

Millwood Primary Special School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	105377
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	287213
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Sue Hunt

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Cleaver
Headteacher	Mr Bernard Emblem
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001
School address	Fletcher Fold Road Bury Lancashire BL9 9RX
Telephone number	0161 7646 957
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Age group	2–11
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Amended Report Addendum

The report has been amended in the following ways: change to Description of the school paragraph; change to Overall effectiveness paragraph; change to Achievement and standards paragraph; change to Personal development paragraph; change to Curriculum paragraph.

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Millwood is a primary special school for 75 pupils aged 2 to 11, with severe and profound and/or multiple learning difficulties, many of whom have medical and other complex needs. A significant minority of pupils have a diagnosis of autism and have high dependency needs. The proportion of pupils from families who speak English as an additional language is above but close to the national average. Most of these pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition. A very small number of pupils are in the care of the local authority. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

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 and improving school. This judgement matches the school's view of its self-evaluation. The headteacher, who has steered the school well is supported successfully by the deputy headteacher and together are providing clear direction for the work of the school. All staff and governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and areas to improve. The quality of the teaching and learning is monitored. However, the strands of monitoring from the different management groups, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher, need to be in a more cohesive style so that staff are clear as to what needs to be done to improve their teaching further. By the end of Year 6, academic standards reached by pupils are exceptionally low. However, given pupils' exceptionally low starting points in the Foundation Stage, this represents good progress overall with some pupils making outstanding progress. The school is well placed to improve. There are now good procedures for assessing pupils' achievement, which are beginning to be used well to help pupils' progress. The school's commitment to all of its pupils means that equality of opportunity influences all of its work. Pupils are made very aware of how they can stay healthy; they discuss openly the healthy choice of food offered at lunchtime. There are many sporting opportunities for them to take part in, they enjoy close links with the community and are very active fundraisers. Millwood pupils think and care about others a lot. They are, on occasions, hampered in their learning by the inadequate accommodation, such as during information and communication technology (ICT) lessons. The school building lacks space; classrooms are very small with restricted storage space. Staff, therefore, have to plan extremely carefully to accommodate this. However, building work has started to improve accommodation a little. The outside areas are very attractively designed and provide pupils with exciting apparatus, wooded areas and game opportunities.

Pupils behave extremely well and have positive attitudes to learning. The challenging behaviour, displayed by some pupils, is dealt with very well by all staff. Pupils enjoy and benefit from the newly revised curriculum, which is significantly enhanced by activities such as residentials, drama, Artists in School and musical activities. Personal care and safeguarding of pupils is outstanding. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the resources and accommodation for the teaching of ICT.
- Bring together the various strands of monitoring teaching and learning and pupils' progress into a more cohesive system.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress given their particular starting point; they enter the school at Foundation Stage with standards well below national expectations but because of good teaching and outstanding care meeting their many different needs, by the end of Foundation Stage, they make good progress. Although standards at the end of Year 6 remain low, pupils progress well, some exceptionally, given their low starting points. All are set challenging goals for personal and social development, literacy and numeracy. Over the past two years, the school has recognised the need to improve assessment, therefore, formal assessments are now much more rigorous and they inform the school that pupils are making discernibly good or better progress throughout their time in school. The school's system allows them to compare their results

nationally with similar schools. The school treats every child as an individual with individual needs. These needs are met very well through their individual education plans. Severe Learning Difficulty and Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) pupils and pupils with Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) make good progress, as measured through an adapted curriculum using a PMLD assessment system to help record small steps of achievement. Overall, pupils make exemplary progress in improving their communication and independent living skills, as do pupils with autism who make notable progress in the way that they interact and work with others. The small number of pupils who are in public care perform as well as their peers, as do pupils from minority ethnic groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Considerable emphasis is placed on helping pupils to lead healthy lifestyles even though some find this difficult. Frequent and regular physical activity, including coaching in football, cricket and dance, helps with this. The school is always highlighting the importance of being healthy. Health, including weight, is monitored by health professionals and discussed with pupils and parents as part of routine medical support.

Achievements in all areas of school life are celebrated. Pupils have many opportunities to make a positive contribution to the school community to take responsibility and help others. The newly formed school council has helped tremendously with this and this gives pupils the facility to make their views known. In the short time they have been formed they have purchased equipment for the school to make it healthier, such as a very large juicer and smoothie maker! They support others by fundraising for charities such as Christian Aid, Marie Curie Cancer Care and Comic Relief.

