

# Lydiard Millicent Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 126337          |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Wiltshire       |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 315503          |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 7 February 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Patricia Davies |

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>                    | Voluntary controlled                                 |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School                                    | 209  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                                   |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Phil Heads   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Carol Dougill  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 27 January 2003                                      |
| <b>School address</b>                     | The Butts<br>Lydiard Millicent<br>Swindon<br>SN5 3LR |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01793 770571   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01793 770571   |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

This inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the success of strategies to increase the achievement of more able pupils and meet the needs of boys and girls in mathematics; the impact of improvements to assessment; how effectively changes to staff have been managed; confirmation of progress in Reception; and how successfully the school encourages the benefits of good attendance. Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, sampling pupils' work, discussion with pupils, staff and governors, the school's documentation and assessment information and the inspection questionnaires to parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Lydiard Millicent CE Primary School is a little smaller than average. Most pupils are from White British families and a very small minority are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, and the greatest proportion of these has moderate learning difficulties. Attainment on entry to Reception is above expectations. There have been a number of changes to staff over the last 18 months. Changes have taken place this year to accommodate the temporary absence of some staff, including those holding senior roles and subject leadership. The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2006. There was recently an increase in the number of pupils joining from other schools, but this movement has now become less frequent.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Lydiard Millicent is a good school. Pupils feel its friendliness particularly marks it out as a special place and report the warm welcome it extends to those who come from other schools. Exceptionally good behaviour is illustrated by pupils' mature, thoughtful and polite responses to adults and each other. They clearly enjoy a challenge. There are high levels of concentration during lessons and some have a real buzz of excitement and industry. Pupils' close involvement in the evaluation of their learning gives them a very clear understanding of their progress. They speak of the great pride they feel when they have done well, moved up a group or have merited an award. More able pupils recognise that their activities successfully extend their understanding; such a telling observation indicates that the school's work to improve the performance of its more able and gifted pupils is proving to be effective. All these factors make important contributions to pupils' good academic achievement and prepare them well for later life. So, too, does the experience gained from their considerable and varied links with the community, including close partnerships with other schools, involvement in local events, fund raising activities and school environmental projects, such as composting. Pupils unanimously agree that the school council does a really valuable job; this group takes part in the recruitment of new staff and is currently monitoring the use of energy in school. Enthusiastic participation in physical activity at break times reflects a keen understanding of the merits of a healthy lifestyle, which is recognised in a national award.

Most pupils have good attendance, which is encouraged particularly well through certificates and class awards. In addition, those very few pupils whose attendance sometimes falls, are monitored carefully so that their learning is not affected adversely. The school has been relatively less successful in securing parents' understanding of the educational importance of good attendance in relation to holidays and trips taken during the term.

Extremely thorough and comprehensive assessment of pupils' progress enables the school to recognise quickly where pupils need more challenging targets and where others require additional support so that they do not fall behind. Above average standards are maintained this year throughout the school, including the Reception class. The current Year 2, although a relatively lower-attaining group, are making good progress. The present Year 6 have a greater number of pupils with learning difficulties than last year's group, but are, nevertheless, on track to gain larger proportions at the higher Level 5 in English and, particularly, in mathematics. Standards in science have been consistently high in national tests in recent years. Pupils put this down to teachers' great enthusiasm for the subject, the predominance of practical and investigative activities, which pupils enjoy, and the many opportunities to assess what they have learned.

There has been considerable attention to maintaining the quality of teaching during a time of some disruption to staffing. It is, therefore, to the school's credit that the overall quality of teaching is good. A key feature of teaching, and of the school's good curriculum, is the systematic development of knowledge, skills and understanding. Confident use of subject vocabulary allows staff and pupils to explore and explain ideas in depth. In exceptional cases, the constant expectation that pupils should give their reasons and rationale ensures clear explanations from pupils about, for example, sophisticated mathematical calculations. Challenging and interesting tasks engage boys and girls equally and enthuse those few more likely to be distracted. It is only occasionally that boys are selected to provide answers to questions more often than girls. Those with learning difficulties benefit from good resources and close individual attention from teaching assistants. Pupils say that staff know their strengths

and weaknesses extremely well. Feedback to pupils is frequent and robust, always giving them vital information about how to improve their learning. Sometimes, however, teaching and learning are satisfactory, rather than good or outstanding. The reasons for this difference are varied. In some cases, pupils spend a bit too long on one activity, while others are not thoroughly prepared for their task so they can get on swiftly. Questions are sometimes not adapted for different ability groups or there is a bit too much formal instruction. Nevertheless, when these factors are present, activities do not demand as much of pupils as they do at other times.

