

# Millfield Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120838
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	313760
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Judith Dawson

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	334
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alex Robinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Catherine Parkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Recreation Road North Walsham Norfolk NR28 0ES
<b>Telephone number</b>	01692 403172
<b>Fax number</b>	01692 405110

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average primary school serves a mixed community which has changed in recent years due to an increasingly mobile population and the completion of a new housing estate. Provision includes a Learning Support Centre for 12 pupils aged 7–12. The percentage of pupils with specific learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or speech and communication challenges is much higher than average, as is the number of pupils with statements of special needs. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception classes is much lower than average. The school holds the 2007 Eco Schools Award and is the lead school in the cluster for the Primary Strategy Learning Network. There have recently been improvements in the accommodation.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This satisfactory school has recently been through a period where there was disruption to the staff and the senior management team due to staff absence and changes. During this period, national data showed that pupils in Year 6 had not made enough progress since Year 2. Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weakness. The headteacher and new management team, well supported by the governors, have worked hard to address the underachievement. As a result, pupils now make satisfactory progress throughout the school and standards are average. An imaginative management structure, including a bursar, has freed up the headteacher and subject leaders to concentrate on improving pupils' learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as is the capacity to make further improvement. New systems for tracking pupils' progress have been established, enabling teachers to provide additional support for pupils who find learning more difficult. This has been effective in accelerating these pupils' progress. However, some teachers do not use assessment accurately to evaluate the levels achieved by their pupils. This prevents teachers identifying exactly at what levels pupils, including the average and above average achievers, need to be working to make more rapid progress.

There are strengths in several aspects of the school's work. The Learning Support Centre is very effective in providing high quality support for pupils with significant learning, behavioural, social or emotional difficulties, enabling them to make good progress towards their targets. This is an inclusive school and these pupils are fully integrated into mainstream classes each afternoon so they have full access to the curriculum. A parent says she has nothing but praise for the way the school has nurtured her child throughout her time at Millfield. Other pupils who need additional help and support are catered for well. Pastoral care, guidance and support are good, having a positive impact on the personal development and well-being of all pupils. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The new building that the school, governors and parents have worked so hard for now links all parts of the school except the Learning Support Unit and provides a safe and pleasant environment.

Pupils enjoy school and behave well, fully appreciating the rich curriculum and many interesting activities that enhance their learning. They respect their teachers and each other and work well together. They make a good contribution to the community within and outside school and the school council has a positive impact on school life.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Some teachers have a good understanding of the way pupils learn, successfully matching the tasks to their needs and questioning effectively to test and deepen understanding. Almost all teachers give wise advice to help pupils improve when marking their English work. This is not so for other subjects and pupils are rarely expected to respond to their teacher's comments. This misses opportunities for pupils to learn from their mistakes or to extend their learning.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children start school with skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for their age. With good teaching, within a caring environment, they make a good start to their schooling and progress well, although their attainment by the time they enter Year 1 is still below that expected for their age. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The curriculum is tailored

to cover the six areas of learning in ways that interest the children. The classroom is divided into well-organised areas so that children become more independent in their learning through structured and practical play activities. There is a good balance between children's use of these and the adults teaching them new and specific skills. Adults use assessment well to challenge children of differing abilities. There are limitations to the use of the main outdoor learning area, which always has to have an adult present, as it is not fenced off from other parts of the school grounds. It is not covered, so can only be used in fine weather. There are sufficient resources for most areas of learning, but there are few large wheeled toys.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Accelerate pupils' progress, especially that of the middle and higher achievers, ensuring they all work at appropriate levels in lessons.
- Improve the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' work to develop an accurate picture of standards and to track progress.
- Ensure teachers' marking gives the next steps in learning across the school and in all subjects and make sure pupils respond to the advice given.
- Develop and extend the outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage.

