

# Milton Hall Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115313
<b>Local Authority</b>	Southend-on-Sea
<b>Inspection number</b>	311909
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Heather Weston HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	519
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Dominic Roche
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Margaret Haynes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Salisbury Avenue Westcliff-on-sea Essex SS0 7AU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702 330758
<b>Fax number</b>	01702 436821

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Milton Hall Primary School is much bigger than most primary schools. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The number eligible for free school meals is well above average. Over a third of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, and almost all of these have English as an additional language. An increasing number of homeless families, many of whom are new to this country, are initially housed in the area, and subsequently re-housed elsewhere. This results in a particularly high number of pupils moving in or out of the school during the year. In addition, a significant number of pupils join Year 3 each year from a nearby infant school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, with a third of these having behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of educational need is below average.

A Children's Centre has just been established on the site and is managed by the school.

Milton Hall School has a number of awards, including Healthy Schools Award; Gold Clean Air Award; Commission for Racial Equality accreditation; Intermediate International Award; Learning Mentor Leading Aspect Award and the National Association for Able Children in Education Challenge Award. It is a Dyslexia friendly school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

'This school is fantastic!' There really is 'a lovely nurturing atmosphere at Milton Hall where diversity is valued and children are treated as individuals.' Parents know that the school is outstanding. It really does help pupils 'reach for the stars.' Pupils join the school from a diverse range of backgrounds, many with significant and complex issues, which unless dealt with, would seriously interfere with their learning. In addition, the regular movement of pupils in or out of the school presents a real challenge to both these pupils and to the school. The school knows the key importance of addressing these issues, and does all it can to ensure that pupils do overcome barriers to their learning.

From very low starting points on joining the school, children make excellent progress in the Nursery and Reception classes due to the outstanding, meticulously planned provision. However, their attainment when they move to Year 1 is still well below national expectations. Pupils make good progress overall, although the rate of progress, particularly of more able pupils, is slower in Key Stage 1 and early Key Stage 2. Standards reached by pupils in Year 2 remain well below average, but by Year 6, pupils reach broadly average standards. In 2007, their results were average in English and mathematics, although below average in science. Importantly, all groups of pupils make good progress.

The combination of highly effective care, guidance and support and a vibrant curriculum results in pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. The headteacher, senior leaders and all staff and governors are committed to working towards the goal that each and every pupil feels they can (to quote their favourite hymn) 'Never stop believing, let no-one stop them dreaming' and can 'achieve your goal and find what you are looking for.'

Leadership and management are outstanding. The central vision of inclusion and pupils' personal development underpins everything. As a result, pupils enjoy school, behave well and relate very well to each other. The headteacher is remarkable in her knowledge of pupils and her drive for improvement. She is well supported by a dedicated leadership team and an equally committed staff team and governing body.

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is exemplary. The pastoral team work as a highly skilled resource and whatever needs a pupil has, they are met very well from either within the school's own resources or from outside support agencies. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is outstanding. The very careful tracking of progress enables teachers to quickly spot when pupils are falling behind, and action, fine-tuned to meet pupils' needs, is put in place to make sure pupils catch up. Partnerships with other schools and organisations are highly effective in supporting learning. Every opportunity is taken to promote partnerships with parents to support both their children's welfare and their learning. The newly built Children's Centre is proving to be an invaluable asset to children, parents and the school.

Teaching and learning are good. A real strength is the careful tailoring of work to meet pupils' needs. However, planning does not always detail what each group will be learning. As a result, pupils, particularly some more able pupils, are not capitalising on the independent learning skills so well developed in the Nursery and Reception classes to enable them to make the best possible progress. In addition, teaching assistants are not always deployed so that they can support pupils' learning throughout the whole of each lesson.

Milton Hall School gives outstanding value for money and has outstanding capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children get off to a wonderful start in the Nursery. They settle into routines quickly because the procedures for settling children into school, including close liaison with parents, are outstanding. Parents rightly praise the marvellous provision in the Foundation Stage, which is very well managed and ensures children in both the Nursery and Reception classes make exceptional progress. Although their levels of attainment are well below what is expected for their ages, children make excellent progress in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy because the consistently well-planned teaching ensures a strong emphasis on these highly relevant areas of learning. Excellent curriculum planning and guidance for learning ensure skills build up systematically from the Nursery through the Reception classes. Children's communication skills are promoted most effectively by all adults, who constantly talk and listen to children, encouraging them to develop their own ideas. Their personal development is promoted extremely well through carefully planned opportunities for paired and group work, where children learn how to take turns and share. In the outside play area children choose their own activities and develop their own creative approaches to learning. All children thoroughly enjoy their activities.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the effectiveness of independent learning activities, by ensuring that planning focuses on the expected outcomes, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Ensure that the skills of learning support assistants are fully utilised during all parts of each lesson.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Despite children's outstanding progress in the Foundation Stage, their overall attainment when they enter Year 1 is low, compared to national expectations. Standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 have been significantly below average for the last four years. The rate of progress accelerates throughout Key Stage 2, and in 2007, pupils reached standards that were broadly average in English and mathematics, although below average in science. Their progress has improved over the last three years and in 2007 was significantly above average. All groups of pupils, boys, girls, those who find learning difficult, or have emotional barriers to learning, and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds including those with English as an additional language, make good progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