Leadership and management are good. The school has a clear and detailed understanding of its effectiveness and is well placed to move forward. The most senior staff and the governing body have played a major role in keeping the school on track this year without other key and subject leaders, aided by advance preparation for their absence. Sensible decisions have been taken about temporary staffing. The most senior leaders have taken on the responsibility for additional subjects in the short term and are gradually developing the leadership skills of other staff members who remain. Governors have been carefully briefed, so that they can help to check how things are going. Indeed, governors give the school excellent support. They keep themselves extremely well informed about the school's work and outcomes through considerable liaison with staff, analysis of data and closely focused visits to school to monitor the progress of initiatives. This high degree of contact and collaboration allows them to probe and challenge and to plan knowledgeably for the future.

A very small minority of parents feel that the school does not always respond well to parents' concerns. Nevertheless, most parents express a lot of satisfaction with the school, identifying the quality of its education, its many and varied clubs and the dedicated care of staff among its strengths. Safeguarding procedures are robust. The school has been quick to respond to any concerns about health and safety - its considerable attention to pupils' care and safety was conspicuously illustrated during this inspection when the fire alarm sounded unexpectedly. Staff responded swiftly and efficiently to ensure that everyone left the buildings and was accounted for. Pupils clearly knew what was expected of them and behaved impeccably.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Detailed curriculum plans and good assessment practices have provided valuable continuity to the quality of provision in Reception during changes to teaching staff and leadership. These children progress well so that many enter Year 1 having attained standards beyond the goals expected.

Children enjoy the plentiful and interesting resources. Areas of learning link together well. At the moment, the story of 'The Three Little Pigs' is providing a wide range of activities. Making each of the pigs' houses allows children to explore mathematical language and describe the textures and properties of each building material; they also enjoy painting pictures of the story and telling adults about it. The outside play area has a construction site, where children build up large bricks together, wear 'hard hats' to keep them safe and write out a list of works to be completed. Children are happy and confident and independent habits are well developed. They know the routines expected of them during free-choice activities, for instance in one case reluctantly recognising when all the 'peg' spaces were filled with names, signalling that they must wait their turn to go outside. Sometimes, though, there is too much noise. Although much of this noisiness comes from children's enthusiasm, it nevertheless disturbs the concentration of those working in small groups on a focused task.

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

- Ensure that teaching is consistently demanding so that pupils always make good or better progress during lessons.
- Promote the educational importance of good attendance, particularly to discourage holidays and trips taken during term-time.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

### 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   |
| 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?  | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 2 |
| 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   | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 |
| 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?   | 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>                                       | 2   |
| 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 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  | 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

07 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lydiard Millicent Primary, Swindon, Wiltshire SN5 3UR

Thank you all for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed talking with so many of you and visiting your lessons. Yours is a good school. I was pleased to hear from some of you that its friendliness makes it a special place to be. You are thoughtful, mature and polite young people and behave extremely well. These qualities were very much in evidence when the fire alarm went off and you had to come together quickly so that staff could make sure you were all there. You work extremely hard during lessons and especially enjoy a challenge! All these positive things help you to make good progress right through the school. You do particularly well in science. You told me the staff really enjoy teaching this subject, which makes you enthusiastic about it too. Most of your parents like your school a lot and say many nice things about it.

Here are some other important things I found out.

- Teaching is good overall and especially so when you have to explain exactly how to do things or work things out, in mathematics for example.
- All the staff take extremely good care of you; they keep a really close eye on how you are progressing, for instance, and you think they know you very well.
- You get lots of guidance about how you can improve your learning.
- All the staff and governors have worked hard to keep everything going along well while some of your staff are absent, including good planning in advance to make sure things run as smoothly as possible.
- You say that you enjoy the school's many clubs and activities.

Here are some things the school has been asked to do to make things even better.

- Make sure that teaching always demands that you do your very best in every lesson.
- Ensure that your attendance is as regular as possible at all times, especially so that you do not miss out on any of your learning to go on holiday during school time.

Best wishes

Patricia Davies Lead inspector

**Annex B**

07 February 2008

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**Inspection of Lydiard Millicent Primary, Swindon, Wiltshire SN5 3UR**

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Best wishes

Patricia Davies  
Lead inspector