



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Inspection report
Millbrook Primary and Nursery School

Tameside Education Authority

Dates of inspection: 9-10 March 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

© Crown copyright 2004. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Contents

Section	Page
Basic information about the school	iv
Introduction	1
Main findings	1
Key issues	3
Inspection findings	3
Standards achieved by the pupils	3
The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	4
The quality of education	5
Leadership and management	6
Implementation of the action plan	7
Appendix – Information about the inspection	9

Basic information about the school

Name of school:	Millbrook Primary and Nursery School
Type of school:	Primary and nursery
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Mrs S West
Address of school:	Bank Road off Huddersfield Road Stalybridge Cheshire SK15 3JX
Telephone:	01457 834314
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mrs V Fallows
Local education authority area:	Tameside
Unique reference number:	106195
Name of reporting inspector:	Mr M Cladingbowl HMI
Dates of inspection:	9-10 March 2004

Introduction

1. Millbrook Nursery and Primary School is situated near Stalybridge, east of Manchester. There are 172 pupils on roll, including 40 part-time pupils who attended the nursery. The school serves an area of significant social disadvantage: 57 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is about three times the national average. Thirty five per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, including three pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need.
2. The school was inspected in September 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.
3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of September 2002. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on four occasions to monitor the progress being made.
4. In March 2004 one HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of September 2002.

Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:
 - in the 2003 national tests for Key Stage 1, the pupils' results in reading were in line with the figure for similar schools. They were above the figure for similar schools in mathematics and slightly below in writing. The pupils' average points score was in line with the figure for similar schools. In the national tests for Key Stage 2, the pupils' results were broadly in line with those for similar schools. In the Foundation Stage, the pupils make good progress. The pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall;
 - the quality of learning was satisfactory or better in 15 of the 16 lessons; it was good in ten and very good in two. The pupils made good progress overall;
 - the school makes effective provision for the pupils' personal education, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The support and care provided for the pupils are good;
 - the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good overall. They were satisfactory or better in all of the lessons; they were good in 11 and very good in 3. The pupils' attitudes to learning were positive. Their behaviour around the school at break and lunchtime was good, despite the lack of suitable outdoor play areas for the older pupils;
-

- the pupils' attendance has improved from 92.4 per cent in 2001-2002 to 93.5 per cent in 2002-3. This remains below the figure for all primary schools. The pupils' current rate of attendance stands at 93 per cent, compared to 88 per cent for the similar period last year. Punctuality is satisfactory overall, although a very small number of the pupils arrive late to school most mornings;
 - the quality of teaching was good. It was satisfactory or better in 15 of the 16 lessons; it was good in 11 and very good in 2. Most of the good teaching was in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2, and the one unsatisfactory lesson was in Key Stage 1;
 - the pupils in the Foundation Stage receive a well-balanced and effectively taught curriculum. In Key Stages 1 and 2, there is an appropriate curriculum for the pupils but there is scope for further development, in particular through refining cross-curricular approaches and in revisiting the way that time is organised in some years;
 - the school has developed an effective framework for using assessment to set targets and to monitor the progress of the pupils. The use of assessment in the core subjects is good; it is satisfactory overall in the foundation subjects;
 - the provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has established appropriate systems for supporting the pupils and they make good progress;
 - the quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher is providing an effective lead, and she is well supported by the newly appointed deputy. The work of the subject co-ordinators is sound overall and much of it is good. There is a positive climate for learning in the school;
 - the work of the governing body is good. The governors are committed and hardworking and they support and challenge the school well;
 - the school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Where areas for development have been identified, they are tackled with sufficient rigour and urgency;
 - relationships between home and school are good. The school has worked hard to involve more parents in the life of the school;
 - the school has made good use of the available accommodation but it is unsatisfactory overall;
 - the local education authority (LEA) has provided a good level of support to the school and has made a significant contribution to bringing about rapid improvement.
-

Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- raise standards further in both key stages;
- continue to improve the pupils' attendance and punctuality;
- improve the quality of accommodation.

