

Millpond Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109137
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	309893
Inspection dates	12–13 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Rowena Onions

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Drummond
Headteacher	Susan Eriksson
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2003
School address	Baptist Street Baptist Mills Bristol BS5 0YR
Telephone number	01173 773085
Fax number	01173 773086

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size primary school. It is a multicultural school. The largest ethnic group is Black African and there are minorities from British, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and mixed backgrounds. For over 60%, English is an additional language and 25% are at an early stage of language development. The school serves an area of significant economic and social deprivation and a well above average percentage of pupils have free school meals. A broadly average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes is low. A large number of pupils enter the school at an older age. Some of these pupils come from other countries and some have not had any prior schooling. Over the last four years, the school has had a number of temporary headteachers. The substantive headteacher now in post started work at the school less than a term prior to the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Millpond is a satisfactory but rapidly improving school. It already has a number of good aspects. Successful initiatives have ensured consistency in the way pupils are managed and their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are now good. Teachers are supportive and encouraging and help pupils to enjoy school and lessons. Pupils are respected and, as a result, they show respect for others. They report feeling safe and secure in school and demonstrate this by being friendly and relaxed.

Progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils enter the school with attainments that are low. They receive a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress, especially in learning to communicate and in gaining personal and social skills. An emphasis on the systematic teaching of reading over the last year has resulted in pupils in Years 1 to 6 making good, and sometimes very good, progress. Progress in learning to write is, however, only satisfactory, because pupils do not have enough opportunity to write. Progress in mathematics and science is also satisfactory, but inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics mean that achievement and standards are not yet as high as they might be. Although standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are rising steadily, they are currently well below average in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils' well-being is strongly promoted. Curricular provision is good in the promotion of healthy, safe lifestyles. Pupils agree that they have an adult to whom they can turn. Those who have more troubled lives are supported well. There are strong induction procedures for the large number who enter the school at other than the usual age that help them settle well. The help the school provides for parents through bilingual support and activities, such as Family Learning, assist the partnership between parents and school to develop well. Cultural diversity is celebrated and pupils gain self respect through their developing knowledge of their own and others' traditions. Although preparation for their future economic well-being is only satisfactory because some basic skills are not secure, the positive role models staff and visitors provide raise pupils' aspirations. After one such visit, a pupil wrote 'I learned today that I could become a nurse'. Through schemes such as 'playground buddies' and the school council, pupils learn to contribute to the school community.

After the recent turbulent period, the school has recruited a strong, dynamic headteacher who has ensured that initiatives already begun have been continued and strengthened. In the short time she has been in post, she has made considerable further improvements, particularly in improving the school environment. Over the last year, concentration has rightly been on providing the pupils with the ability to learn, through work to improve their attitudes and their behaviour. Good teaching ensures pupils now behave well in class, want to learn, and have secure knowledge of how to improve their work. These factors are beginning to impact on the pupils' achievement, which is now satisfactory and improving. The new headteacher, staff and governors are successfully building a team with a shared drive for improvement. The roles of senior staff are, however, not yet fully developed especially in checking work and driving forward improvements in their areas of responsibility. School self-evaluation is secure in that priorities for improvement have been correctly identified and addressed, but the school's overall evaluation of itself has been a little generous because it has focused on how far the school has come rather than how far there is still to go. Nevertheless, because the new headteacher is providing stable, dynamic leadership and because past improvements mean pupils are now ready and able to learn, the school has good capacity to further improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching in both Nursery and Reception, especially in the careful development of language and social skills, promotes good progress. A stimulating curriculum that has a good balance of supported and independent work helps the children to gain self confidence and to learn how to work and play amicably. Leadership of the provision is secure but there has not been sufficient opportunity for the leader to check what is provided and its impact on children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress and standards in writing by providing pupils with more opportunities to learn how to write.
- Improve progress and standards in mathematics by improving the consistency of teaching.
- Develop the roles of senior staff in monitoring and developing their areas of responsibility.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The use of a very structured commercial scheme has enabled pupils to achieve well in reading and the legacy of underachievement that was evident in the school's data is well on the way to being eliminated. The development of skills in spelling and structuring sentences has established satisfactory progress in writing. Progress is not better because pupils do not get enough opportunity to learn to write for different purposes and audiences. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory overall, representing an improvement in the last year, but progress is still patchy especially in Years 3 and 4. The school's careful attention to the tracking and support of different groups of pupils ensures that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make similar progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in their English language learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are well behaved, well motivated and enthusiastic. They are attentive in class, are polite and friendly, and clearly enjoy school. They report that this is a very different situation to that which existed in the not too distant past. Very consistent management enables pupils to understand boundaries and to respect the ways of life of others. Parents too, comment on the marked improvement in behaviour and attitudes. The number of exclusions, previously high, has fallen dramatically. Despite the school's best efforts, attendance is still below average, but this is not a reflection of the pupils' opinion of school. Pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy safe and secure, although some still admit to choosing to eat chocolate rather than fruit – a matter that the school continues to address.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

