

# Millbrook Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133582
<b>Local Authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	328711
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anthony Shield

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	299
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Terry Ward
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire Griffin-Felton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Worsley Road Freshbrook Swindon SN5 8NU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 872800
<b>Fax number</b>	01793 882589

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 September 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Millbrook Primary School is a new school, created out of the merger of two schools. It serves an area of mixed housing in west Swindon. While most pupils are from a White British background, there are small numbers of pupils from a wide range of other ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school admits children into the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at the age of four. The school also houses a Special Resource Provision (SRP) for seven pupils with complex learning and physical needs.

## 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 overall effectiveness is satisfactory, but this judgement fails to capture the sense of purpose and energy which the headteacher has generated. In just over one year, this new school has come a very long way and has established a clear identity and ambition which the school community has adopted with enthusiasm. A strong commitment to social inclusion and community cohesion is reflected in the school's approach to valuing individuals and 'making people feel good'. Most parents are strongly supportive of the new school. 'A real community with a friendly approach and staff team' was typical of comments received from parents.

Pupils' standards are broadly average, and their achievements are satisfactory. Although some pupils underachieved last year during the amalgamation, this is no longer the case, and challenging but realistic targets have been set to raise expectations. There is no significant difference between standards in English, mathematics and science, although writing is a relatively weaker area, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

Improvements have been driven by an emphasis on ensuring a more consistent quality of teaching. Although some variability remains, teaching is securely satisfactory and much is good. There is a good climate for learning and a purposeful hum in most classrooms. Pupils are keen to do their best and take pride in their work. Activities are well planned to excite and interest pupils. Some teachers lack confidence in judging how well pupils are doing and gearing subsequent work to their individual needs, so the tasks they are set are sometimes insufficiently demanding. The satisfactory curriculum is well balanced, with a good emphasis on acquiring basic skills, and an increasing emphasis on linking subjects to make them more meaningful. The school offers good opportunities for enrichment through visits, visitors and well supported extra-curricular clubs. The visit of a theatre group during the inspection was received enthusiastically by pupils.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory. While the emotional and social well-being of pupils is given a high priority, and the support for vulnerable pupils in particular is sensitive and secure, academic guidance and support is less well developed or rooted in everyday practice. Pupils are friendly and cheerful. They enjoy school, and take increasing pride in belonging to the new school. In lessons, their good attitudes help ensure that they make progress. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is thoughtful and courteous. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, whether as playground pals or members of the school council. Overall, pupils' personal development is good.

The headteacher has set about establishing a new school with a confident authority. Her inspirational approach has quickly gained the support of staff, pupils and parents. The support of governors, astutely led by the chair of governors, has also been an important factor. As a result, the school has a clear sense of direction and purpose. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. Some staff lack confidence in leading and managing improvements in their areas of responsibility. Monitoring by the headteacher has ensured she knows the school well, but self-evaluation is not yet threaded through the work of all managers. As a result of the progress already made in such a short time, the school has a good capacity to improve, and is poised to make further gains.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Good provision in the EYFS enables children to progress well and make a positive start to their learning. Arrangements for children entering school are good, and parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. Pupils come into school with skills typically below expected levels, particularly in their communication and language skills. They make good progress because of the well-designed activities and good teaching, which provides the children with a wide range of suitable activities. These stimulate their interest and help them develop. Good leadership and management ensure a safe and caring environment where children can actively take part and make choices in their learning. All adults are responsive to children's needs, assessing their progress carefully. Children in both Reception classes enjoy working and playing together, and adults interact with them well, providing a supportive environment. However, the outside area is limited and provides too few opportunities for children to enjoy large apparatus and outdoor learning. Children are well prepared for entry to Year 1, although their language and literacy development remains weaker than other aspects of their learning.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Plan more consistently challenging activities in lessons through checking the progress pupils make and setting work geared to their individual needs.
- Build the capacity of all leaders and managers to monitor and evaluate within their areas of responsibility and to contribute to school self-evaluation. 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

Overall standards vary but are improving and are close to the national average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, although for some pupils it is good. In 2008, the first year the school was open, preliminary results in national tests and assessments indicate that standards in both Years 2 and 6 were below average, suggesting that some pupils did not achieve their potential. However, pupils' current work shows that underachievement has now largely been eliminated and school data indicate that pupils will do much better this year. Evidence from the inspection supports this judgment. Action taken to improve performance has already made a difference to the progress pupils are making in maths and writing, although there is more to be done to raise attainment in writing in Years 1 and 2 in particular. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with disabilities also make satisfactory progress. Those in the SRP make good progress in their social and communication skills because of the skilled individual support and attention they receive.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