Inspection findings

Standards achieved by the pupils

7. Overall, the pupils made good progress in the lessons, and their achievement is satisfactory.

8. In the Foundation Stage, the pupils receive a good start to their education and make good progress. Although many of the pupils enter the nursery with attainment that is well below average, they are achieving the standards normal for their age by the time they leave the nursery. A significant number of the higher-attaining pupils do not enter the reception class after leaving the nursery and attainment on entry to the reception class is below average. Those pupils who enter the reception class make good progress and around two thirds of the pupils are achieving many of the nationally set Early Learning Goals before entering Key Stage 1.

9. In 2003, the proportion of the pupils achieving the expected Level 2 in the end-of-Key Stage 1 reading tests was in line with the figure for similar schools. It was above the figure for similar schools in mathematics and slightly below in writing. The proportion of the pupils achieving Level 2B or above was much higher overall compared to similar schools. The pupils' average points score was in line with the figure for similar schools, although it was well below average compared to all schools nationally.

10. In Key Stage 2, the proportion of the pupils achieving the expected Level 4 in the 2003 statutory tests was below the figure for all schools nationally. However, it was in line with the figure for similar schools in science and slightly below this in English and mathematics. The trend in the pupils' average points score is broadly in line with the national trend.

11. In lessons, standards in English were slightly below those expected nationally. Many of the higher-attaining pupils achieved standards in line with or above those expected for their age. Most pupils listened well and many spoke at length, using vocabulary appropriate for their age. A few found difficulty in articulating their views and lacked confidence. In the guided reading sessions, the pupils explored a variety of texts, but a few struggled with work that was appropriate for their age. Most pupils read independently but some require assistance to decode simple but unfamiliar words. There were examples of very good writing in the early Foundation Stage and examples of good writing throughout the rest

of the school. In numeracy, standards were slightly below those expected nationally. In the early Foundation Stage they were similar to the average, and a significant number of the pupils in Year 6 were working at the nationally expected level as a result of additional support in booster classes.

12. The quality of learning was satisfactory or better in 15 of the 16 lessons; it was good in 10 and very good in 2. In most lessons, the pupils understood what was expected of them and responded enthusiastically to the tasks they were asked to complete. Their enthusiasm was nurtured carefully by the teacher, and they were quickly involved in the lesson. Many were eager to use their initiative and take responsibility for their own learning. They were keen to demonstrate and explain their learning to the rest of the class. Effective use was made of pair work, often to generate and to discuss ideas, and the pupils were encouraged to think for themselves. The pupils' attitudes to learning were positive. In the one lesson where the quality of learning was unsatisfactory, the teacher did not ensure that the pupils worked quickly enough and instructions were not always crisp and clear. This slowed the rate at which the pupils moved from one task to another, and consequently the pace of the learning was too slow.

The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. In religious education, history and geography lessons, the pupils explore the values and beliefs of a variety of cultures, including their own. A regular act of collective worship enables the pupils to reflect on and understand issues that affect their lives. Visiting speakers, for example from charities, provide good opportunities for the pupils to hear and think about those less fortunate than themselves. Displays around the school, educational visits and Eco school status provide a framework within which the pupils are encouraged to think about their place in the wider community.

14. The provision for social development is good. The school is an orderly community; there is a clear code of conduct and school rules are consistently applied and followed. Expectations of behaviour are promoted through discussions and explanation. The pupils have a sound understanding of how their actions have consequences, both for others as well as for themselves. The pupils understand what is right and wrong. When they make mistakes, they are frank and open about them. The pupils are given opportunities within school to exercise leadership and responsibility and their efforts are valued and rewarded. For example, the Year 6 pupils answer the telephone and greet visitors to the school at lunchtime. Other pupils collect registers and help in the reception class and nursery.

15. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The pupils take part in a variety of sporting, musical, and educational visits. The school has a longstanding cultural link with a school in Zimbabwe, allowing the pupils to experience authentic accounts of the attitudes, values and traditions of a different culture. The school is regularly visited by theatre groups, poets, authors, and music and dance groups and this provides opportunities to participate in the literature, drama, music, arts and crafts of different cultures.

16. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good overall. They were satisfactory or better in all of the lessons; they were good in 11 and very good in three. Overall, the pupils were attentive and listened well. They followed instructions and settled quickly at the start of

the lessons. Routines were well-established. The pupils responded positively to praise. In practical activities, they handled equipment appropriately.

