



Millfield First and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117309
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280037
Inspection dates 23 February 2006 to 24 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. David Jones LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Monks Walk
School category	Community		SG9 9DT
Age range of pupils	3 to 9		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01763 271717
Number on roll	213	Fax number	01763 274178
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. David Paull-Wills
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Debra Blizzard

Age group 3 to 9	Inspection dates 23 February 2006 - 24 February 2006	Inspection number 280037
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Millfield School is situated on the western side of Buntingford, Hertfordshire. The pupils live locally and come from a range of social backgrounds. The school is similar in size to other first schools in the local authority. The pupils transfer to a local middle school at the end of Year 4. The proportion of children from minority ethnic backgrounds is low as is the number learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Attainment on entry is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school population is stable. The governing body has received confirmation that full day care provision can be introduced from the start of the summer term 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features that gives good value for money. Self-evaluation is good, although the school's view on a number of areas of provision is more modest than the judgements given by the inspectors in this report. The school has correctly identified the aspects of provision which require further development, for example, the use of assessment to track pupil progress. Standards are above those found nationally and pupils make good progress. The quality of provision and the standards achieved in the Foundation Stage are good. The care, guidance and support provided for the pupils are outstanding. The relationships between pupils and with adults in the school are excellent. The personal development of the pupils is outstanding and their behaviour is excellent. Attendance is good. Pupils are happy to come to school. They enjoy their lessons, feel secure and display very good attitudes to learning. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The quality of teaching is good and on some occasions outstanding. Leadership and management are good; the headteacher and senior staff have raised achievement and provided outstanding support for all learners. Governance is good and valued by staff. The learning environment is outstanding. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and the capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of assessment by incorporating the extensive data available into an electronic format to facilitate access by class teachers and senior managers. - Develop procedures that will allow the school to track pupil progress even more accurately and improve the sharing of information.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Inspectors agree with the school that attainment on entry is average. Standards are above average by the time the pupils leave the school in Year 4. Pupils make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and this continues throughout the school. The unvalidated results of the 2005 Key Stage 1 assessments were above average in writing and mathematics but average in reading. Evidence from the school's reliable assessment data indicates that almost all pupils made appropriate progress and more than two thirds achieved above average standards. In the last two years nearly a third of the pupils in Year 4 made outstanding progress. A scrutiny of the pupils' work confirms the results of the school's assessment processes. The school sets challenging targets and is consistently successful. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are very enthusiastic learners with a real thirst for knowledge, thriving in the outstanding support and encouragement they receive. The pupils consistently contribute to the life of the school and are pleased to be involved in the school council and the assembly committee. They readily offer their ideas to help improve the school and its environment, raise funds for local and international charities and participate fully in the community. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are outstanding. They always give of their best and relish opportunities to engage in their own learning, taking great pride in their achievements. The pupils are invariably courteous and polite to one another, adults and visitors. Attendance is above average and improving. The pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and enjoy their daily fruit. They develop a very good understanding of personal safety and learn to look after one another. The pupils effectively learn the skills they need for their future economic well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding overall. Assemblies, regularly led by the pupils have a strong spiritual element within a very respectful ethos. Social and moral development is outstanding, for example, the contribution of playground buddies to the social development of the school. The pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong, they respect and celebrate each other's achievements. Cultural understanding is enhanced by visits to national museums and innovative curriculum initiatives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school judged teaching and learning to be good and inspectors agree. Pupils make good progress because lessons are well planned, challenging and fun. Lesson objectives are made clear and revisited to gauge success. Staff often make very good use of the new classroom technology available. Outstanding teaching was seen where carefully directed questions and guidance consistently sought to build language fluency and understanding. Most teaching assistants make valuable contributions to the lessons. They were well briefed and had clear roles when working with groups or individuals. In lessons that were satisfactory overall, there were areas for development. Some tasks lacked pace or failed to engage some pupils' attention and consequently learning outcomes, although acceptable, were not as positive as on other occasions. The use of assessment information to inform teaching and learning is sound. Pupil progress is monitored rigorously and targets are revised regularly. This manual process is laborious and insufficiently flexible to allow staff to make the best use of the robust data available.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced with a strong emphasis on developing basic skills particularly in literacy, information and communication technology (ICT) and numeracy. An excellent range of activities ensures that subjects are effectively linked to promote the pupils' understanding. Careful planning of relevant and stimulating activities is the basis of a highly effective curriculum plan. Lessons generally provide a rich variety of tasks. Out of school activities are outstanding. The range of clubs and visits is carefully planned to extend and enrich learning in school, for example, national museums and a coastal environment are used effectively. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is very good. These pupils are identified quickly and given tasks, such as accelerated reading to develop their skills and challenge their thinking.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school believed the care, guidance and support provided to be good, inspectors judged it to be outstanding. All staff know the pupils very well indeed and provide excellent care for them. Teamwork is strong so that staff work collectively to meet the pupils' particular needs. Pupils settle very quickly when they join the school or move between classes. A great deal is provided to prepare older pupils for their move to the middle school and they look forward to the transition. Procedures to protect pupils and care for the vulnerable are very good. Health, safety and welfare are seen as paramount. Pupils know what to do if they feel bullied, and are confident that staff will resolve issues. The support for pupils who struggle is very good. Individual needs are accurately identified and suitable activities provided. When appropriate, pupils receive well managed additional support in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have clear targets that are regularly reviewed and enjoy effective support that enables them to make good progress. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language receive very appropriate support and make good progress. Homework is good. Tasks reinforce learning in school and are carefully linked to the pupils' capabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has delegated responsibility, provided support and held her colleagues to account. The monitoring, evaluation and development of performance is outstanding, if a little modest in judging its own success. Senior managers set clear directions that have helped raise standards and promoted high quality care and provision. The quality of teaching is monitored rigorously and evaluated carefully; support and guidance has been provided by the school's strongest staff. Senior managers have a sharp focus on standards of achievement and target setting is good. However, the use of assessment information to inform management decisions, teaching and learning is hampered by the lack of

suitable computer- based facilities. This limits the effectiveness of this potentially very good resource. The promotion of equality of opportunity is excellent and has helped all pupils to achieve as well as they can. The leadership of the Foundation Stage and the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are good. The school's application to provide extended day care provision is proceeding successfully. The headteacher and governing body have worked hard to achieve financial stability; resources are used well and the learning environment is outstanding. The governors know the school well as they often give their time in a support role. Governance is good. The curriculum is coordinated by a staff collective which allows new ideas to develop. The responses received to the parental questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. The school has made good progress since the last inspection when weaknesses were identified in the Foundation Stage provision. The school's capacity to improve is good.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	2	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	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

I would like to start by saying a big thank you to everyone for being so nice to us when we visited your school recently. I know you like coming to school and think it is a very good place to learn and I agree. These are the things I liked about your school: You all behave really well and I like the way you look after each other. The art work I saw around the school was impressive. Your teachers plan interesting things for you to do in lessons. You are doing well with your reading, writing and number work. All the people working at your school really care about you. They work very hard to keep you safe and help you get better at your work. I think that the school can make better use of the information from your assessments and you can be involved in this. The headteacher will explain how this will happen to the school council. Many of your parents wrote and said how much they liked your school. Please thank them for me. I hope to meet you all again one day.