The school's caring approach and attention to individuals encourages good personal development. Pupils speak positively about the new school and enjoy coming. Overall attendance is satisfactory. They take part in all activities with enthusiasm. The vast majority of pupils behave well, treating each other with politeness and respect. The challenging behaviour of a

few pupils is well managed. Pupils report little bullying and that adults stamp it out quickly. Pupils understand how to keep safe and are confident in the culture of trust and good relationships. Their understanding of a healthy lifestyle is good, reflected in the school's award of Healthy School status. They know the importance of regular exercise, and many participate in the after-school sports clubs. Pupils make a good contribution to both the school and wider community, through such activities as charitable fund raising. Although, overall, pupils are developing satisfactory skills for later life, some skills, such as team work are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, contributing much to the school's harmonious atmosphere.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

A key priority in the new school has been to raise the quality of teaching to that of the best. The school has made good strides in achieving this objective, although there is still more to be done. A strong sense of purpose and positive attitudes characterise the learning. Good relationships and a sense of partnership encourage pupils to do their best. Teachers encourage pupils through a frequent use of praise, building their confidence and self-esteem. Planning is carefully thought out and activities are usually well designed to excite and engage the interest of pupils. An emphasis on encouraging learning through pupils working together, often independently of the teacher, is developing more self-reliant learners. Pupils say that they especially enjoy this approach to learning, relishing the opportunities to be active participants. While activities are usually adapted well to meet the needs of the wide range of abilities and ages in some classes, this is not always the case. Teaching is less successful when teachers fail to assess how well pupils understand the work and adapt their planning accordingly to meet the personal needs of pupils. Marking is regular and supportive and increasingly helps pupils move their learning forward. Teaching assistants provide effective support in most classes, although the quality of support is patchy.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum, while satisfactory overall, has a number of good features, and some imaginative and innovative ideas are being developed. Good links are made between subjects to ensure pupils understand the relevance of what they are learning. Regular focus weeks provide good opportunities for study in depth and parents are actively encouraged to support through initiatives such as 'Mothers' Monday' and 'Fathers' Friday'. Whole-school topics such as 'Inspirational People' provide good opportunities for pupils to learn from the examples of others. There is a good range of well-supported enrichment activities and clubs, and visits and visitors make an important contribution. There is a well-planned personal, social and health programme. While work is usually well planned to meet the range of learning needs, this is not consistently the case. Additional programmes to extend gifted and talented pupils are underdeveloped.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

The school's commitment to the care and respect of all pupils is clear. Staff work successfully to nurture a supportive ethos. The care for pupils with complex needs in the SRP is exceptional. Good relationships with outside agencies ensure extra support when needed. Through the school, health and safety procedures are thorough and safeguarding procedures fully in place. Child protection procedures meet statutory requirements. Procedures for supporting pupils' academic progress are newly in place. They now provide a secure and reliable benchmark for measuring progress and identifying potential underachievement, although procedures to identify pupils with learning difficulties are not always effective because some teachers lack confidence in identifying them. Meetings to discuss the progress of individual pupils are held regularly and these are proving increasingly helpful. These relatively new systems need time to be rooted in everyday practice and to be fully adopted by all class teachers.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Decisive and committed leadership by the headteacher has very quickly created a vision for the new school. She is well supported by her deputy and all staff, who have embraced her ideas and change with enthusiasm. A majority of parents are very supportive of the school and recognise the school is moving forward with vigour. A newly appointed leadership team has provided a clear direction for others to follow. Monitoring is regular and constructive. As yet, however, self-evaluation is not woven into the fabric of the school through the full involvement of all middle managers and governors. The school rightly recognises the scope for developing the work of all staff further in leading and managing developments in different aspects of school improvement. Governors are coming together well to support the new school under the judicious leadership of the chair of governors. They make an increasingly effective contribution both to strategic planning and in holding the school to account. Already the initiatives to raise achievement are beginning to make a difference. The school has already made tremendous strides and is well placed to make further improvements.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### 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 <sup>1</sup> 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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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**

25 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Millbrook Primary School, Swindon SN5 8NU

- We very much enjoyed our visit to your new school. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. It is obvious you enjoy coming to school. We agree with what you told us. Millbrook is providing you with a satisfactory education and is getting better all the time. There are a number of good points:
  - You enjoy learning and are keen to do your best.
  - Most of you behave very well and are polite and thoughtful.
  - Everybody at school gets on well together.
  - Teachers plan work which is interesting and fun.
  - Most of you make satisfactory progress; some are doing even better.
  - While teaching is satisfactory, your teachers are working hard to make it even more challenging and interesting for you.
  - The school takes care of you, ensuring you feel safe and well looked after.
  - The headteacher and all the teachers are working successfully to make your school even better.

We have asked the teachers to do the following in order to make things even better.

- Make sure that you make better progress in writing, particularly those of you in Years 1 and 2.
- Make sure they know how well you are doing and set you work which makes each of you think hard.
- Help all teachers to check how well things are going in their areas of responsibility so that they can all contribute to making your school even better!

You can certainly help the teachers with these things. Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and good luck with your work in the future!

Yours sincerely

Tony Shield Lead Inspector