



# Millbrook Community Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104432  
**Local Authority** Knowsley  
**Inspection number** 286941  
**Inspection dates** 13–14 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Paul Bamber

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Kirkby Row
<b>School category</b>	Community		Westvale, Kirkby
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Liverpool, Merseyside L32 OTG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 4778160
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	214	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 4778161
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr E Ely
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jane Maloney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 January 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
3–11	13–14 December 2006	286941

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This above average sized school serves pupils from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds. A higher than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities or is entitled to a free school meal. Pupils are of predominantly White British heritage and few use any other language than English.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Within this overall judgement, pupils' personal development is good and this is a strength of the school. It is most noticeable how polite, cheerful and positive pupils are and how well they get on together. A strength of the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning is the way in which staff encourage good relationships and promote pupils' confidence. This means that pupils are prepared to 'have a go' in lessons even though they are not fully sure of themselves. Pupils comment understandably that they feel safe and that the school looks after them well, encouraging them to be healthy and fit. Without a strong example from the top, this positive ethos would not exist. Senior managers work successfully to ensure that the strong links with parents, other schools and the local community all add value to pupils' learning, their personal development and to the good range of out-of-school activities on offer.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily, reaching broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. They achieve best in mathematics throughout the school. Achievement in writing is not as strong, especially that of boys in Years 1 and 2. Throughout the school there is not enough consistently good teaching to ensure that pupils achieve well rather than satisfactorily. There are weaknesses in lesson planning and in the use of assessment that contribute to the satisfactory teaching in some classes. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage in their communication skills and in their personal, social and emotional development having entered the Nursery with lower than expected attainment in these areas. Overall, these children achieve satisfactorily across their six areas of learning.

While the curriculum generally promotes pupils' basic skills satisfactorily it is insufficiently well planned to meet fully the needs of all pupils in writing. Nor is it explicit enough about the ways in which pupils will take responsibility for their own learning or in evaluating how well they are getting on.

Senior leaders and managers respond effectively to perceived weaknesses in pupils' achievements by identifying and implementing strategies for improvement. Crucially, rigorous systems to track that all pupils are achieving as well as they should, and which class teachers have full ownership of, have only been introduced recently. It is too early, therefore, to judge these systems' impact on raising achievement. In its self-evaluation, the school rather overestimated its effectiveness, partly because it compared itself with schools locally rather than nationally. Improvement planning is insufficiently focused on how proposed changes to the curriculum and to teaching will impact specifically on pupils' learning. This is a factor in determining that achievement is not higher.

The school's improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. There have been good improvements in governors' financial planning. Value for money is satisfactory as is the school's capacity to improve further.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievements in writing, particularly that of boys in Years 1 and 2.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good, especially in planning lessons and using assessment more rigorously.
- Make clearer how planned changes to teaching and to the curriculum will specifically improve pupils' learning and achievement.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain broadly average standards. Achievement is best in mathematics because the curriculum and the quality of teaching in this subject is a relative strength. The weakest achievement is that of boys' writing, especially in Years 1 and 2. Children enter the Nursery with communication and social skills below those expected, and with expected levels of skills in other areas of their learning. They achieve satisfactorily overall in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) and progress well in those areas in which they were weakest on entry.

The school usually meets the challenging targets it sets for itself in the Year 6 national tests. In 2006, targets for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level were missed in English and mathematics but targets at the higher levels, Level 5 or above, were met. The achievement of the current Year 6 indicates a return to average standards. Vulnerable pupils, including those with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve satisfactorily because they receive good quality support.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their greatly improved attendance, which is now average. Behaviour is good and pupils treat each other with respect. Relationships are good and pupils work happily and safely together, which results in a very positive ethos. Pupils know how to keep safe and are aware that a balanced diet and regular exercise contribute to their good health. They put theory into practice by attending the good variety of out-of-class activities and by drinking water regularly and eating fruit to promote a healthy lifestyle. Pupils contribute to school life well, through the school council, by running a tuck shop and by initiating improvements to equipment that is used at lunchtimes and at breaks. However, school council members have quite limited formal roles and this detracts from their understanding of how committees work. In contrast, when pupils work with representatives of local businesses on group tasks they develop skills that will contribute significantly to their future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