It is through good quality teaching that the teachers have, over the last year, turned around the situation where the behaviour of some pupils was affecting the ability of others to learn. Behaviour management is very strong and consistent. Teachers use good techniques to include pupils in lessons, for example, encouraging them to discuss with a partner or write down answers to questions directed at others. They ensure that pupils understand what they are learning and how they will recognise success. They check what pupils understand and develop their thinking by good questioning. Teachers use their assessments well to plan work for the wide range of attainments and educational backgrounds of the pupils. They are very successful in motivating the pupils to want to learn. The strength of the teaching is already showing in the progress in reading which has been the main focus of school improvement work, and in the increased progress in other subjects. Teaching in mathematics, although satisfactory, is less consistent and there are some lessons in which there is too much teacher talk and not enough pupil activity.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is suitably broad and encompasses both the development of academic skills and knowledge and the promotion of personal development. There is good emphasis on the cultural development of the pupils, enabling them to develop cultural identity. There is good enrichment, particularly in the use of visitors to help make the curriculum seem more relevant to pupils. Because of the need to emphasise the development of basic skills for reading and spelling, the curriculum is a little unbalanced and not enough time is given to the teaching and practising of writing. Information and communication technology has, with the recent installation of sufficient computers, only just become a full part of the curriculum and the use of computers to support learning across subjects is not yet fully established.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The atmosphere and values of the school ensure pupils feel valued from the time they start in Nursery. All staff work hard to make pupils feel safe and confident and great care is taken to ensure their health, safety and well-being. The promotion of good behaviour has had a profound effect on the progress that pupils make. Increased efforts to improve attendance, including an emphasis on good timekeeping, are not yet having the effect the school seeks. Further work, linked to the education welfare service, is planned for the beginning of the new term. The school makes good links with external services. Support for pupils at an early stage of English language development is especially effective. Strategies used in lessons, marking, and the setting of targets help pupils know how to improve their work. Although these procedures are good, they are not yet sufficiently embedded to be having maximum effect on the pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The start made by the new headteacher has been particularly positive. She already has the full support of pupils, parents and the community. She has promoted improvements, understanding that there can be no loss of momentum in moving the school forward. The change in the environment and the provision of new resources she has promoted have been dramatic and have raised the self-esteem of the pupils and energised teachers. One teacher commented, 'I feel as if we have won the lottery.' Because the headteacher is so recently appointed, the new management team is embryonic. There is already a shared vision, but roles and responsibilities are not yet fully established. Equality of opportunity and the celebration of difference are strongly promoted by headteacher, staff and governors. Accurate and detailed tracking of pupils' progress has been used by the new headteacher and staff to set challenging targets for the further improvement of standards and help has been sought from the local authority to assist the school to meet these. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and are proactive in helping it move forward. In the last few years, however, a number of their statutory duties, such as those in performance management, have not been met. Action to change this is already in hand.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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?	3
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
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

14 December 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Millpond Primary School, Bristol, BS5 0YR

Mr Greenall and I really enjoyed our visit to your school and would like to thank you for the friendly way in which you talked to us. We think that your school is a satisfactory one that it is getting better all the time. This letter is to tell you what we found.

?You are making good progress in learning to read but you could be making more progress in maths and in writing. ?You like your school and find it a safe and secure place to be. ?You learn to understand and respect each other and to behave well. ?You are well taught by teachers, who try to help you know how to improve your work. ?You learn how to keep yourselves healthy, although some of you still prefer to eat too many unhealthy foods. ?The adults in the school take very good care of you. ?Some children do not come to school regularly enough. ?Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working hard to make your school even better.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to do three things to help make your school better.

?Help you to make faster progress and reach higher standards in your writing by giving you more chance to write. ?Help you to make faster progress and reach higher standards with your maths. ?Share some of the jobs that the headteacher is doing amongst some of the other teachers.

We are very glad that you like your school and think you are right to do so. We think that you could help your teachers to make your school even better by working hard with your maths and writing.

Best wishes. Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions Lead inspector

Annex B

14 December 2007

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- You are making good progress in learning to read but you could be making more progress in maths and in writing.
- You like your school and find it a safe and secure place to be.
- You learn to understand and respect each other and to behave well.
- You are well taught by teachers, who try to help you know how to improve your work.
- You learn how to keep yourselves healthy, although some of you still prefer to eat too many unhealthy foods.
- The adults in the school take very good care of you.
- Some children do not come to school regularly enough.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working hard to make your school even better.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to do three things to help make your school better.

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- Help you to make faster progress and reach higher standards with your maths.
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We are very glad that you like your school and think you are right to do so. We think that you could help your teachers to make your school even better by working hard with your maths and writing.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions
Lead inspector