

Mill Field Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135162
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	329043
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Carmen Markham

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)	231
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	Mr Andrew Keefe
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Watkins
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Potternewton Mount Leeds West Yorkshire LS7 2DR
Telephone number	0113 262 0021
Fax number	0113 262 2378

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school is an amalgamation of two smaller schools. It opened as a new school on the site of one of these schools in September 2007. The school serves an area of some significant social disadvantage and the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above that usually found. The proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is almost double the national average. More pupils join or leave the school at a time other than the start of the year than is typically seen. The school admits children into part-time education from the age of three into its Early Years Foundation Stage provision. An after-school club is run by the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. The governors, leadership team and staff have been very effective in developing a new community school from two local schools that served different communities. It has a strong inclusive ethos and good learning environment. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They recognise the outstanding care, guidance and support that the school provides and the good progress that their children are making. Typically, parents write that, 'staff are very involved with the welfare of pupils in school. Children preparing for external tests are given fantastic support during and after school in this wonderful, caring and efficient school.'

When the school opened 20 months ago the overall standards attained by pupils were significantly below the national average. The school has focused on raising standards by improving teaching and introducing a range of effective strategies to support pupils' individual learning needs. This has proved to be very successful. Consequently detailed records of pupils' progress show that pupils in both key stages are making good progress in English, mathematics and science. The achievement of all pupils is good in relation to the standards they attained when the school opened. However, there has been insufficient time for standards to rise sufficiently to meet the national average. By the end of Year 6, standards are below the national average. They are lower in reading and writing than in mathematics and science.

Good leadership and management have enabled the school to provide high standards of care and good educational achievement. The headteacher's leadership style has allowed staff to concentrate on areas of development that will provide solid foundations for pupils' life-long learning.. All staff share the headteacher's vision for the school and are involved in evaluation and action planning. They have the confidence to identify challenging targets for the school and for pupils and this has made a significant contribution to improving standards. The school has good capacity to improve further.

Teaching is good with some examples of exemplary practice. Teachers plan lessons well, assess pupils' progress effectively and generally ensure that lessons meet the needs of different groups of pupils. They make good use of resources, including very effective teaching assistants, and relationships are excellent. Pupils develop well as independent learners and good questioning extends their thinking skills. The good curriculum does much to enrich learning and useful links are made between different subjects. The outstanding care, guidance and support enable all pupils to achieve well. High-quality personal support is identified for those pupils requiring additional help. This is very effective as pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress and achieve well in line with their peers.

Most pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning; they enjoy school and behave well. They respond well to the responsibilities they are given and, through the school council, they are involved in making decisions that will affect them. Pupils know how to stay safe and the actions they need to take to improve their work. However, absence levels are too high as a small but significant number of pupils miss more than 20% of school through absence. This limits their progress.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are significantly lower than the expectations for typical three-year-olds. They make good progress in all areas of learning, in relation to their starting points. By the end of the Reception class they are achieving broadly in line with the skills expected for their age, although, in some aspects of literacy and mathematical development they are a little below average. Children make excellent progress in their personal and social development. Carefully planned induction procedures ensure children quickly become used to daily routines and develop confidence and independence. Staff's initial assessments of children's skills are thorough and they monitor their progress rigorously. The care of children is outstanding. The provision is well staffed. Parents are involved in their child's learning and kept very well informed of their progress. They are very pleased with the quality of the provision.

Good leadership and management ensure that teaching and planning take account of the abilities and specific needs of all children. The curriculum is expertly planned through topics that motivate children to learn. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils have the opportunity to develop a full range of skills. In the Reception class, where there is limited outdoor learning provision, frequent out-of-school visits linked to topics provide children with many new experiences that enrich their learning. Nursery and Reception operate as two separate units in different parts of the building to support transition to Year 1. Staff manage this effectively through curriculum planning and pupils benefit from this arrangement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in reading and writing.
- Implement more rigorous procedures to reduce the level of absence of a small minority of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In the past, pupils joining Year 1 have not had the benefit of the current good Early Years Foundation Stage provision that the new school has developed. Similarly, pupils entering Year 3 did not have good foundations on which to build. On entry to Year 1 and Year 3, pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics have been well below expectations for their age for some time. The new school has introduced a range of impressive strategies to accelerate achievement for all pupils. Detailed progress records show that pupils in both Key Stages 1 and 2 are currently making good progress and they are achieving well in relation to their attainment when the school amalgamated. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils currently attain standards that are below average in reading and writing and just below average in mathematics and science. The achievement of all pupils, regardless of gender, ethnicity and additional needs is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They respond very positively to the school's provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education and they enjoy learning about the many different cultures and traditions represented in the school. Pupils feel valued and this builds their confidence and self-esteem. They enjoy school and their behaviour