17. The pupils moved around the school sensibly. Their behaviour at break and at lunchtime was satisfactory. The indoor supervision of the pupils was effective and expectations of the pupils were appropriately high. The cramped conditions in the available play areas for the Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils led to some unnecessarily boisterous behaviour. The arrangements for bringing the pupils back into school after lunch and break were effective. In assemblies, the pupils behaved well and demonstrated positive attitudes. The pupils are proud of their school and are keen to talk about it to visitors.

18. The school has established sound systems for recording and reporting the rate of the pupils' attendance. The pupils' attendance has improved from 92.4 per cent in 2001-2002 to 93.5 per cent in 2002-3. This remains below the figure for all primary schools. The pupils' current rate of attendance stands at 93 per cent, compared to 88 per cent for the similar period last year. Punctuality is satisfactory overall, although a very small number of the pupils arrive late to school most mornings.

19. The support and care provided for the pupils are good. The school has established good working relationships with a variety of outside agencies, including the educational welfare service. The school nurse visits the school fortnightly and offers support and help to families. All staff are trained in child protection.

20. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers have a good understanding of the challenges faced by many of the pupils. They know the pupils well. They are adept at recognising their needs and respond well to them. The pupils recognise that they are safe, secure and respected within the school.

The quality of education

21. The quality of teaching was good. It was satisfactory or better in 15 of the 16 lessons; it was good in 11 and very good in 2. Most of the good teaching was in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2, and the one unsatisfactory lesson was in Key Stage 1. Additional adults were generally used well to support the pupils' learning.

22. In the well-taught lessons, the learning objectives were clear and precise. The lessons were well structured and organised, the various parts were appropriately timed, and a variety of practical and lively activities captured the interest of the pupils. In these lessons, the teachers managed the pupils well, using a combination of high expectations and praise. The learning was well planned and briskly managed.

23. In the less successful lessons, the learning objectives were sometimes confused with the teaching objectives, and opportunities to reinforce and extend the pupils' learning at the end of the lessons were rushed. The teachers' introductions and explanations were long, and a small number of the pupils became fidgety and restless. At times, the pace of the teaching did not allow the pupils to reflect on their learning. The teachers used questions to inject urgency into the lessons, but did not always follow them up to probe and extend the pupils' understanding. The pupils did not always receive enough opportunities to learn independently.

24. The pupils in the Foundation Stage receive a well-balanced and effectively taught curriculum. It is well organised and covers each area of the nationally set Early Learning Goals. In Key Stage 1 and 2, there is an appropriate curriculum for the pupils. Each of the National Curriculum subjects are taught for a suitable period of time. Medium and short-term planning is mostly adapted from national guidelines, and the plans take sufficient account of the needs of the different groups of pupils. Long-term curriculum planning is adequate overall. There is scope for further development of the curriculum; cross curricular approaches to learning are not well developed and time is not well organised in some years.

25. The use of assessment in the core subjects is good; it is satisfactory overall in the foundation subjects. The school has developed an effective framework for using assessment to set targets and to monitor the progress of the pupils. The school keeps a central record of information on the pupils' attainment. It sets out annual and end-of-key stage targets, based on prior attainment, and the pupils' progress towards their targets is monitored carefully each term, and in some instances at the end of a unit of work. This information is used to plan work for the pupils, so that work is accurately matched to their needs. Portfolios of the pupils' work in all subjects have been established and this has contributed to improving the teachers' skills in assessment. Increasingly, the subject co-ordinators are taking responsibility for assessment in their subjects.

26. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall. Work is marked sufficiently frequently, and the teachers identify where the pupils have met their objectives. Teachers provide the pupils with useful guidance on what they need to do to improve further.

27. The provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is good and they make good progress overall. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is providing good leadership and management. She has established appropriate systems for identifying and supporting the pupils' different needs. The co-ordinator's time away from class teaching has been used effectively to work with individual pupils to assess their needs. New individual education plans have been introduced, and training has been provided for the teachers. Clear targets for improving the teachers' use of individual education plans have been agreed and most have been met. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to supporting the pupils with special educational needs.

