

Millfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104203
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	323987
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Debbie Vials

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)	183
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	Dave Senior
Headteacher	Peter Bispham
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Catshill Road Brownhills Walsall WS8 6BN
Telephone number	01543 452513
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has before- and after-school provision, which is run by a private provider. There is a part-time Nursery class and one Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It provides an environment where pupils feel safe and receive a good level of pastoral care and support. Pupils' good personal development and well-being are evident in their mature behaviour seen in and around school and through their positive attitudes to learning. The satisfactory curriculum is effectively enriched through a high number of visitors and educational visits that help bring learning to life. This has included a Roman centurion who worked with the pupils in history and a visiting artist who helped the pupils to make face masks. A wide range of extra-curricular activities encourage and support the pupils' good understanding of healthy living, including class allotments where each year group grow a range of fresh produce.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment that is below, or well below the levels expected and children's language skills are often at very low levels. They make satisfactory progress through the Nursery and Reception classes but the lack of outdoor learning experiences restricts children's development in certain areas of the curriculum. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the rest of the school although this has not always been the case in the recent past where there is evidence of underachievement as a result of ineffective teaching. This has been eradicated. Standards are broadly average by time pupils leave in Year 6.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Although the school has strengths in the quality of the school's pastoral provision including the welfare and care of pupils, teachers' academic guidance does not provide sufficient information for pupils to help improve their work. Parents generally hold the school in high regard and are pleased with the way members of staff look after their children, with one parent, representing the views of many, saying, 'I feel that Millfield provides a good, solid, all-round education for my child. I do not have any concerns and if any arose would feel confident that the school would be 100% supportive.' Teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage behaviour well.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Although teaching is effective in a number of classes, too much is satisfactory, which prevents pupils making good progress all of the time. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher ensures that pupils' well-being is given high priority. The leadership team have created an environment where relationships are good and individuals feel valued. There is now a greater sense of purpose amongst teachers to improve the attainment and achievement of all learners. However, the monitoring of pupils' progress is insufficiently regular and rigorous. New initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact, such as the introduction of targets in writing and the use of new assessment procedures in mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Both of these processes have focused teachers on pupils' learning outcomes and are resulting in a sharper delivery amongst the better teaching seen. Subject leaders and governors share the aspirations for the school but their role in monitoring provision is only just being established and it is not yet strong enough. As a result of this, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

In Reception, children are working at below expected levels and will enter Year 1 with below average standards. Children have made satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. Enthusiastic and friendly adults support the children to ensure they are well cared for, safe and secure. This contributes successfully to pupils' good personal development and ensures children develop confidence and are happy and settled. As a result, children behave well and play collaboratively. This is a particular strength of the provision which contributes well to pupils' good personal qualities as they get older. Routines are well established. The use of a specific phonics programme is having a positive impact on the children's language development. Lack of suitable outdoor provision limits children's independence and free choice. This also has a negative impact on progress in some areas of learning. For example, aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world are restricted because there are too few opportunities for the children to explore the world around them. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a clear understanding of what needs improving. Plans are in place to develop a dedicated outdoor area. Parents and carers are appropriately informed of their child's progress and are encouraged to be involved in their learning. Induction procedures for both children and their parents and carers are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rigour and regularity of the monitoring of individual pupil's progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the academic guidance pupils receive so that they have a clearer idea on how to improve their work.
- Develop the outdoor learning area in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school has successfully eradicated previous underachievement which was the result of ineffective teaching. Although achievement is now satisfactory, pupils' progress accelerates in particular year groups, for example it has improved for Year 6, as a result of good teaching and the additional effective support provided for different groups of pupils. The academic targets provided for pupils are not always challenging enough and the monitoring of pupils' progress is not sufficiently rigorous, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided with effective support which enables them to make the same progress as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Behaviour is good as seen in the mature and sensible attitudes of pupils, who are polite, welcoming and considerate. Playtimes are calm. Rates of attendance are satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. However, the pupils have a limited understanding of the different cultures and religious beliefs of others. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep healthy. This is encouraged through the many, well-attended extra-curricular sporting activities, regular swimming sessions in the school pool and the good attention paid to encouraging healthy eating. Pupils have a good

