



Millbrook Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106195
LEA Tameside
Inspection number 277506
Inspection dates 27 June 2006 to 28 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Arthur Markham CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bank Road
School category	Community		off Huddersfield Road
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 3JX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01457 834314
Number on roll	174	Fax number	01457 834314
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs M Clowrey
Date of previous inspection	9 September 2002	Headteacher	Mrs Susan West

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 27 June 2006 - 28 June 2006	Inspection number 277506
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school serves an area of significant social disadvantage in Stalybridge, Tameside. The vast majority of pupils are of white British background with only a very small number from minority ethnic groups. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average as is the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. When they enter the school many children have well below average skills. Pupil mobility is above average in some year groups.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which gives excellent value for money. Inspectors feel that the school has underestimated its performance. One pupil summed up the school well, saying, 'I've been in lots of schools and this is the best one I've been to'. Strong leadership by the headteacher, senior staff and governors has resulted in a dramatic improvement in performance since the last inspection. The improvement in standards in the last two years has been particularly impressive. Children make a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage because provision is good, but standards are well below national expectations by the time they enter Year 1. Throughout Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress, but standards are still below average by the end of Year 2. The need to raise standards in these years has been identified by the school and the action being taken is having a positive impact, but standards are still not high enough. In Years 3 to 6 the progress made by pupils accelerates rapidly and is excellent overall with the result that they reach very high standards by the end of Year 6. Teaching is outstanding and pupils enjoy a rich and varied curriculum so that they enjoy their learning, although attendance is below average. They develop very positive attitudes to learning as they progress through the school and their personal development is excellent because they feel valued for what they can offer. Parents rate the school highly and are very pleased at the outstanding care taken of their children.

The school has improved extremely well since its last inspection. Teaching has improved and all staff are highly committed to making the school even better. It has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards attained by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- Improve the attendance of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding and standards are very high. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below average. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because a clear focus is given to practical activities that stimulate and interest children. In Years 1 and 2 pupils continue to make good progress, but standards are below those expected nationally. A marked dip in standards in 2005 was caused by staffing changes. The situation has now been remedied. The school's assessments, confirmed by observations of pupils' work during the inspection, show that standards are improving, although more remains to be done. The progress made by pupils accelerates in Years 3 to 6 and by Year 6 is outstanding. Standards in national tests at Year 6 have improved dramatically since 2003 and inspection evidence shows that the present group of pupils are maintaining the very high standards. This is because

teaching is of a high quality, particularly in Year 6. Pupils respond very successfully to the challenging targets set for them and work hard to achieve them. Skilled support staff help to ensure that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, work hard and are enthusiastic about learning. They benefit greatly from the 'can do' ethos which permeates the school. They have excellent relationships with staff and each other and their behaviour is very good. They concentrate very well in lessons and work successfully both independently and collaboratively. Despite the determined efforts of the school to encourage good attendance, it falls below average because of the poor attendance of a small number of pupils. Pupils understand and eagerly accept responsibilities. They are pleased that their views are taken into account and that a number of the changes recommended by the school council have been implemented. For example, their awareness of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles led to an increase in the choice of healthy lunch options. They have excellent opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures. Pupils' involvement in organising the school fair develops their economic awareness well. This has a marked impact on pupils' self-confidence and awareness of how to work together, preparing them well for their next stage in learning. Participation in local events and organising fundraising projects for charities, for example raising money for Medequip, enhances their understanding of helping others well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding overall and never less than good. Teachers know their pupils well and plan work that meets the wide range of learning needs evident in all classes. Their good subject knowledge enables them to explain activities clearly and use questions skilfully to check that pupils understand what they have to do. Close attention is given to developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence so that they participate in activities enthusiastically. As one pupil put it, 'Teachers make us feel confident about the work we do'. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and pupils consequently have very positive attitudes to learning. Teaching assistants work in close partnership with teachers. They provide excellent support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who make very good progress.

The techniques used by teachers to assess pupils' work, monitor their performance and set targets for further progress are very effective. Their marking of pupils' work gives clear guidance on what each pupil needs to do to improve in order to meet their

agreed targets. At the end of lessons pupils are encouraged to evaluate how well they have done and to review their work critically in order to suggest possible improvements.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and meets the needs of all pupils well, with close attention placed on the basic skills. The strong emphasis placed on providing a wide range of stimulating learning opportunities with a strong focus on the use of the locality results in a rich curriculum. Termly thinking skills days, together with an array of visits and visitors, enhance the curriculum very well. Pupils enjoy taking part in music, sporting and drama workshops. These develop their co-operation and independent skills well. The wide range of out of school activities provided is popular with the pupils. Links with local organisations and churches are good and this helps the pupils to appreciate their place in the community. Pupils' excellent personal development owes much to links made within curriculum subjects, for example the 'wall of friendship' within the Reception/Year 1 classroom, which successfully links literacy and personal and social aspects of children's learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils. The school has a particularly warm and friendly ethos, which is evident in all aspects of its work. Staff know pupils very well and pupils say they feel very safe and happy at school. They trust staff to look after them and feel confident there is someone to talk to if they have worries. Risk assessments are undertaken thoroughly and child protection procedures and health and safety procedures are secure. Highly successful links with outside agencies ensure that help is given to vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is successful in helping its pupils to understand the importance of healthy eating and staying safe.

Teachers monitor the progress of pupils very closely and support is swiftly and effectively provided when needed. The close and caring attention with which teachers assess pupils' work gives pupils excellent guidance as to how they can improve. Parents appreciate the way the school works closely with them to keep them well informed about their children's progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's very clear educational vision gives a strong direction to the school. She has successfully developed a very effective team approach within the staff and governors, who share her commitment to the provision of high quality education for the pupils. Their hard work and determination, combined with the strong support provided by the local authority, has resulted in an impressive rise in standards since the last inspection. Parents have a

high regard for the school, one of them saying, 'I am very pleased at the way my children are growing up into well behaved, adventurous and progressive individuals'.

The school's evaluation of its own performance is very effective. Coordinators monitor their subjects very well and have a very good awareness of areas needing development. The views of parents and pupils are sought and the monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous. The information gathered is used very well to inform the school development plan, which consequently supports improvement very effectively. The school has rightly identified the need to raise standards in Years 1 and 2. The action being taken is having a positive impact, although more remains to be done.

Governors fulfill their responsibilities very well. They monitor the performance of the school closely and have a very good awareness of its strengths and areas needing development. This enables them to challenge and support the school very effectively. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The school has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, two inspectors recently visited your school to find out how well your teachers are helping you with your learning. Thank you for being so friendly and talking to the inspectors. We enjoyed being in your exciting school and listening to what you had to say. The things that we particularly liked were:

- your very good behaviour and attitudes to school
- the way the teachers work hard to help you learn
- the way you all try hard and do your best to improve your work
- the wide range of interesting activities and visits that make learning more exciting for you
- how well the school is run by the headteacher and staff.

We think you have an excellent school, but have asked your teachers to improve two things to make your school even better. We want them to:

- help you to improve your reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2
- do everything they can to ensure that you all attend school regularly.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We all hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers so that Millbrook Primary becomes an even better school.