



# Millhouse Junior School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114912  
**LEA** ESSEX LEA  
**Inspection number** 279474  
**Inspection dates** 15 December 2005 to 16 December 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs. Helen Ranger LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Tavistock Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		SS15 5QF
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01268543584
<b>Number on roll</b>	284	<b>Fax number</b>	01268544641
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. Stephen Reed
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 October 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Jayne Mitchell

<b>Age group</b> 7 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 15 December 2005 - 16 December 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 279474
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Millhouse Junior School is larger than average. It serves an area on the outskirts of Basildon where most housing is owned by the local authority. There is a higher than average percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is quite high. Almost all pupils in the school come from White British families, and the small number of others represents a wide range of minority ethnic groups.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

This is a school where standards are steadily rising. There has been an unsettled period with changes to the staff and difficulties in recruitment. The current team, led by the energetic and clear-sighted new headteacher, is making the changes necessary to secure improvements. Inspectors agree with the school that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Since its last inspection six years ago, standards fell but this downward trend has been reversed. Pupils now make at least satisfactory progress because teaching is sound. The most able pupils, who had not always done well enough in recent years, are now supported more effectively. Lessons increasingly cater for their needs. English standards are at expected levels and the school is determined to improve attainment in mathematics and science which is below the national average. A good start has been made on improving the ways progress is checked and communicated to pupils. This is an area that needs to continue to develop. Pupils' personal development is a significant strength. They enjoy school and are positive about learning. Behaviour is very good. Attendance is slowly improving, but remains below average. The standard of day-to-day care for individuals that is provided by adults is generally very good. It includes satisfactory attention to their academic guidance, with good plans to develop this aspect of support further. Standards are rising because the headteacher has rapidly identified where improvements to teaching and the curriculum are most needed. She is working closely with the new deputy to ensure that subject leaders rigorously assess standards and identify areas for development. The governors contribute soundly to the school's management. A core group of able and well-informed governors has played a valuable role in leading the school through its staffing difficulties and continues to support it well. In view of the school's current standards, it gives satisfactory value for money and is well placed to continue improving.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make sure that lessons consistently cater for the needs of the more capable pupils, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Make sure that all lessons build on the good practice that is developing in tracking progress, marking and target-setting, so that pupils know how well they have done and what they need to learn next.
- Improve attendance by continuing to work with parents to decrease the number of pupils with poor attendance.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

From a lower than average starting point when they join the school, pupils make satisfactory progress. A downward trend since 2001 in the results of the Year 6 tests was halted in 2005. Although the school missed the very challenging targets that were set for performance last year, results rose in mathematics and science. Historically, pupils have reached broadly average standards in English and these were maintained. The current Year 6 has a high level of pupils who need extra support with learning,

but they are making sound progress. The progress of the most capable pupils is satisfactory and improving. The school is tackling well the underachievement in this group that resulted from some poor teaching in the past. The school is not complacent about its results. It is rightly determined to ensure that pupils' literacy, numeracy and scientific skills give them the basic tools to cope in all subjects. There has been sufficient improvement in skills in information and communication technology (ICT) which were a weakness identified by the previous inspection. Pupils are now working at the expected levels in this subject.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Very good behaviour and an enthusiasm for learning help pupils enjoy school. They are polite and treat each other respectfully. They enjoy earning 'character points' for qualities such as trustworthiness, citizenship, fairness, respectfulness, responsibility and being caring. They know they are treated fairly and that adults, including the learning mentor, will listen if they have a problem. They say 'the teachers respect us and make learning fun.' Pupils' views are taken seriously. For example, when the school council asked for a playground clock, it was provided. Pupils understand about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and staying safe. The emphasis on literacy, numeracy and computer skills provides a sound basis for their future economic well-being. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good and cultural development has improved soundly since the last inspection when it was a weakness. Pupils respect others' beliefs and customs. Attendance is below average but slowly improving. The school works hard with parents to promote good attendance. Most pupils arrive punctually.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are often good, although teachers' expectations are not consistently high. This limits pupils' achievement in some lessons, particularly that of the more able. The school is aware of these inconsistencies, and staff training and effective monitoring are improving the teaching. Teachers manage their classes well to sustain pupils' interest and attention. They clearly inform pupils what they are trying to achieve and check on how successful they have been by the end of the lesson. Teachers use this information well to plan the next steps in pupils' learning, although they do not consistently ensure that activities meet fully the range of different needs. Teachers use questioning well to encourage pupils to contribute their ideas, although, in some lessons, pupils could be stretched further by being asked more complex questions. Improved assessment and marking procedures are used more effectively to tell pupils how to raise the quality of their work. Many teachers are using individual improvement targets with pupils. These targets would benefit from more

detail to ensure that pupils have a clearer understanding of what they specifically need to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a satisfactory range of learning experiences. Teachers plan well to meet pupils' needs in mixed-age and single-age classes, particularly pupils of average and below average ability. They are improving the opportunities for more able pupils. The curriculum includes enough time for the teaching of pupils' basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, although there are not enough opportunities to extend these skills in other subjects. Recent improvements, including a greater range of extra-curricular activities, contribute well to pupils' enjoying school and their sporting and musical achievement. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum. A good programme of personal, social, health education and citizenship contributes well to pupils' personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is a caring place where pupils feel happy and secure. They say that they can turn to any adult for help and appreciate the opportunities to talk to the learning mentor. Health and safety matters are taken seriously and secure child protection procedures are in place. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are swiftly identified and their progress is closely monitored. The school works well with other agencies to make sure that pupils get all the help they need. Support for individuals' academic progress is improving.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has shown impressive skills of leadership and management in identifying where the school needs to develop. Until recently, the school had not improved enough since its last inspection. There have been many changes over the past few terms that are having a much more positive impact. The school's evaluations of its performance are accurate and enable it to pinpoint areas for further improvement. The headteacher and her deputy are steadily ensuring that subject leaders and others with responsibility for aspects of the school carry out their duties rigorously and effectively. Throughout the recent changes, the school has continued to provide well for the care and personal development of its pupils. It maintains the confidence of parents, most of whom are very pleased with how it serves their children. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning in school. A small group of governors has been very active in helping the school through the uncertainties of recent years. The information these governors now receive from the headteacher is ensuring that they are more knowledgeable about the school. They bring a good range of skills to the school, are very supportive and act as 'critical friends'. The school is

taking action to ensure that the entire governing body is as well informed as this group about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Some aspects of the school's performance declined since its last inspection. There is now the capacity to raise standards again and evidence that initiatives are working well. The strong commitment to staff development and a determination to continue to improve the provision for pupils mean that the school is in a good position to thrive in the future.

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## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	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	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and helping us to find out about it. This letter is to tell you about some of the most important things we saw. These are some of the best things

- You enjoy school, behave very well and get on well together.
- The adults in your school care about all of you as individuals and listen to your opinions about school.
- You have a good headteacher who is working with your teachers to make sure you learn well.
- Most of you make sure your attendance is good so that you can benefit from your lessons and clubs.

These are things that can be made better

- We want your teachers to make sure that those of you find learning quite easy are 'stretched' in your lessons.
- We want marking and target-setting to help you more in knowing how well you have done and what you need to learn next.
- A few of you stay away from school when you are well enough to attend and this means you do not make full use of the good things your school offers you.

Carry on enjoying your time at Millhouse School.