Pupils behave very well around school. They rarely squabble. They take responsibilities given to them seriously. Pupils say they like school and the work they do. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, the school encourages them to feel good about themselves and this is evidenced in the work displayed around the school. During the whole school assembly there was a very spiritual moment when the whole school prayed and reflected on the plight of a missing child reported in the media, this illustrated that the pupils are very aware of current affairs and thinking of others' needs. Overall, attendance is good; this reflects pupils' enjoyment of school and parental support. There are very efficient systems to monitor pupils' attendance. Instances of challenging behaviour happen from time to time but the well trained staff effectively deal with these, implementing individual behaviour plans well. There are no exclusions or racist incidents in this very happy school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good across the school. Pupils make good progress in their learning and excellent progress in their personal development because they are treated as individuals with individual needs. Assessment and record keeping is now consistent and effective across the school and is used particularly well to track what pupils know and what they need to learn next. Learning resources are used effectively to stimulate pupils and develop their capacity to learn through making choices and finding out for themselves, particularly at Foundation Stage. More able pupils are challenged well; for example, in an ICT lesson for Years 4 to 6 where pupils

independently took photographs to illustrate their creative stories and then downloaded them to a prepared file on the computer. Good lessons are characterised by enthusiastic teachers who have detailed knowledge of their pupils without causing pupils extra stress, particularly with ASD pupils and their adverse reaction to events around them. In outstanding lessons, teaching is lively and every minute is a learning experience with all staff contributing to this. The school uses all staff and the NHS professionals well to diffuse sometimes difficult situations and this just adds to the good provision available. A dance programme for PMLD pupils has improved their physical ability and pupils find it enjoyable to express themselves to the different mood swings of the music. Foundation Stage children benefit from the outside classroom facilities and the many learning experiences made available to them throughout the day. Particularly, the opportunity to visit and be taught in local mainstream primary schools, as well as going out on visits to such places as Blackpool Zoo with their local primary connected school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The range of subjects offered is good and meets statutory requirements. The radical changes over the past two years to the organisation of the curriculum has borne fruit and the curriculum quite rightly now meets all pupils' individual needs, addressing their social skills and increasing their self-esteem and confidence as they progress through the recognised National Curriculum.

A rigorous personal, health, social and citizenship education programme contributes significantly to the pupils' outstanding personal and health development. The school receives additional support from outside agencies such as speech therapy, educational welfare, social services and physiotherapy. This works extremely well. The school is continually working to improve the help NHS professionals provide and is working towards being an extended school in the near future.

A good range of educational experiences help to broaden the children's understanding of the world. There are also good links with the community. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to participate in residential experiences and exciting activities such as educational day trips and residential to Rochdale. Visitors including artists, dancers and writers have worked regularly with the pupils over the previous twelve months. Foundation Stage children have very close links with local mainstream nurseries and there is a steady flow of youngsters between the different schools gaining benefit for all. This good practice is mirrored across the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes outstanding care of all pupils, who in turn trust staff and know who to approach if they need help. There is superb support for them when they are upset or troubled. Pupils' behaviour is tracked closely so that staff can spot where there is potential trouble and intervene quickly. Staff know the children and their families very well, they use this knowledge to encourage pupils' good attendance and promote their enjoyment of learning. Pupils work towards challenging targets for both their behaviour and school work and these are regularly reviewed using the help of the NHS professional where necessary.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and frequently reviewed. Child Protection and risk assessments are fully in place and known by all staff. Vulnerable children are supported effectively and their progress is carefully monitored. Both parents and their children are

extremely supportive of the school, describing it as having 'a warm, friendly family feeling about it which meets all pupils' needs.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A common purpose and clear vision, defined by an evident commitment to achieving the best for all pupils, permeates this good school. The very self-critical but highly effective school team, led by a thoughtful and experienced headteacher who consults very well and a hard working deputy and assistant headteacher, have established a culture where high expectations and performance are the norm. All teaching members of the school are experienced and becoming leaders and managers within this new management structure. However, there are many strands to the monitoring system in place and these have not yet had time to become fully effective. Training for staff is afforded high priority and this has helped the vast majority of teachers and support staff polish their considerable skills in dealing with the broad range and complexity of pupils' needs. New buildings have started to be built which will provide the school with larger medical and office space as well as another classroom with two more classrooms planned early next year.

The budget is managed well to allow for this new building to take place and to relieve the very difficult accommodation problem the school faces, equipment, particularly computers need updating and there are a number of areas within the school which are unattractive and overcrowded. The present governing body is becoming highly effective and proving to be a good critical friend of the school. The school has good capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	4
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	1

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.

Annex A

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	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Inspection of Millwood Primary Special School, Bury, BL9 9RX

I promised I would write you a letter. Please share what I write below with the other children. You can talk about how you might do this.

Thank you for being so friendly and willing to talk to me. It was useful to know what you think about your school. I found the school council particularly good. I enjoyed having lunch with you and listening to some good advice on 'healthy eating'.

Please continue to work very hard for all your teachers who care so well for you. This will make it easier for them to check how well you are working.

I have asked your teachers to try to buy some more computers and to find a bigger computer room for some of you to work in. Soon, you are going to have more rooms in your school, which will be great.