



Millbrook Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122108
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292321
Inspection date 22 February 2007
Reporting inspector Timothy Bristow HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Churchill Way
School category	Community		Kettering
Age range of pupils	4-7		NN15 5BZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01536 483714
Number on roll (school)	350	Fax number	01536 417048
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	I Wilson
		Headteacher	Ellen Humphries
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2007		

Age group 4-7	Inspection date 22 February 2007	Inspection number 292321
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Description of the school

Millbrook Infant School is above average in size. When pupils enter the school aged four, standards are broadly average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils who have free school meals is below average as is the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Within the school there is a designated special provision for pupils with communication and language difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that gives excellent value for money. The school has been modest in its own estimation of its effectiveness. It has judged itself to be good, reflecting its desire to continue to find ways to improve.

The achievement and personal well-being and development of pupils are outstanding. This is because the headteacher has prioritised the use of resources to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress by the time they leave Year 2, when standards are exceptionally high. The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding because of the very effective use of tracking information and teaching assistants who intervene to make sure pupils achieve challengingly high standards. The school uses assessment information to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make progress that is comparable to that of others in the school. Many staff changes in the last two years have had an effect on teaching quality, which was outstanding, but is now good overall. However, the school has demonstrated outstanding capacity to improve by ensuring that the care, guidance and support given to pupils of all abilities are outstanding. In consequence the standards that pupils achieve have remained well above the national average.

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding, and are characterised by highly accurate self-evaluation of strengths and areas for development, a strong team spirit and a common goal which is a relentless desire to improve the education for its pupils. Although some teaching is outstanding, especially in Year 2, in other lessons assessment information is not used to pitch work at the correct level for pupils, which slows their progress. The achievement of children in Reception is good because the teaching and leadership are good. The personal well-being of pupils is enhanced by the outstanding enrichment opportunities provided by the curriculum. The school strives to provide opportunities that will excite and interest pupils. A consequence of this is that nearly all pupils say that they thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Although the curriculum covers all necessary requirements it does not yet take full advantage of the opportunity to link subjects together. This means that the learning that takes place in some lessons lacks depth and has too few opportunities for pupils to practise skills in English and mathematics.