This aspect is outstanding. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and their learning. The school's positive ethos and the consistently good role models provided by all adults greatly enhance pupils' personal development so that they feel very happy and safe in school. Their spiritual, moral and cultural development is outstanding and this is reflected in their excellent enjoyment of school. There are very positive relationships between adults and pupils, and the pupils with each other. The pupils have a really good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They are confident and lively and they play a full part in the life of the school. Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils' social awareness, including their excellent contribution to

the community, extends beyond the school and is evident, for example, in the wide range of fund-raising activities supported by the pupils and the excellent work of the School Council. The sense of wonder brought tears to everyone's eyes when in assembly two children shared the fact that, by bringing 'a penny a day' the school had raised the Two Hundred and Five pounds necessary to buy a water pump for a village in Africa. Although attendance is slightly below average, the school goes that 'extra mile' in promoting good attendance. The good progress pupils make in basic skills ensures that they are well prepared for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good teaching leads to good learning and achievement. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and is usually good. It is sometimes outstanding, as seen in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils, who listen, show respect and focus on learning. Lessons are usually brisk and lively, with a variety of learning activities to stimulate interest and, as a result, most pupils thoroughly enjoy learning. Teachers have a very good understanding of pupils', particularly those with additional learning needs. This is nearly always reflected in careful planning to accommodate the wide range of needs in each group. However, lessons do not always provide more able pupils with challenging work to move their learning forward and there are missed opportunities for promoting independent learning. Teaching assistants are usually well deployed in lessons to ensure pupils make good progress. However, they are not always used well enough at the beginning and the end of lessons. Assessment is used effectively to plan and set targets and marking nearly always helps pupils to improve their learning. Good use is made of resources, particularly computers and interactive whiteboards to support teaching.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The excellent curriculum is enriched through a wide range of out-of-school activities that include visits to local museums, activity centres and places of interest. Visitors, such as those connected to the arts and music, provide additional interest. Pupils greatly enjoy the range of activities that they are able to take part in during lessons and other times. The promotion of pupils' health, safety and general well-being is central to the well-conceived provision of personal, social and health education. The curriculum is well planned and highly relevant to for all groups of pupils including those at an early stage of learning English, those who find learning difficult and those with behaviour difficulties. The school's very effective partnerships support the development of sport, art and music. The school places great emphasis on the promotion of all aspects of physical education and uses specialist trainers and coaches to support this. The richness and variety of the curriculum is greatly appreciated by the pupils. One commented, 'We are able to learn lots of new skills here. There is always something new to do'.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils benefit extremely well from the exemplary procedures to care for, guide and support their needs, which are accurately reflected in the highly positive comments of the vast majority of parents. Procedures for protecting the interests and welfare of pupils, including vetting the

suitability of staff to work with children, fully meet requirements. There are extremely effective procedures for preventing and dealing with bullying, despite the concerns raised by a few parents in their questionnaires. These include sanctions, counselling, prompt same day notification of parents and if necessary involvement of other agencies. In discussion, pupils and parents also confirmed that pupils feel safe in school. Learning Mentors provide outstanding support for the personal and academic needs of pupils. Support for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, such as the use of bi-lingual staff in a lesson where pupils translated English books into the Czech language, is exceptional. Support for pupils who find learning difficult and for those with behaviour difficulties is also excellent, particularly through the work of the learning support unit, the highly effective action to promote the social and emotional aspects of learning, and the work of the seclusion unit. The promotion of better attendance through, for example, a wide range of rewards such as medals and cups, is outstanding, resulting in excellent improvement in individual levels of attendance. The superb breakfast club has a significant impact on improving punctuality. Very good systems for setting challenging individual targets for pupils and for tracking pupils' progress helps to ensure that support is effectively matched to pupils' needs.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The school can truly state that it has a 'clear sense of purpose and high aspirations, and an intrinsic belief in inclusion' as demonstrated by a focus on 'narrowing the gap' in attainment. This powerful direction is strongly reflected throughout the work of the school, driven by the passion, commitment and high expectations of the headteacher and senior leadership team. Senior leaders provide very strong leadership, but responsibility is appropriately distributed throughout the school. Performance management is in place. Staff receive focused training and share good practice. Self-evaluation processes involve all members of the school community, with the school council as well as governors reviewing and contributing to planning. One of the keys to the school's success is the careful tracking, analysis and review of pupils' progress towards challenging targets. Governors provide a strong level of challenge and support and are very effective in carrying out their role. Attention has been paid to ensuring that the all aspects of the school environment support learning.

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## 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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

15 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milton Hall Primary School and Nursery, Westcliffe-on-Sea, Essex SS0 7AU

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting your school and meeting you all. Thank you for making us feel so very welcome. I don't think I have ever shaken so many hands in one day! We were very impressed by your politeness, the way that you work together and the respect you show each other. You really do value and try to understand each other. You also show a great deal of care about people in other countries. I was quite overwhelmed in assembly when two of you told us how much you had all raised by bringing pennies to school, so that you could buy a water pump for a village in Africa.

We think that you go to a remarkable school. It really is a very special place and because of this, we decided that it is an outstanding school. Mrs Haynes and all the staff look after you extremely well. They know that many of you find learning difficult, or don't speak English well and they find ways to help each and every one of you. They really do want you to 'Reach for the stars!' They teach you well, and because of this, you all make good progress in your work.

I have asked Mrs Haynes and the other staff to do some things to help all of you, particularly those of you who find learning easy, to make even better progress. (I do know that some of you would like harder work!). These are:

- make sure that you always do as well as you can when you are working independently
- make sure that the learning support assistants help you learn at the beginning and end of all lessons, as well as helping you with your work.

I am sure you will help by continuing to work hard, and that you enjoy all the exciting things planned for the rest of this term.

With best wishes

Heather Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector