

Milking Bank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103834
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	323909
Inspection date	3 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Marion Wallace

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)	476
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	Andrew Cook
Headteacher	Richard Mason
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Aintree Way Milking Bank Dudley DY1 2SL
Telephone number	01384 816695
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Introduction

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

The impact of leadership and management in planning for, and bringing about, improvements in pupils' achievements and personal development

Progress made by more able pupils throughout the school, especially in mathematics

Provision and progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils, members of staff and governors; observation of teaching; views of parents; and scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. 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, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Milking Bank Primary School is a larger than average primary school. Children start school in the Nursery on a part-time basis as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average but none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award, Local Authority Health Promoting School award, Activemark, Silver Eco Award, NACEICT Mark and Financial Management Certificate.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Overall effectiveness is outstanding. Pupils blossom in the positive learning environment because the school ethos is warm, friendly and challenging. Pupils receive an outstanding education. They learn to become part of, and contribute to, the school and wider community. The school works closely with, and is strongly supported by, parents. Most parents are very positive about the school, with one describing it as: 'An excellent school where children are extremely happy and make superb progress because dedicated and hardworking teachers do an outstanding job.' Pupils acknowledge that the school encourages them to do their best but that it is fun and enjoyable. One pupil, reflecting the views of many, said, 'I really, really like school, I love it, I can't wait to come every day.'

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and enables them to reach standards that are well above average by the time they leave school. Very effective induction arrangements and care in the EYFS ensure all children settle into school life extremely well. A balance of good teaching and well-planned activities ensure EYFS children make good gains in most areas of learning. Outdoor learning has improved recently but teachers do not always plan work that is sufficiently challenging for children in all areas of learning when they work outdoors. Relationships are excellent and contribute to the outstanding personal development and care throughout the EYFS. Most children enter the EYFS with skills that are similar to those expected for their age. They make good progress so that they enter Year 1 with standards that are above average in all areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make excellent progress and, by the age of seven, standards are exceptionally high in writing and well above average in reading and mathematics. Pupils in Year 2 showed high levels of enjoyment and enthusiasm when challenged to find describing words for their writing, more able pupils using the thesaurus to select words such as 'objectionable' and 'sinful' to enrich their writing.

Pupils continue to make significant gains in their learning. The school is exceptionally adept at setting challenging but achievable targets for all pupils. The successful whole-school focus on writing resulted in improved standards being reached by pupils at both the expected and higher levels in the 2008 national tests. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 they attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. High standards are also achieved in subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT), history and geography. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers because they are extremely well supported.

The very high quality of academic guidance and personal care contributes very successfully to pupils' outstanding personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils greatly enjoy school and appreciate the friendships and 'family atmosphere' of the school. This is reflected in good levels of attendance. They develop into mature, sensitive individuals concerned for the needs of others. Pupils have an outstanding awareness of how to maintain healthy lifestyles. They talk knowledgeably about healthy food and clearly enjoy all physical activity. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they have very positive attitudes to their learning. Excellent relationships with adults and each other, and strong moral guidance, promote a thorough knowledge of safety. Pupils say, 'Absolutely no bullying here'. They contribute exceptionally well to ideas and actions to help those less fortunate than themselves through fund raising to help build a nursery in The Gambia and support an orphanage in Cuke, Albania. Pupils of all ages take a mature responsibility towards the school and their community. They are proud to be play leaders, Global Gang members, litter police, prefects and part of the

gardening gang and recycling team. Pupils are very knowledgeable about caring for their environment and are extremely well prepared for a life in a multicultural community. The school council does an excellent job and encourages pupils to consider what they can do to improve their school and the wider world. Preparation for economic well-being is excellent, with pupils developing very competent skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. They build on this further through many team-building opportunities.

Teaching is outstanding and contributes significantly to the impressive gains pupils make in all aspects of their learning. Lessons are challenging, fun and well matched to pupils' abilities. There are very rigorous systems in place to check on how well pupils are doing. Excellent relationships and consistently high expectations help to ensure the highly motivated pupils are keen to tackle challenging work. Older pupils talk excitedly about the 500 club, where they are challenged to answer 500 mental mathematics questions in five minutes. Visiting theatre groups are used extremely well by teachers to stimulate and enrich pupils' writing.

