

Millfield Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120404
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	327273
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Miller

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	211
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	Dr Robert Wilson
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Reeve
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mill Lane Heighington Lincoln Lincolnshire LN4 1RQ
Telephone number	01522 872625
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school, which serves the community of Heighington and the surrounding area near Lincoln. Pupils enter the school, in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), with broadly expected levels of attainment. Most pupils are of White British origin. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups, or those for whom English is an additional language, is below average. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils who require additional learning support is below average, but the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory, which is how it judges itself, and it gives satisfactory value for money. This is because pupils make satisfactory progress from the time they join the school to the end of Year 6. There have been inconsistencies in performance since the last inspection, particularly for potentially higher-attaining pupils. However, the school's self-evaluation accurately recognises what must be done to secure improvement. This not only includes providing more challenge for all pupils but also raising standards in the core subjects. Some important initiatives have been put in place, but these are in their early days of implementation. Such initiatives involve the more regular and informed use of assessment to help set accurate targets for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school is in the process of sharpening its approach to the monitoring of learning throughout the school. Its productive and close work with the local authority in order to achieve these goals is helping to secure the required improvements. Its capacity to improve is satisfactory. This is being underpinned by overall sound leadership, management and governance of the school and good co-operative teamwork. In addition, the school and its pupils are able to celebrate some important strengths in pastoral care and the pupils' personal development.

Standards are currently average by Years 2 and 6, and this was reflected in the 2008 national tests and assessments. Overall, pupils who find learning difficult receive sound support to enable them to make satisfactory progress in relation to their abilities. Learning and teaching are satisfactory overall. Teachers use assessment routinely in lessons to aid planning and the setting of accurate targets for pupils. The school has fallen short of its targets in the past, particularly for its more able pupils, but those set for the current year are achievable. This is because the teaching is now challenging pupils to tackle higher-level work, although this approach is not firmly established in all lessons. Suitable training has been undertaken to help staff improve challenge for pupils by stepping-up the accuracy of frequent assessment.

There are good links with parents and carers, the large majority of whom appreciate the 'family feel' of the school. Many praise the school for the way it meets their children's social needs. Pupils' personal development and behaviour are good, their attitudes to learning are positive and they clearly enjoy their life and work at school. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported satisfactorily. Pastoral care for pupils is good. Links between the school, its support agencies and education partners are also good. Community cohesion is satisfactory. There are well-established local community links but broader, global community links are not developed sufficiently to support fully pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. Overall, the school has worked hard to create an environment for learning to underpin the improvements it wishes to achieve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management of the EYFS are ensuring improving standards and achievement for children in the Reception class. The impact of strategies to raise standards is being established firmly and children are now achieving above expectations overall at this stage of their development. Their welfare is promoted well. The new approaches to teaching, learning and the EYFS curriculum, which were introduced during the last academic year, are starting to pay dividends. Children are making good progress across the range of their expected areas of learning and development through a balance of adult-led and free-choice activities. This is

because of good teaching and the effective use of new tracking procedures, record keeping and assessment strategies, which have resulted in increased challenge for the children. Particularly good progress has been made in the children's personal, social and creative development. Children's attitudes to learning are good. They are inquisitive, gaining a good knowledge and understanding of the world and life around them during indoor and outdoor activities. There are good links with parents and carers, who praise the support they receive from the school, the ways their children make friends and the atmosphere for learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school by providing sufficient challenge for all pupils, particularly for those who are more able or potentially higher attaining.
- Ensure all teachers focus more clearly and consistently on the development of pupils' key skills through the more regular use of assessment.
- Ensure the regular, established monitoring of lessons by the school's leaders focuses more firmly on the quality of pupils' learning.

