

# Milton Road Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133930
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328771
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Best

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)	467
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	19
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Lewin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sue Romero
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2006
<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>	Ascham Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB4 2BD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01223 712333
<b>Fax number</b>	01223 712119

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how effectively the school is improving pupils' achievement in writing
- how well pupils know what they need to do to improve their work
- the school's promotion of community cohesion.

Inspectors gathered evidence from:

- observations of lessons
- scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and records
- discussions with pupils, parents, governors, the headteacher and staff
- scrutiny of school policies and documentation
- analysis of parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire.

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

## Description of the school

The number of pupils in the school is nearly twice the national average. The school serves a mix of privately owned and rented properties just north of the city centre and is oversubscribed. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The number of pupils joining the school other than at the start of Reception is below average.

About 75% of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with others from a wide range of ethnicities. A greater than average proportion of pupils have English as an additional language and just over 10% are at the early stages of English language acquisition. Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage at the beginning of the school year following their fourth birthday. Due to a rise in numbers, an additional Reception class was established by the local authority at the start of this school year. When they start in Reception, children's overall skills and experiences are similar to those expected for their age but the range is very wide.

Although the overall proportions of pupils with special educational needs and statements outlining their needs are broadly average, the number in each year group varies significantly. The predominant special educational needs are moderate learning difficulties, autism and emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school was previously inspected in 2006, shortly after moving into the present purpose-built premises and following the amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools on the old site. The current headteacher and deputy headteacher are retiring at the end of the school year. The breakfast and after school clubs that meet each school day on the premises are run by a private provider. This provision is inspected and reported upon separately.

The school holds a number of awards including, Artsmark Gold, Activemark, Healthy School Award, ICTmark, International School Award, Investors in People and The Teaching Awards Commendation.

## 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 where pupils thrive in both their academic and personal development. The school has made excellent progress since the last inspection, particularly in developing its ethos and learning environment in the new building and grounds. This has helped it to sustain and further improve both provision and pupils' achievement. The school has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and speak highly of the excellent range of activities available. Attendance is above average, with very little regular absence. Pupils have an excellent understanding of keeping safe and say they have no hesitation in turning to staff for help. Pupils' excellent appreciation of keeping fit is reflected in their enthusiasm for walking and cycling to and from school, and their involvement in the many sporting activities provided. They have an excellent understanding of healthy eating and are justly proud of the many awards the school and its caterers have gained. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils are thoughtful and reflect carefully on what they see, hear and read: their cultural development is enhanced extremely well by regular opportunities to experience the richness of the arts, architecture and heritage within walking distance of the school. Pupils are exceedingly well prepared for the next stage of their education, enhanced by the school's excellent links with its partner providers and outside agencies. The school's promotion of community cohesion, based on a thorough analysis of its unique context, is excellent. This is particularly reflected in the high quality of pupils' respect for the views, opinions and beliefs of others, and their regard for the school's values and those of the wider community. Close links with a primary school in Ghana and pupils' pen friends links with an American school provide an international dimension that complements teaching and learning in the arts, geography and religious education.

Standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 are significantly above the national averages and have been maintained at these levels for a number of years. The differences that do occur from year to year are mainly due to variations in the proportions of pupils with learning difficulties: one exception was in English where the school's analysis of pupils' results in 2007 indicated a widening gap between reading and writing. Using this information, the school implemented a number of changes, in particular increasing the opportunities for pupils to write at greater length and for a wider range of purposes. Pupils' recent writing about key events in the Second World War, for example, demonstrates a mature and very effective grasp of structure, vocabulary and audience. As a result, standards in writing have risen for both girls and boys in Year 6 and are significantly higher than average. In addition, solid foundations have been established across the school to support further improvement.

Achievement is outstanding. Pupils across the school make consistently good, and at times exemplary, progress as they move through the school. Boys and girls make equally strong progress, working exceptionally well on their own or together in small groups. More able pupils successfully broaden and deepen their knowledge and understanding both in classroom through the challenging work they are given and in their personal reading research. Those with learning difficulties or at risk of falling behind are very well supported in taking the smaller steps needed to build successfully on their previous learning. Pupils learning English as an additional language make rapid progress and achieve very well. Again, the school's analysis of pupils' performance has been instrumental in boosting their achievement: its recent focus on developing pupils'

knowledge and understanding of subject-specific vocabulary, notably in mathematics and science, has benefited all groups of pupils but particularly those capable of the higher levels.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent, underpinned by mutual trust and respect. Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning reflect adults' high expectations of their behaviour and achievement. Classrooms are calm but busy places where time, space and learning resources are imaginatively and productively managed. Teachers' planning takes full account of pupils' previous learning. They are well challenged and their needs met through a carefully-balanced combination of direct teaching and practical activities in which they apply and further develop their skills and understanding. A particular strength is the way in which learners are encouraged to think through and address each step in learning: help is always at hand but invariably pupils find their own solutions and this strengthens their capacity for independent learning. High quality information and communication technology (ICT) resources, together with an excellent range of well-chosen programs, meet pupils' diverse learning needs very well.