28. In all of the classrooms, the physical environment was attractive and often was well used to support learning. The pupils' work was displayed well and promoted high expectations.

Leadership and management

29. The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher is providing an effective lead and she is well supported by the newly appointed deputy. The work of the other key staff, including the subject co-ordinators is sound overall and much of it is good. Roles and responsibilities are clear. All of the staff have responded vigorously to the challenges facing the school and they have worked well together to bring about the necessary improvement. The ethos of the school is good; there is a strong team spirit and the climate for learning is positive.

30. The headteacher has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's self-evaluation, produced with the assistance of the LEA, is good. Monitoring of the teaching, lesson planning, and the pupils' work is regular and systematic and has led to sustainable improvement. Where areas for development have been identified, they are tackled with sufficient rigour and urgency.

31. The work of the governing body is good. Governing body meetings are well attended and the committees have appropriate terms of reference. At meetings, and through regular visits to the school, the governors work hard and support and challenge the school effectively. There are no vacancies on the governing body.

32. Financial management is satisfactory. The school has a projected budget surplus for 2003-4, which it expects to use to fund improvements to the site. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

33. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. The school has made good use of the available accommodation and the internal environment of the school is attractive and well maintained. However, many of the rooms are small. The design of the building contributes to the cramped conditions. There are not enough suitable outside play areas for the pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. The fencing around the exterior of the site, particularly at the front of the school, is in poor repair. The entrance gate to the school is in need of refurbishment. The amount and quality of the resources available for teaching and learning are adequate overall.

34. The LEA has supported the school well. It has met its commitments as set out in the statement of action and has made a significant contribution to improving the school. Its work has been sharply focused on building capacity in the school to bring about and sustain improvement. The LEA's lead adviser has worked well with the school, particularly in relation to school self-evaluation. The LEA's consultants, advanced skills teachers and advisory teachers have provided a good level of support for the school and its impact has been marked. The LEA has exercised its power to appoint an additional governor who has played an effective part in improving the work of the governing body.

35. Relationships between home and school are good. The school has worked hard to involve more parents in the life of the school. Records of attendance at parents' evenings are kept and attendance is improving. A regular newsletter informs the parents of forthcoming events and topics to be taught. A survey of parental attitudes towards the school was undertaken in the autumn term. Over half of the parents responded, and the results indicate that more parents are pleased with the school and have a better understanding of how they can help to support the pupils with their school work at home. One parent works voluntarily in the school, assisting in the Year 1 class and a number of the other parents have attended after-school activities and concerts.

Implementation of the action plan

36. The inspection report of 2002 required the school to address nine key issues. These principally related to: raising standards; improving the provision for the pupils who have special educational needs; improving curriculum planning and assessment; strengthening the role of the governing body; improving the pupils' attendance; and developing better

relationships with parents. Overall, the school has made good progress in tackling the key issues.

37. The school has followed a range of appropriate strategies to improve the standards achieved by the pupils in the core subjects. Where needed, adjustments to provision are made to address underachievement. The teachers have received considerable advice and assistance in curriculum planning and most weaknesses have been addressed.

38. The programme of monitoring through lesson observation has facilitated significant improvements to the quality of the teaching. The teachers have undertaken an extensive programme of training and have received effective support from the LEA's consultants. Training has been provided for the teachers in the use of individual education plans and the co-ordinator for special educational needs has reorganised provision.

39. The governors have benefited from a programme of training. The newly appointed LEA governor and the additional governor have made an effective contribution to the work of the governing body. The governors are aware of their roles and responsibilities; they are helping to determine the strategic direction of the school and are holding it to account for its performance.

40. The school has improved the quality and extent of its links with parents. No formal complaints have been made by parents since January 2002. The school promotes and celebrates good attendance through competition and the use of rewards. It has developed effective arrangements for combating poor attendance. Despite this, attendance remains below average overall.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in September 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in April, July, and December 2003 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of September 2002.

In March 2004, one HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected.

The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act. The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of September 2002 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

Sixteen lessons or parts of lessons, one assembly and two registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunchtimes and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other key staff, the chair of the governing body, two other governors and two representatives of the LEA. Informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

Notes

