

Milldene Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114760
Local Authority	ESSEX
Inspection number	290021
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2007
Reporting inspector	George Falconer HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	173
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Springett
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2005
School address	Barbrook Lane Tiptree Colchester Essex CO5 0EF
Telephone number	01621816490
Fax number	01621815301

Age group	4–11
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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

Milldene Primary School, along with other schools, serves the village of Tiptree in the north east of Essex. It sits in spacious grounds and it currently has 173 pupils with ages ranging from 4 to 11. They are drawn largely from the immediate surroundings, with some pupils travelling in from outside the catchment area. Housing is a mix of privately owned and council properties. Attainment on entry varies but it is broadly average when compared to national statistics. The majority of pupils are of White British origin with a very low number from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than found nationally and the number of pupils receiving free school meals is also lower than the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's previous designation of having serious weaknesses no longer applies. Milldene Primary School is a good school. Very positive indicators of good and outstanding practice are evident throughout the school, which demonstrates a good capacity to improve further. A parent referring to pupils commented, 'Educationally, they are encouraged to not only reach but surpass their targets and socially they are rewarded for courtesy and good behaviour.'

The school has seen a good deal of turbulence in the past due to unavoidable long term staff absences through illness. This affected the quality of provision and the overall standards, especially at Key Stage 2. However, the relatively new leaders and managers are having a fantastic effect on teaching, learning and curriculum provision. The strong leadership of the headteacher demonstrates vision and direction, as well as very robust strategies for moving the school forward. The governing body gives good support as a critical friend to the school, with a firm lead from the chair.

Pupils' achievements are good this year and standards are satisfactory overall. The progress that pupils are now making in their lessons is good. Pupils work hard and show a genuinely high level of engagement in their learning. In discussion with pupils, it is evident that they really do enjoy working towards challenging targets and think that their teachers do a great job.

Pupils are very keen to attend because they know they will be well supported and well guided in their learning. During the course of the inspection, the quality of teaching was good overall and with some outstanding lessons observed too.

Pupils have a good curriculum that meets statutory requirements and the level of curriculum enrichment is excellent. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their involvement in extra sporting and educational interests. Personal development and well being are good, with pupils' enjoyment of learning and their contribution to the school and wider community being outstanding. Consequently, and because they are so well engaged, behaviour is also outstanding.

Care guidance and support is good with many parents commenting on how caring the school is. Pupils feel safe in this very caring environment where health and safety and child protection are carefully managed.

The school reflects critically on its performance and knows that there is still room for improvement, particularly in raising standards for all pupils. It also realises the need to develop the new management structure further and to make sure that the teaching and learning, and the curriculum provision moves from strength to strength.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that standards in English, mathematics and science continue to be the key focus in the school's development.
- Make sure that the distributed leadership and management team becomes more fully developed to involve teachers at all levels
- Make sure that the strategies to develop the quality of provision, including the teaching and learning and the curriculum, continue to be embedded and rigorously monitored.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and continuing to improve because the quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some outstanding practice being observed. Close monitoring by the school of both the quality of teaching and learning and of pupils' progress is also making a significant contribution to the quality of the overall provision.

Pupils enter school with broadly average abilities compared to the national picture. Many pupils attend pre-school provision. The majority of them make good progress in the Reception Year as a result of good levels of support on entry. Development in the six areas of learning is good overall.

Pupils continue to make good progress towards the end of Year 2 in their reading scores and in their writing and mathematics, but more notably in reading and mathematics. End of Key Stage 1 results for 2006 illustrated that many pupils reach levels above the national average.

Test results for the end of Key Stage 2 in 2006 reflected the degree of turbulence in the school in the year leading up to the tests. The scores for English were below the national average, but the results for mathematics and science were broadly average. The picture for 2006–2007 is much better, with pupils demonstrating good progress due to improved staff stability, the close monitoring of pupil performance combined with tracking pupil progress and the good match of levels of work to pupils' abilities. Standards are satisfactory. Intervention strategies are used swiftly and diligently across the school to support those pupils who need it most.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well being are good.

The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is exemplary. Pupils feel safe, they are confident their views are listened to, and the school council takes decisions to bring about change. Pupils contribute really well to the life of the village and raise money for charity in innovative ways, such as with their DVD of jokes! Pupils also make an outstanding contribution to the school community, for example through monitoring jobs, such as those carried out by the Year 6 play leaders. Parents say that new pupils are warmly welcomed. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with particular strengths in moral and social education. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. Pupils demonstrate good knowledge of the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. They are well prepared for their futures by their ability to work together in teams and because of their responsible and enthusiastic attitudes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning have improved significantly and as a result, there is evidence of good progress over the past year from all groups of learners. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and some current practice is outstanding. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils. They are supported by an able team of support staff. Assessment is used effectively to set targets for pupils and these are shared with parents together with homework requirements.