The quality of care, guidance and support is excellent. Pastoral care is very well organised and highly effective. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and all statutory policies and practices are in place. The individual support for vulnerable pupils is discreet and expertly backed by outside agencies. Nearly all parents are highly supportive of the school and many freely give their time as volunteers in school. Since the last inspection, the school has constantly refined and developed its assessment procedures and the way in which it uses the information it gathers to advance pupils' learning. At the start of each lesson, staff clearly explain the learning intentions and what they expect different groups of pupils to achieve. Regular marking of pupils' work, often with comments signposting the next steps in learning, helps pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. Most pupils are familiar with their personal targets for improvement and can explain what they have to do to achieve these. The best examples are to be found in Year 6, where pupils' targets are sharply focused and they can pinpoint the specific steps they are taking to meet these. The school rightly identifies the need to now embed these systems and monitor their impact on pupils' achievement to ensure consistency across the school.

The school provides pupils with an outstanding range of curricular and other activities. The national strategies for literacy, numeracy and ICT are well established and expertly adapted to meet pupils' needs. Purposeful links between different subjects provide pupils with excellent opportunities to solve problems and develop their thinking skills. Extra-curricular sporting, arts and other activities take place before and after school and at lunchtimes: these are very well supported by boys and girls alike. Teaching and support staff, outside specialist providers and Year 6 pupils are all involved in running these activities. Day visits and residential trips complement the curriculum, with excellent use made of facilities such as art galleries and museums within walking distance of the school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding. Under the expert guidance and leadership of the headteacher, the senior leadership has successfully expanded and taken on additional responsibilities. Similarly, the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders have developed, particularly with the active involvement of subject governors. In consequence, all leaders in the school have first-hand involvement in monitoring the quality of provision and pupils' achievement. The school's self-evaluation procedures are highly effective in identifying its strengths and areas for improvement and these are well focused in the priorities in the school development plan. As a result, targets are challenging and often exceeded because of the high quality systems for analysing and evaluating progress.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The effectiveness of the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Overall, children's skills and knowledge are broadly similar to those expected for their age when they start their Reception year: however, the range is particularly wide and the proportions of very able and less able children vary from year to year. Achievement is consistently good and sometimes outstanding because of the excellent quality of teaching. By the time they move to Year 1, standards are above average in all areas of learning, and particularly in mathematical development. The school's emphasis on developing children's early writing skills, which have traditionally been lower than other skills on entry, is successfully helping to raise standards.

The learning environment is inviting, very caring and safe. Induction arrangements are excellent and children quickly become familiar with daily routines. Parents are particularly pleased with the quality of information provided and the ease with which they can talk with staff. Children's personal development and well-being has a very high profile. Relationships are excellent and children's independence develops outstandingly well. Through a first-class balance of adult-led and activities children choose for themselves, themes such as 'Under the Sea' are very effectively developed. The purpose-built outside areas are used to the full throughout the day without becoming overcrowded. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. The staff team has a very clear understanding of how young children learn and they work exceedingly well together. Their innovative and often outstanding practice responds very effectively to the needs of individual children.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Embed procedures for ensuring that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and monitor the impact of this on their achievement.

**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](http://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?	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 <sup>1</sup> 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

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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>	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

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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

26 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milton Road Primary School, Cambridge, CB4 2BD

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. You told us a great deal about your work and all the marvellous activities the school provides for you. The standard of singing in the choir's early morning rehearsals for 'Oliver' was stunning - it is great to see boys and girls performing so enthusiastically.

You all get on very well together and your behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. You have a really good understanding of keeping safe, especially on the roads and when using the Internet. Your knowledge of healthy living is second to none - especially the importance of eating a balanced diet - and you are rightly proud of the awards the school and the caterers have won. You work hard and do well. Your teachers have high expectations of your behaviour and the quality of your work: you meet these well through quickly getting down to what you have to, working well with each other and trying hard at all times. The standard of your writing in English has improved since you started writing in chapters - we much enjoyed reading your stories and accounts of events in the Second World War. You make excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT) in your work, and you are both quick and accurate in solving problems.

Since the last inspection, the school has improved the systems to help your teachers check on what you know and can do. They are making really good use of the information these provide to plan what you need to learn next. Often they share this with you at the start of lessons, in the comments they make when marking your books and when they set you a target. These help you to improve your work and Year 6 pupils are clearly experts in knowing their next steps in learning! We have asked the staff to make sure that you all know what you have to do to improve your work and for the school's leaders to check how well this helps you make even better progress. You can help them by remembering your targets, especially when starting a new piece of work, and checking for yourselves that you have met them.

Keep working hard and enjoying school.

Yours truly

Mike Best

Lead inspector