



Millhouse Infant School and Nursery

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 114915
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 279476
Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Tavistock Road
School category	Community		Laindon, Laindon
Age range of pupils	3–7		Basildon, Essex SS15 5QF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01268 542597
Number on roll (school)	199	Fax number	01268 490398
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr. Dave Davies
		Headteacher	Ms. Wendy Foster
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized infant school that includes a nursery for 52 children. Almost all the pupils come from White British backgrounds. There are a few pupils who come from a range of ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is about one tenth of the national average and there are two pupils who are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is about twice the national average and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national figure. A significant minority of families have social needs. As a result, the school has a nursery and close links with the local Children's Centre - the 'All About Centre'. The centre provides breakfast and after-school care and parents and toddlers groups in the school. In addition, the school shares a family support worker with the Centre.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Millhouse Infants is a good school that is on an upward track. It has made significant strides forward since the last inspection and there have been across-the-board improvements. The school is justified in its evaluation that overall effectiveness is good. It provides good value for money. Parents are almost unanimously supportive. In particular they say that their children enjoy school and are safe and well cared for. One parent wrote, 'my son cannot wait to get to school in the morning'. The inspection confirms these views. Although the full range of ability is represented in the intake, overall children enter the nursery with standards that are below those typically found in schools, particularly in the area of communication, language and literacy. Due to the good quality teaching and the high standard of care and support provided in the Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress in both year groups. However, the activities provided in the nursery and reception classes do not flow seamlessly enough across the two year groups. By the time that they enter Year 1, the children's good achievement in the Foundation Stage means that their attainment is much closer, though still below, that expected nationally. Critically, the pupils are very keen to learn. The school is successful in its aim of ensuring that all groups of pupils thrive. There is a warm and positive atmosphere that pervades the whole school. Pupils say that they love school and this is seen in all of the classes. The pupils' personal development and well being is good because the staff take great care to ensure that the pupils feel included and respected, and they manage them particularly well. 'We always try our best' said one pupil. Behaviour is very good both in lessons and around the school. Pupils have positive attitudes and thoroughly enjoy lessons. Teaching and learning are good in all the classes in Years 1 and 2 as well as the Foundation Stage. Due to this, and the outstanding care provided, pupils' achieve well and their progress is good in both years. As a consequence, by the time they leave school, standards are at the national average in the Year 2 tests for reading and writing. They are above average in mathematics. The school is deeply committed to ensuring that all pupils make equally good progress. This is achieved through the good provision and careful checking of how well all groups of pupils are doing. This includes those who find learning hard, the more able and those who speak English as an additional language. In consequence, all these groups of pupils make progress in line with their peers. These strong improvements since the last inspection have not happened by accident. They have been due, in the main, to the outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher who is very well supported by the senior management team. She has a clear vision for the school, is respected by all, and has led the improvements with commitment and determination. One of the keys to this has been the significant improvements made in systems for checking how well the school is doing. The staff work very closely and effectively as a team to spot any weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum. These are quickly ironed out. As a consequence of this improved rigour, standards have improved. However, parents are not informed early enough about the targets set for their children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that teachers' planning for the nursery and reception classes knits more closely together. - Share pupils' individual targets for improvement with parents.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes. They make particularly good strides forward in their personal, social and emotional development and their communication, language and literacy. However, by the time that they enter Year 1, only a few pupils attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Pupils continue to achieve well and make good progress in both Years 1 and 2. This is because, as in the nursery and reception, the good quality teaching and learning that is linked to the high quality care and support provided by all adults, ensures that pupils learn well. Standards have improved significantly in the last two years because of improvements made in the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum. Pupils' attainment has been raised from below average to slightly above average in reading and writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and its opportunities for keeping safe and healthy. They choose healthy meals at lunchtime and enjoy keeping fit through physical education lessons. They make a good contribution to their community through their responsibilities on the school council and the many opportunities to be 'guardians' or playground helpers at lunch and playtimes. They readily accept responsibility though more opportunities for this could be provided. They develop a good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness because of the caring ethos and the opportunities to learn about other cultures. Their sound basic skills equip them well for their future lives. Attendance is below average but improving because the school is working hard to help parents understand its importance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. It is now good in every class and there are some outstanding features. All staff, including support staff, manage the pupils very well. This retains good behaviour and positive attitudes to lessons and school. In addition, the arrangements for assessing the pupils' work are good. Teachers' thorough questioning and careful monitoring of pupils' progress helps to make sure that the work set is pitched at just the right level to capture and maintain the pupils' interest. As a result,

this ensures that the effective planning is put to good effect. Pupils are successfully grouped together to gain maximum impact from the varied activities provided. However, at present, teachers planning lessons for children in the reception year do not take sufficient account of work undertaken in the nursery class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is broad and balanced and meets pupils' needs. A wide range of visits and visitors help to make learning interesting. In addition, the school has arranged high quality literacy and numeracy 'trails' for parents and their children to learn together. This, too, helps to enliven learning for the pupils. There is a suitable range of lunchtime activities which are enjoyed by the pupils. The school has recently revised the way in which subjects are taught to ensure that the necessary skills are covered in a practical approach that corresponds with the pupils' interests and different learning styles. The impact of this development is too recent to measure. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, those who are more able and those who speak English as an additional language.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides excellent care and support for its pupils. Procedures for child protection are very rigorous and staff are well trained. Pupils' progress is very thoroughly tracked and swift action is taken if they are lagging behind. Very good support for parents means that they can help their children at home. Currently, although the school provides good guidance to parents and pupils, it does not share pupils' targets with parents as rigorously as it might. Very effective support is given to pupils who find it hard to learn. When necessary, the school works closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has maintained and built on her good leadership and excellent use is made of the rich range of performance information and is one of the key reasons why standards have improved. Her leadership is now outstanding. There was a weakness in the way the school checked how well it was performing at the time of the last inspection: This is now a strength. In addition, other senior staff make a strong and positive contribution to the very effective leadership and management. All staff are involved well in determining and securing the school's improvement. This helps them to feel that they can make a positive contribution to the school's success because they know that their views are important and acted upon. The very recent appointment of a Foundation Stage leader, and her appointment the school's senior management team, provides a good platform to enable the early years' team to make a formal

contribution to whole school development. Governors support and manage the school well and they ensure that all statutory responsibilities are met.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children Millhouse Infant School and Nursery, Tavistock Road, Laindon, Basildon, Essex SS15 5QF Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. We would like to tell you what we thought were the best things about your school. You told us that you try to do your best and we agree with you. We thought that you behaved very well and played nicely with your friends. The guardians and playground helpers do a good job in helping you to have happy playtimes. You have lots of interesting things to do in lessons and lots of visits to exciting places. All the grown-ups look after you extremely well and help you to learn. If you find learning hard you get lots of help. Your headteacher is always looking to see how well you are doing and finds ways to help you do even better. All the teachers and support staff make sure that your school is a pleasant place to be. Your families know that you attend a good school. To make your school even better, we have asked the teachers to make sure that there are no breaks in your learning when you move from the Nursery to the Reception class. We have also asked the school to let your families know what you need to do to improve so that they can help you at home. You can help by continuing to try as hard as you can to do your best. We hope you carry on enjoying your time at Millhouse Infant School and do well in your next school. Best wishes Keith Sadler Lead inspector