

Millbank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101113
Local Authority	Westminster
Inspection number	323404
Inspection date	1 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Graham Stephens

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	351
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Wrathmell
Headteacher	Ms Alyson Russen
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Erasmus Street London SW1P 4HR
Telephone number	020 7641 5945
Fax number	020 7641 5946

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	1 May 2009
Inspection number	323404

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following areas:

- the impact of leadership and management on raising the achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2, particularly that of boys
- the consistency of the teaching and its impact on learning throughout the school
- to check the school's view that there are strengths in pupils' personal development, care and well-being, and to confirm that the curriculum is effective in promoting community cohesion and racial harmony.

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 returned from parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form (SEF), were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English is much higher than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, most of whom find aspects of English and mathematics challenging, is average. The school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Nursery and a Reception class. There is a breakfast and an after-school club. This is also a designated school within Westminster for pupils with autism. The school's admission capacity is being raised from 45 to 60 pupils per year group to reflect a rise in demand for places. There are now two classes in most year groups.

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. The excellent headteacher is relentless in her drive to accelerate progress and raise standards further. She is very well supported by a team of teaching and non-teaching staff who have created a vibrant, colourful and interesting environment which is conducive to learning and in which pupils excel. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and their comments lavish praise on all aspects of the school. 'I feel fortunate to have my children at such an amazing school. The headmistress is inspiring and combines incredible leadership with an extraordinary memory for the detail of the children. The teachers follow her lead with well-disciplined and enthusiastic teaching. The school is a positive force in all our lives.' This is typical of the comments received.

Pupils make excellent progress from their starting points and reach above-average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Standards are lower in science because, although pupils make good progress, fewer pupils attain the higher levels. Children enter school with levels of skill and understanding that vary but are generally below those expected for their age, especially in the areas of communication, knowledge and understanding of the world, and social awareness. Since 2005, when numbers on roll began to increase, many more pupils have entered the Reception class directly with very limited pre-school experience. Nevertheless, the vast majority of pupils, most of whom are learning English as an additional language, make excellent progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. This helps them to access and learn from the wide range of learning opportunities provided both in the Early Years Foundation Stage and throughout Key Stage 1. Current work and school data show that most pupils, including boys, are in line to attain the challenging targets set and to exceed them at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Standards in English and mathematics have improved year on year since the last inspection and they are above average by the time pupils leave. Both boys and girls are on track to meet the challenging targets set, with more than one third of pupils likely to attain the higher levels this year in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. In science, many pupils lack a detailed working knowledge and understanding of scientific vocabulary and this prevents more of them from attaining the higher levels. The school has begun to focus on extending pupils' scientific vocabulary and evidence confirms that this aspect of pupils' language development is improving well.

Pupils really enjoy their time in school and approach all tasks with unbridled enthusiasm. Their attitudes are reflected in excellent behaviour and good attendance. Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are confident, reflective and very sensitive to the needs of others. Consequently, pupils with autism, who receive additional support in the Windmill class, make excellent progress and spend much of their time in mainstream classes where they are welcomed and included in all activities. These pupils and others who find aspects of English and mathematics challenging, as well as those learning English as an additional language, make excellent progress because their needs are accurately identified, their work is well planned and they receive very good support from experienced and able teaching assistants. Pupils understand very well what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and know what to do in order to stay safe.

Teaching is outstanding because lessons are planned well to meet the varying needs of the pupils, they proceed at a brisk pace and pupils' progress is consistently evaluated. Different approaches are adopted if, for any reason, teachers suspect that progress is slowing down. Teaching is also well supported by an excellent curriculum, which meets the needs of all pupils

and drives the many and varied activities that engage them in their learning. It encourages pupils to work very well together and provides many opportunities for them to apply the skills they are taught. Visits, visitors and very close links with the stimulating range of learning resources and experiences available in close proximity to the school also enrich pupils' learning.

Very good relationships underpin the outstanding care, support and guidance that pupils receive. Safeguarding procedures are secure, well known by all staff and applied consistently. Teachers spend much time guiding pupils during lessons and also marking books in a way that ensures that pupils know what they need to do to improve. Teaching older pupils in groups of similar ability in mathematics and English has a positive impact on their rate of progress, as well as ensuring that they are appropriately challenged and gain confidence in their own abilities.

The headteacher's insight and enthusiasm are infectious. She has delegated responsibility for different phases within the school to members of the senior management team and they are held closely to account for the progress pupils make. The senior management team offers the headteacher excellent support. All members of staff are valued, including the site manager who plays a full and active part in a wide range of activities. The administration staff, although relatively new, have responded quickly to the ethos of cooperation and mutual support that pervades the school. Governance is outstanding. Governors know and understand the strengths of the school but are not complacent. A seminar led by governors established a clear strategy for the ongoing implementation of the school's successful community cohesion policy. It draws well on the backgrounds, interests and cultures of the pupils and extends beyond the school and local community. Governors have well-established systems in place to hold the headteacher to account for the standards attained and the progress pupils make. They share the headteacher's determination to ensure that the school continues to improve. The school's capacity to improve further is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The outstanding systems to ensure that children settle quickly into school and learn the routines are particularly effective. Parents value the opportunities they have to share their children's learning at home or in their pre-school settings. They contribute extremely well to the assessments that staff make on the children's progress during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning and, from a low starting point, achieve outstandingly, with many reaching the expected levels by the time they start Year 1. Teachers place great emphasis on teaching the basic skills children need to become confident readers and writers. Through stimulating topics, such as mini-beasts, children watch caterpillars emerge from their cocoons and snails move around a tank. They learn about life cycles while using the immediate locality to explore various habitats. The wonderful curriculum is greatly enhanced by visits in the local area and by visitors to school. The children were very excited by the visiting duck which they thought was a dog that wagged its tail when it was happy. The outside area provides a very rich learning environment and is extremely well used. Children play together happily, sharing equipment and learning together, with excellent staff input. There is an excellent balance of activities, both inside and out, that cover all areas of learning. Some are led by adults, so that children learn new skills, while others are chosen by the children. This encourages independence and helps the children to concentrate on and persevere at their work. Planning is thorough and based on accurate assessments of what children know and understand. A thorough record is kept of the progress each child makes and

parents are being encouraged to add to this by sharing what their children are learning at home. The Early Years Foundation Stage is extremely well led and managed. The smooth transition from Nursery to Reception, and then to Year 1 means that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on current plans to introduce a more systematic approach to the teaching of scientific vocabulary.

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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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

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	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

15 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Millbank Primary School, London, SW1P 4HR

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. The inspectors enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to all you had to say.

We think you go to an outstanding school and this is why.

- You do very well in your work. You are proud of the things that you do, explained yourselves very clearly and made us feel very welcome.
- You are very polite and caring of each other. Your behaviour is excellent.
- Your teachers are very good at planning work to meet your needs and are always looking for more interesting things and ways to teach you.
- All the adults in your school make sure that you are encouraged, challenged and really well looked after.
- Your headteacher and all the other people who help run your school are doing an excellent job.

Every school, even one as good as yours, has things that could be improved.

- We have asked your teachers to make sure that you all understand some of the special language you need to use so that you can be clearly understood when describing what you know about science.

Yours faithfully

Graham Stephens

Lead Inspector