awareness of how to keep safe, however the school recognises that safety on the internet is an area for development. The school council represents the pupils' views and they take on responsibilities willingly. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching, which is satisfactory overall, has positive features in all classes. Good relationships between members of staff and pupils contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school and teachers manage behaviour well. However, teaching is too variable and this can be seen in the uneven rates of progress that pupils make in different age groups. Teachers are aware of the need to provide challenge for the wide range of different abilities in each class, but they do not consistently pitch work at the right level for all pupils, especially in English and mathematics. When this happens, pupils' learning slows. Teachers give clear instructions at the start of lessons and teaching assistants are used well to support small groups and individuals. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work but do not always give sufficient guidance, or make adequate reference to individual learning targets, in order to help pupils improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Provision in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is satisfactory enabling pupils to make sound progress in these areas. The recent move towards a more creative, cross-curricular approach between subjects is yet to have an impact on raising pupils' achievement although they find lessons interesting and exciting. Evidence from pupils' work indicates that a significant number are still undertaking low-level tasks, such as colouring and copying, and there is an over-reliance on worksheets in certain areas of the curriculum. Good efforts to enrich the curriculum have been made, through the wide range of visits and visitors to the school. These contribute well towards pupils' personal development and include a residential visit to Wales and visits to an airport and local farm. The introduction of the 'Big Write' is starting to have an impact on improving pupils' access to writing, although promotion of these skills across the wider curriculum in other subjects is insufficient.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Adults know the pupils well and good relationships enable pupils to feel safe and secure in the knowledge that adults will help them if they have any particular issues or concerns. Procedures and support for pupils who find school difficult are secure, and these pupils make similar progress to their peers. The school has satisfactory links with outside agencies to support the wider needs of all pupils, and all safeguarding procedures and risk assessments are in place and fulfilled requirements at the time of the inspection.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. The use of targets to help pupils understand how to improve their work is at an early stage of development. While teachers mark work regularly, this varies in its effectiveness in giving good guidance to pupils in how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Staff place a high priority on the welfare and care of pupils with a strong and successful emphasis on helping pupils to become good citizens. Whilst the headteacher has established a clear picture of what needs improving, the pace of change has been sound rather than good and standards and the rates of pupils' progress have only recently begun to improve. Monitoring and the processes of school self-evaluation have not used performance data effectively or decisively enough to ensure that rapid improvement takes place, particularly in English and mathematics and in the quality of provision. Nevertheless, some initiatives are having a positive impact, such as in writing. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors have an understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development but do not monitor and check the work of the school rigorously enough.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which 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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	3
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**

26 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Millfield Primary School, Walsall, WS8 6BN

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were very polite and friendly. We found your school is providing a satisfactory education, which means that there are some good things and also some areas that could be improved.

Things that we found out about your school.

- You try hard in lessons and make steady progress as you move up through the school. Standards in English, mathematics and science are similar to those found in most schools by Year 6.
- You behave well in lessons and in the playground. You are polite to adults. You enjoy school and take responsibility sensibly.
- Adults are very kind and take good care of you.
- Teaching is satisfactory as is the school's curriculum. The many visits and visitors make lessons interesting.
- You know how to keep healthy, enjoy exercise and have grown your own fresh food.

What we have asked your school to do.

- We have asked your teachers to look very carefully at the progress each of you make in English and mathematics.
- We have asked the school to give you more help and guidance on how to improve your work and make it better, particularly in English and mathematics.
- We have asked the school to improve the outdoor learning area for the children in Nursery and Reception.

Yours faithfully

Debbie Vials

Lead inspector