There is a mixture of good and satisfactory teaching throughout the school but the overall quality is satisfactory. In those lessons that pupils enjoy, learn the most and subsequently make the most progress in, teaching is lively, well focused and pacy. In a Year 5/6 literacy lesson, for instance, the teacher made excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT) to engage pupils' interest, to clarify ideas, to illustrate points about the text and to specify exactly what pupils were expected to learn. The effective use of short-term targets for the quality of work expected resulted in pupils of different abilities working to their optimum. Consistently good relationships in lessons result in pupils having the confidence to contribute and to take risks. Where teaching is less successful and promotes only satisfactory achievement, there are weaknesses in planning and in the use of assessment. This means that the tasks set for pupils insufficiently match their needs. The lack of rigorous planning is most evident in its negative impact on pupils' learning where teaching assistants are provided with too little guidance about what is expected of them when they take groups of pupils out of the main classroom. However, teaching assistants provide good support overall for pupils who have the most severe learning or behavioural difficulties, enabling them to achieve as well as their peers.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, meets requirements and promotes pupils' basic skills satisfactorily. It is well planned to promote pupils' personal development and their understanding of cultural diversity. For example, events such as a 'multicultural and arts weeks' enrich pupils' experience of school. Pupils enjoy an extensive variety of out-of-class activities that contribute well to their understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils are offered a range of opportunities which complements the formal curriculum such as dance and other sport activities. Residential visits promote pupils' independence effectively and their ability to work in teams. However, despite recent improvements, the curriculum insufficiently meets the needs of pupils in writing, especially boys in Years 1 and 2. It also provides insufficient guidance about how pupils will be involved in their own learning and in evaluating how well they are progressing.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The school's care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. In partnership with parents and through sound links with outside agencies, the school provides satisfactory pastoral care. Procedures for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are in place. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. However, these pupils' progress is not checked carefully enough to make

sure that they are doing as well as they could. Although pupils are given guidance to improve their work they are not always clear about what they need to do next to improve further. The school's programme to promote pupils' well-being and good attendance is developed well with the effective work of the learning mentor playing a key role.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has initiated many improvements in the school's provision, including eradicating some ineffective teaching. She has overseen good improvements in the school building, in pupils' better attendance and in the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher level in the Year 6 national tests. The school's close partnership with other agencies now enables children to be cared for from 8.00 to 18.00. Senior leaders have a strong influence on pupils' positive attitudes to their work and to their good behaviour in and around the school. The astute appointment of a very competent learning mentor has contributed significantly to these strengths. Other effective partnerships have enhanced pupils' learning and achievement, especially in sport and in their development as effective young citizens. Although systems to manage the school's performance have been in place for some time, they have not been sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the pupils' achievement and standards are consistently good. A weakness is the lack of the specific focus on improving pupils' achievements and standards in the school's plans to improve teaching and learning and aspects of the curriculum. Governors carry out their roles and responsibilities appropriately and an indication of their greater effectiveness is their astute management of a difficult budget situation.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

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

Thank you for making us welcome during the days we spent in your school. We enjoyed our visit to your school and it is currently providing you with a satisfactory education but there are good things that we would like to list for you.

Here is what is good about your school.

- Your behaviour is good and because your teachers are so keen for you to do well and encourage you to try your best, your attitude to school is positive.
- The school has done well recently in making sure that all of you come to school regularly and has thought up lots of interesting ways to reward your good attendance.
- The good links with other organisations have provided you with lots of exciting experiences and have made you particularly aware of other cultures.

For the school to help you do even better, the next steps are:

- to make sure that all of you improve your writing, but especially to help the boys in Years 1 and 2 to do better in this

- for all the teaching you have to be of good quality
- when the school plans to change what and how you are taught, to be very clear how this will help you to improve your work.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope that you continue to really enjoy school.