The exceptionally rich curriculum meets the needs of all pupils very effectively and makes a valuable contribution to their personal development. The school year is full of visits, visitors, projects and activities which bring learning alive. The quality of sports and arts is very high. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the theme days such as the Viking Day and the Florence Nightingale Day. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are used extremely well to support other subjects. There are extensive opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of extra-curricular activities and to learn to play musical instruments. Many play in the school orchestra and sing in the choir.

Excellent care, guidance and support from all members of staff are other factors underpinning the pupils' increasing self-confidence and their personal qualities. All staff monitor pupils' academic progress extremely well and intervention strategies to support pupils are very well planned and successfully ensure all groups of pupils achieve as well as they can. More able pupils talk enthusiastically about the 'Einstein' and 'Master Maths' classes that help them improve their mathematical skills. Marking and target setting are exceptionally well developed; consequently, pupils have a clear understanding of how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. There are robust systems for safeguarding. The 'Out of Hours Club' is extremely well run. Pupils enjoy their time there because activities are well organised and suitably matched to their interests and ability. The staff are warm and create a safe, friendly environment.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is an excellent role model and is extremely well supported by his senior team. Together, they provide extremely effective and clear educational direction. There is a strong, enthusiastic commitment from all staff to provide each pupil with the best possible education. Leaders have a very thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Monitoring pupils' progress throughout the school is exemplary and highlights any areas of weakness, leading to improvement, as in writing and achievement of more able pupils. Community cohesion is outstanding; the exceptional planning ensures that pupils' awareness of the school, local and global communities is impressive. Pupils have an excellent awareness and understanding of other faiths and religions. Governors are extremely well organised and support and challenge the school effectively. The school has made rapid progress since the last inspection. This impressive record of continual improvement, excellent organisation, consistency over time and the strong, shared vision demonstrate its very clear capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is good. Milking Bank Primary School is an extremely inclusive setting and consequently all children settle very well. Children make good progress in the EYFS, and the majority exceed the expected level by the time they enter Year 1. Relationships in the EYFS are extremely strong and consequently children make outstanding progress in their personal development. The quality of teaching and learning is good. High expectations and an exciting, well-planned curriculum that is well matched to the children's needs contribute to the good progress they make in all areas of learning. Most activities are fun and challenging. Opportunities to challenge children in all areas of learning outdoors, however, are sometimes missed because teachers do not always plan work that is sufficiently demanding. Children make good progress in their speaking and communication skills because teachers encourage them to respond individually to questions and to talk about their ideas. Personal aspects of care and welfare are exemplary and this contributes to a very positive start. The transition into and out of the Nursery and Reception classes is very smooth because communication is excellent. The EYFS leader provides good leadership and management and has established a very positive learning environment that ensures children are provided with a good start to their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan work that is sufficiently challenging for EYFS children in all areas of learning when they work outdoors.

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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 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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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**

4 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milking Bank Primary School, Dudley DY1 2SL

Thank you for helping with the inspection. We enjoyed visiting your school and talking to you and your teachers. We will remember how considerate you were and how much you enjoyed learning and taking part in all the extra activities. We agree with most of your parents and with you, that Milking Bank is an outstanding school.

- These are the things we liked most about your school:
- You make a good start to your education in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You make excellent progress throughout the rest of the school because you are extremely well taught. Learning activities are rich and varied. Teachers give you activities that make you work hard and you enjoy your lessons a lot. Your teaching assistants are very skilled and help those who need extra help very well.
- You are extremely polite and consider the needs of others.
- Your behaviour is exemplary.
- You appreciate and really enjoy the activities in school, after school and the many trips, visitors and visits. These all help you to learn more about yourselves and the wider world.
- The school is very good at helping you to lead a healthy life and to feel safe.
- Your school is extremely well led and managed and this contributes to your excellent achievement and helps you feel very safe and well cared for. Your headteacher, teachers and governors are all working together superbly well to make your school even better.
- You make excellent gains in preparing for later life. Your progress is outstanding in all the skills and knowledge you will need for your next step in life.
- Your parents and carers are extremely pleased that you come to this school.
- What we have asked your school to do now:
- Plan really challenging work for the younger children outside in all aspects of their learning.

We wish you well for the future. Work hard and enjoy everything your school has to offer.

Yours sincerely

Marion Wallace

Lead inspector