachers ensure that pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education and their future lives.

**The achievement of pupils is outstanding**

- Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have been significantly above average for three of the last five years in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are currently rising still further through excellent teaching and pupils are exceeding the progress expected nationally for their age.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been significantly above average for at least five years in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in the newly introduced test for spelling, punctuation and grammar has also been significantly above average for the last two years.
- For the last three years the measure showing how much value the school has added to pupils' learning shows that this has been significantly above the national average. Last year, well-above-average proportions of pupils made the expected, and more than the expected, progress in reading, writing and

mathematics. The standard of pupils' communication skills is very high and they develop into articulate speakers with well-developed vocabulary.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 is too small to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils. However, their progress recently has been as good as or better than that of their classmates and all pupils nationally.
- The results of the Year 1 check on pupils' skills in phonics show that in 2014 standards were well above average. This reflects high-quality teaching, given the pupils' starting points.
- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is outstanding throughout the school. There is also much evidence, especially from displays of pupils' work, of excellent achievement in other subjects such as art and design, science, geography and history. The large choir and school orchestra demonstrate the high standards reached in music.
- Throughout the school, the most able pupils are provided with challenging tasks that help them make excellent progress. Because of this a well-above-average proportion reach the higher levels. Even so, the school demonstrates its ambition by aiming to help even more Year 6 pupils to reach the levels expected in Key Stage 3 in reading and writing.
- The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make outstanding progress. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make equally strong progress because of the extra help they receive. Last year, these pupils in all years made similar or better progress than their classmates.

### The early years provision

### are outstanding

- Most children start school with levels equal to or above those typically found. The progress they make, including that of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, and those who are most able, is outstanding. By the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage they have reached levels well above those expected in all areas of learning, and are very well prepared for Year 1. They are clearly happy at school and are kept safe. Their behaviour is exemplary.
- Children start the day happily and productively, and enjoy sharing their learning with adults. For example, they talked very enthusiastically about their work exploring water and the differences in illustrations of trolls in different books. Children work cooperatively and talking to them shows how much they enjoy school and the range of activities provided for them.
- The accommodation is used well by staff and this enables children to learn well in all areas of learning. The outdoor area is used well to extend children's learning through a range of adult-led activities and those that the children choose for themselves. Number work has a high profile outside, as did dramatic recreations of the story of the Three Billy-Goats Gruff during the inspection. All children develop good skills in cooperating and sharing through their activities.
- Teaching is outstanding. The provision is led and managed very well. Staff use detailed assessments of children's achievements very effectively to plan the next steps children need to take to move their learning on. All adults are involved in observing and recording children's progress.
- Parents are regularly informed about children's progress and they are invited to record their comments in the children's records of learning or on displays. In addition a home-school book is used exceptionally well by parents to share activities and learning done at home through examples and photographs.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115261
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	448671

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nick White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet Meacock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 823044
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