A small proportion of the 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

Standards are currently average in Years 2 and 6, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have made satisfactory progress overall from the time they entered the school. Since the last inspection in 2005, there has been a dip in standards in Year 2, and inconsistent standards in national tests in Year 6. The interim results for the 2008 national tests indicate the percentage of pupils in Year 6 gaining the nationally expected Level 4 was slightly above average, but the proportion gaining higher levels was below. However, the school is taking the necessary action to address the underachievement by more able pupils. The 2008 results and inspection evidence indicate the school's strategies are proving successful. Improved tracking of pupils' progress by their teachers is showing an increasing number of pupils attaining the higher levels in each year group.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils feel justifiably proud of their achievements. They grow in self-confidence and enjoy school. This is reflected in above average attendance and good participation in school activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good but their awareness of cultural diversity and the global community is not as strong. Pupils are polite, friendly and caring. Behaviour is good. Pupils take seriously their responsibilities, and respect and follow the school rules. Occasional disagreements are resolved quickly as pupils get along well together and report no bullying. They contribute suitably to the school and local community, for instance by suggesting ideas for developing the village playground. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, but those who bring snacks and packed lunches do not always eat healthily at school. They have a well-developed understanding of how to keep safe and older pupils often look after younger ones. By developing suitable basic and enterprise skills, and the ability to work alongside others, pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Assessment is being used increasingly effectively in lesson planning. In the good or better lessons, pupils of all abilities are given tasks which challenge them and build on existing learning. However, in lessons which are satisfactory, planning does not always cater consistently well for the most able pupils in particular. Nevertheless, teachers generally make sure pupils understand the focus of their learning and the lesson. Involvement of pupils in reviewing their learning as they go along, and evaluating how well they are doing, is developing steadily. Lessons also generally end with a helpful evaluation of learning. However, there are inconsistencies in the extent to which teachers actively involve the pupils in these reviews. Working relationships between staff and pupils are good and so pupils feel secure and willingly answer questions. Support staff are briefed well and often contribute effectively by leading small groups. Teaching makes effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to present information and to enable pupils to learn in a range of subjects. Pupils say they enjoy most lessons and find tasks interesting in a supportive atmosphere for learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum includes suitable provision for teaching basic skills, including additional programmes to boost attainment in literacy. There is also appropriate provision for the study of a modern foreign language. Secure links between subjects are being established. These are making learning more meaningful and relevant for the pupils, and take account of their interests. However, the curriculum does not meet fully the learning needs of some pupils as work is still in progress to provide further opportunities for potential higher attainers. Nevertheless, there is suitable enrichment for pupils with particular gifts and talents, principally through productive links with secondary schools and making families aware of opportunities in the local community. Pupils enjoy a good range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors, all of which add enjoyment and interest and help to bring learning to life. The school's strong commitment to the arts is reflected in good provision for the creative and performing arts. A majority of the pupils are members of the school's choir or learn to play a musical instrument.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are cared for, guided and supported satisfactorily overall. Pastoral care is good. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. Staff are vigilant and pupils are well supervised. Any potential risks are assessed carefully and suitable action is taken to minimise these. There are regular opportunities for pupils' achievements to be recognised, including those occurring out of school. There are good arrangements to support pupils when they join or leave the school. Staff call on the services of a wide range of external agencies to support pupils who experience difficulties in learning.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has recently revised the system for checking on pupils' progress and is moving appropriately to one which relies more on frequent and thorough assessment by teachers to supplement testing. Staff are increasingly involving older pupils in the process of reviewing their learning, but most pupils are not clear enough about what they

need to do to improve. Parents are given good information about how they can help their children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection in raising standards in mathematics, improving governance and managing the disruptive behaviour of a minority of pupils. The work currently being undertaken to raise standards shows that satisfactory action is being taken by the headteacher and other school leaders. Monitoring by leaders at all levels is improving. However, the regular observation of lessons is insufficiently focused on the quality of pupils' learning and the ways pupils can be engaged more successfully in learning. Nevertheless, the improvements which have been gained, together with sound self-evaluation, show satisfactory capacity to secure further improvements. Consequently, although the school is still in the process of establishing its track record, a sound start has been made. Subject leadership is satisfactory and it is being strengthened, both through training and new appointments. Leaders and governors have a secure understanding of their accountability and responsibilities, and are not afraid to seek help and guidance when necessary. Staff have shown they can work well together. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily through its appropriate strategy.

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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 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?	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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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**

28 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Millfield Community Primary School, Lincoln, LN4 1RQ

I would like to thank all of you for welcoming us so warmly into your school. We were immediately struck by your politeness and the ways in which even the youngest of you approached us and asked us questions. You showed us that the words you sang in your Monday morning assembly have a real meaning for you: 'We take a pride in the things we do. Learning together and having fun.' Your school enables you to make satisfactory progress in your work and learning.

These are the things we found are best about your school.

- You get a good start to your school life in the Reception class.
- You behave well, and your enjoyment in life at school is often very good.
- You take good care of each other and responsibility for each other.
- Your teachers and other staff take good care of you to ensure you are safe.

In your assembly on Tuesday you sang: 'Everything around us is a-moving along. Living and learning as the day goes on.' Your teachers also appreciate this and we have agreed with them that what your school can do now is:

- help you to gain even higher standards and levels in English, mathematics and science by the time you get to the end of Years 2 and 6. They will do this by making sure you are given that extra challenge, as you continue to learn, in order to ensure you make good progress
- put in action, from next month, the plans your teachers have already developed to improve the ways they assess your work and set targets for you to achieve
- for your headteacher and other leading teachers to look more closely at the ways you learn and achieve, when your work is seen and your lessons are monitored.

During singing practice you showed an appreciation of the words: 'Reach for the stars and you will achieve what you are looking for.' We ask you to continue to strive, with your teachers and the other adults at your school, to aim for this goal.

With all best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Miller

Lead inspector