A small proportion of 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**

In the national tests at the end of 2007, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were low when compared with other schools nationally at the end of Year 2 and had fallen significantly. This was due, in part, to several changes in teachers during the year. This year, however, standards have risen and are similar to last year's national average. Provisional data shows that more pupils than average attained the expected levels for mathematics and science in Year 6 but fewer achieved the higher levels. Standards in English are close to last year's national average. Pupils' achievement from their average standards in Year 2 has been satisfactory. Pupils with statements of special educational need make good progress because of the good provision overall and outstanding provision in the Learning Support Unit.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Good relationships between pupils and adults help pupils learn and enjoy school. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and the importance of physical activity. Although they know what they should eat to keep healthy, some are reluctant to adjust their diet to reflect this. Attendance is satisfactory and unauthorised absence is rare. Behaviour is good, as is pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn French or Spanish, and German students have supported them in school. They have opportunities to excel in music and enjoy their drama. The 'Millfield Challenge' widens pupils' perception of their world and provides outstanding opportunities for practical experiences in which they can develop their skills. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. The school council organises fund raising events and is involved in improving the environment. Pupils develop satisfactory skills to prepare them for their future.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although some good and outstanding lessons were seen during the inspection. Most teachers have high expectations of the way pupils present their work and pupils take a pride in what they do. Additional support groups for lower attaining pupils who have not made as much progress as they could, have been particularly effective. Individual or group targets are set for reading, writing and mathematics, and these are often referred to in lessons, so that pupils know what to do to improve their work. In many lessons, teachers plan different tasks for pupils of differing abilities. Pupils' work indicates that activities and learning for middle and higher attaining pupils are sometimes not raising attainment as effectively as they could. Pupils who are taught in the Learning Support Centre each morning have excellent practical and relevant experiences to motivate them to succeed. Most pupils like to take an active part in lessons and some teachers are beginning to give pupils good opportunities to assess their own learning within the class.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad, balanced and planned well. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy as the school strives to raise standards and achievement in these subjects. The curriculum for science is currently improving, with a strong emphasis on pupils carrying out experimental and investigational work to help to raise their knowledge, understanding and skills. The curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved since the last inspection. Teachers are now beginning to plan and deliver effective links between subjects. The school is justifiably proud of the way it enriches the curriculum. A good range of clubs, visits and visitors make learning fun. The 'Millfield Challenge' gives pupils the opportunity to tackle something new. Activities include musical, physical, local community and international challenges.

The school regularly holds themed enrichment weeks, such as the multi-cultural week, to excite and inspire pupils' creativity. Pupils in the Learning Support Centre have practical activities to use and extend their skills on Fridays, such as gardening, natural history work and cooking.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The school is a very caring environment where pupils feel safe. It fully meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding them. Any incidents of bullying are extremely rare and there are good procedures to deal with them. Pupils are involved in discussions about behaviour policies and rules, which makes them relevant and appropriate. An outreach worker provides good quality confidential counselling in school. However, teachers' assessment of pupils' work to provide academic guidance is not always as accurate as it could be or consistent across the whole school. Targets for reading, writing and mathematics are being used effectively in lessons to refine pupils' learning. In some classes, pupils are encouraged to assess their own or each other's learning but this is not yet used consistently well in all classes. The limited written guidance given for subjects other than English prevents pupils from remembering their targets when working independently and taking more responsibility for improving their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The desire to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement is at the heart of all the school's plans for improvement, based on an accurate understanding of the school's needs. The new tracking system provides a solid base for tracking pupils' progress. There is the potential for it to be an effective tool to enable teachers to challenge their pupils more accurately. Subject leaders are involved in monitoring and evaluating the provision for their subjects and school improvement. There is appropriate professional development for staff and some teaching assistants have gained higher qualifications. More needs to be done to improve the accuracy of teachers' assessment. There are effective links with pre-school provision and the high school. Almost all parents agree that there are good links with the school and that they are well-informed. The school rigorously seeks the support of the thinly spread external agencies such as social services. Governors support and challenge the school well and are very knowledgeable about their school.

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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?	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	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	2
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?	3
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?	3

<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>	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	3
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Millfield Primary School, North Walsham, NR28 0ES

Thank you all very much for your friendliness and help during our visit to your school. We were very impressed by your politeness and good behaviour and by how hard you all work. Well done. A special thanks to the school council who gave Mrs Davies your views.

You told us how much you enjoy your school and appreciate all the interesting and exciting activities your teachers provide. You told us that you are well cared for in school and feel safe. We were pleased to see how much you do to help each other, your school and the community. We agree that your school takes good care of you and helps you to develop the skills you need to work and play well together. Children in the Reception Classes have a good start to school so that they learn quickly. We have asked the school to make your outside area better so that you have more chances to use it and more things to do there.

Most of you make satisfactory progress. Some of you make good progress, especially those of you who have extra help. Pupils in the Learning Support Unit learn really well because you have excellent teaching. We want all of you to make good progress so we have asked your teachers to make sure they know exactly what you can do and plan work that closely matches your next steps in learning. We also want them all to give you written advice when they mark your work. Many do when they mark your English work but not for other subjects. Make sure you take their advice, won't you? Then you will be able to astound your teachers with your good work!

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. Your headteacher, parents, teachers and governors have worked hard to improve your school building and grounds. Adults in school are eager to make sure that your opportunities for learning are even better. Their plans are already beginning to help your learning but some of the things they have introduced are very new and have not yet had time to make a big difference. We are sure that, with your help, your school will continue to get better and better.

We really enjoyed our visit to your school and wish you all the best for the future.

Best wishes

Mrs. J. Dawson

Lead inspector