The marking policy is also helping pupils to understand the next steps in their learning. Pupils say that they particularly like assessing their own and each other's work. Where teaching is at its best, it is characterised by good pace and the relevant linking of subjects in a creative way. This results in high levels of pupil enjoyment and motivation. Whilst the content of work is good and displays around the school are of a high standard; handwriting and the presentation of work in books is still in the process of improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Considerable progress has been made in developing the curriculum, which is good with some developing strengths. These include progression from year to year in the core subjects, and the subject knowledge of teachers, which is leading to more interesting lessons. Pupils responded with great enthusiasm when asked about the many extra-curricular clubs, and several of these have a waiting list. The curriculum is further enhanced by a rich range of visits and visitors. Interactive whiteboards are being used effectively in classrooms and the new information and communication technology (ICT) suite has had a positive impact on the teaching of ICT skills. Teachers are starting to link learning across subjects but further opportunities could be taken to enhance other subjects by the more regular use of ICT as an aid to learning. Pupils engage enthusiastically in a wide range of sporting activities. The needs of both higher achieving pupils and lower achieving pupils are met through careful assessment and the careful matching of work to the next stage in learning for pupils of different abilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school has robust strategies and facilities in place for the care of its pupils, supported by regular risk assessments carried out by trained staff. Health and safety procedures are good as are the systems for child protection, which are comprehensive and fully meet current requirements. Pupils feel safe and well cared for in this school, because all systems are regularly reviewed and updated. The school works well with parents and external agencies to support the development of its pupils and as a result, all pupils are academically supported in appropriate ways. Learners' progress is monitored closely and all pupils receive good levels of guidance. Many of the pupils are taught to think about their own learning and have a good understanding of what their targets for the future are. Various intervention strategies are used well for pupils who need extra help.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good with some strong features. The headteacher has a strong sense of purpose. She provides firm direction, plans effectively for school improvement and is developing her new senior leadership team to work purposefully towards raising standards across the school. There is a very clear annual cycle of review and the senior management team meets regularly to evaluate the overall performance of pupils. Key stage managers do a satisfactory job and are becoming more confident in their roles. However, their lesson monitoring and work scrutiny has yet to have its full impact on consistency and achievement across the school. The governing body does its job to good effect by being both supportive and critical. Everyone in school works hard. Assistants make a valuable contribution in the classroom and

at break times. The school maintains good connections with other institutions and outside agencies including the Local Authority. Good progress has been made in a short space of time. However, the headteacher is astute and knows that strategies to promote standards and to move the school forward need to be firmly established and embedded over time in order to maintain consistency in pupils' learning. The vast majority of parents are fully behind this school and write very positively about it.

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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?	2
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	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	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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.

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	3
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	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

27th April 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Milldene Primary School, Tiptree, Essex, CO5 0EF

Thank you very much for helping us with the inspection of your school. You did a really good job of showing us all the good things that happen in Milldene and we were very impressed.

We were impressed by your excellent levels of behaviour and by the courtesy you showed to us, the teachers and other adults in school and to each other. We were even more impressed by the way in which you thoroughly enjoyed everything about school life, including your lessons and playtimes.

Talking of lessons, we saw lots of great ones where you were learning many new things. The music lesson and singing in the hall were super, especially the way you sang the song, 'My Bonnie lies over the ocean'. I liked the actions. Year One pupils were really enjoying their time in the computer suite doing maths and learning a lot with sensitive support from the IT technician. The Reception class were really into learning about estimating and they were having great fun inside and outside the classroom. I was pleased to see Year 6 working so maturely and with a sense of purpose on areas of work which they could easily explain to me. You are all working really well because you enjoy learning and because all of your teachers are good at what they do.

Thank you to the young man who approached me at break time to tell me his teacher was excellent. You also told me how proud you were of your progress. I had the same thoughts. It's good to compare notes.

Your headteacher and the staff work really hard on your behalf and they have done fantastically well this year. Mrs. Springett is going to make sure that your future results will be better and better. She is going to look more closely at how she manages your learning with her teachers and she is going to make learning even more fun, interesting and relevant.

Keep up the good work. It's nice to be proud of yourself and what you do. I know this because the young man told me at break time.

George Falconer

Her Majesty's Inspector