The achievement of the Activemark award and regular physical exercise have helped to ensure that pupils are developing a good awareness of a healthy lifestyle. A very good curriculum for personal, social and health education has helped to instil a strong awareness in pupils of personal safety. The school provides a caring and nurturing environment which fosters pupils' independence and confidence. In consequence pupils thrive in a happy learning environment. The outstanding contribution pupils make to the community is supported by the excellent partnership with the local special and junior schools. Pupils demonstrate a mature understanding and sensitivity to those that have learning difficulties or disabilities because they regularly work with pupils from the local special school. High standards achieved by pupils ensure that they are exceptionally well prepared for the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that assessment information is used consistently to prepare work at the correct level for pupils.
- Link subjects of the curriculum so that pupils have opportunities to practise and apply English and mathematics skills in other subjects and work in greater depth.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The achievement of pupils is outstanding. The pupils reach exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is reflected in their results in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2006. These have been consistently well above the national average since the last inspection for all pupils regardless of background. The school sets very challenging targets which are met because pupils of all abilities make outstanding progress by the time they leave Year 2. They start with broadly average skills when they enter Reception and they make good progress by the end of Year 1 achieving standards that are above average. Progress accelerates in Year 2 because of outstanding teaching, care, guidance and support. Pupils leave the school achieving standards that are better than those found in most schools nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. They feel extremely happy and secure and have very positive attitudes to their learning. A significant contributory factor in this is their knowledge that they are valued and cared for. Behaviour is outstanding. Attendance is good rather than outstanding because some pupils are taken on holiday during term-time. Pupils relish the opportunity to take on jobs in school demonstrating high levels of responsibility and initiative, for example as playground buddies and members of the school council. Many pupils are very confident speakers who contribute very well during assemblies. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils' safety is given a high priority in school. This helps to create a secure environment in which all pupils know exceptionally well how to stay safe. They have a good awareness of the contribution that regular exercise and a balanced diet make to a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make a very strong contribution to the school and the wider community. They contribute annually to many charities, for example 'The Education Project in Gambia' where they talk knowledgeably about the plight of others less well off than themselves. Pupils' ability to work with others and very high standards of literacy and numeracy skills ensure that they are very well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good with some outstanding features. Teachers have very high expectations and children respond well. Teachers use sophisticated questioning skills which give accurate levels of challenge to pupils of different abilities. Very effective teamwork ensures that all lessons are well planned. The outstanding teaching in Year 2 is due to highly experienced teachers ensuring that pupils meet challenging targets. In other classes information about pupils is not used consistently to prepare their work. Where this is the case, tasks are too easy or too hard for some pupils which slows down their rate of progress. Highly skilled teaching assistants support pupils well. They understand what is expected of them and show outstanding initiative when working with pupils in their care.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. The many enrichment activities that pupils take part in make an outstanding contribution to their enjoyment of school life. Most pupils take part in a range of extra-curricular activities, for example, Spanish and recorder clubs. Over the year pupils meet many visitors, for example an African artist, paramedics and the people who run a life education mobile classroom. The school has been awarded a gold Artsmark. The partnership with the local special school means that pupils have access to specialist facilities if required, for example sensory rooms and a hydrotherapy pool. Exciting opportunities are planned for children in the Reception class to explore, investigate and use their imaginations. Particular emphasis is given to extending the children's language development as many pupils have a limited vocabulary when they start school. The school provides a balanced curriculum. However, links between different subjects are not always exploited, which means at times pupils do not have the opportunity to study some subjects in sufficient depth or to practise skills taught in English and mathematics lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. There are very effective arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe and secure. The school provides a caring environment in which pupils thrive. A major strength of the school is the measures taken to track the progress of pupils. This information is used very effectively by school leaders to provide outstanding support for pupils of all abilities using the highly skilled teaching assistants. The consequence of this is that nearly all pupils meet the challenging targets set by the time they leave school. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are identified very shortly after they begin in Reception. This ensures

that the progress they make is outstanding because of the additional support they are given from an early age.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership characterised by a clear focus on the achievement and well-being of all pupils. This has meant that whilst there have been many changes in teachers over the last two years the pupils' achievement has not been affected. She is ably supported by good leadership at all levels even though half of the leadership team is relatively inexperienced. The school is managed extremely efficiently because of the highly effective administration team. Methods for checking the quality of teaching are in place and are used extremely effectively by the more experienced leaders to identify where and how improvements can be made. All pupils are very well integrated into the school because of the highly inclusive environment that has been established. Outstanding partnerships with other schools and outside agencies have made a major contribution to the personal well-being of pupils. Finances are extremely well managed which means that the school is very well resourced with, for example a soft play area, music and art studios, and a high adult to pupil ratio. Governance of the school is good. Governors are well informed and readily able to hold the school to account when necessary. The school tries hard to involve parents in its work. A consequence of this is that the school has the overwhelming support of parents.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	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	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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 the help you gave me when I visited your school. I felt very welcome at Millbrook Infant School. If you remember, I came to look at all the work that you were doing and to talk to you and your teachers. I enjoyed meeting you and thought you were extremely friendly, well behaved and polite. You are very kind and caring towards others. I know that you work very hard and do exceptionally well in your lessons. You feel safe in school and I agree that an adult will always step in to help you if needed. I was pleased to find out that you all enjoy school so much.

Your headteacher and the school governors have worked very hard to give you a super start to your education. Your teachers and teaching assistants take excellent care of you and provide very exciting activities for you to take part in.

I also think there are some things that the school could do better

- Make sure that your work is not too hard or too easy so that you can learn even more than you do now.
- Give you more opportunity to practise some of the skills you are learning.

Please remember to listen to the advice teachers give you so that you do even better in your lessons.