is good. Pupils feel safe and well looked after by adults. All pupils know about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, are keen to participate in physical education and sporting activities and most make healthy choices at lunchtime. The school council has a proactive role in suggesting improvements to the school, including the use of hand cleaning gel at lunchtimes. They organised a very successful Red Nose appeal and pupils are conscious of their responsibility to the community. Pupils are adequately prepared to support their future economic well-being: they learn about the world of work through the school garden but their basic skills are not sufficiently developed to ensure their success in the workplace. Although attendance is currently below average, the school has established a wide range of strategies to improve it.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, make good progress and enjoy their lessons because teaching is effective and behaviour is skilfully managed. All classrooms are well organised and provide a happy and safe place where pupils can learn. Excellent relationships help learners respond to appropriate challenges. Pupils cooperate well together on a good range of practical tasks. Teachers' planning is good although occasionally it does not always make clear how work will be matched to pupils' different needs and abilities. Teachers regularly assess pupils' work to inform their planning and to check pupils' progress. Marking is informative. Pupils have targets so that they know how well they are doing and how to improve their work in English and mathematics. They are regularly involved in assessing their own work. Good use is made of a range of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers and teaching assistants are very able and committed to helping pupils to learn. They make good use of questioning to extend learning and have high expectations of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal, social and health education is a strong feature of the curriculum. The school's recent Health Fair is a good example of this work. The curriculum is planned carefully. There is an appropriate emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, which has led to recent improvements in the achievement of pupils throughout the school. ICT is used as an effective learning tool in many areas of the curriculum. It is used particularly well in helping pupils to understand their progress. A very good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, including games and sport, is often led by visitors with a specialism to offer. In Year 6, all pupils play in the class brass band and have taken part in concerts within the school and the local community. Learning is brought alive by visits, which are carefully linked to topics; displays relating to these visits indicate that many pupils have been inspired by their experiences. The very well-attended drop-in breakfast club has a positive impact on learning by ensuring that pupils are alert and nourished at the start of the school day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

High levels of staff commitment to outstanding pastoral care and robust academic guidance secure pupils' good achievement. Clear and established procedures to promote child protection and safeguarding meet government requirements. Health and safety arrangements, including

risk assessments, are good. Detailed marking informs pupils about progress in their work and the next stage of learning. Thorough systems, that are very well managed, monitor the progress of all pupils and identify those at risk to ensure their needs are catered for. Highly skilled teachers and teaching assistants deliver specialist programmes to accelerate the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English. Learning mentors work very well with a large variety of outside agencies and parents so that all learners are very well supported and therefore make good progress. Parents of pupils who do not speak English as their first language are full of praise about the excellent help their children receive to develop their understanding and use of English. An excellent partnership between the school and the local children's centre ensures that the skills and services of both the school and the children's centre are used to benefit all families in the locality. The transfer procedures through school and later to secondary school are excellent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the leadership of the inspirational headteacher, leadership and management have effectively evaluated the needs of this new school and the correct priorities for improvement have been identified and implemented. The impact of this work is already clearly visible in the positive and inclusive ethos that pervades the school. Standards have improved as rigorous assessment, monitoring of pupils' progress and the evaluation of teaching have improved performance. All staff are involved in decision making and action planning. This enables them to feel fully involved in the management of the school and encourages their own enterprise, initiative and awareness of their responsibility for their work. They have the confidence to identify challenging targets for the school and for pupils and these have made a significant contribution to raising standards. Governors support the work of the school well and have been crucial in helping to bring about the successful development of the new school. The accommodation and resources are well managed to improve learning and the school provides good value for money. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion by ensuring that pupils from a variety of ethnic groups have the opportunities to work very effectively together in school and in the local community. The school is aware that more work on developing pupils' global awareness would further strengthen this area.

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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?	2
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?	1
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?	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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?	2
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for making us so welcome in your school. You were all very helpful and polite and displayed a lot of enthusiasm for your work. I admired the beautiful displays of your work, particularly the Year 5 poems on the Death of the Sheriff of Nottingham and the wonderful paintings on the Great Fire of London in which colour was so well used. I was very impressed by all your targets displayed around the school and how well you understand what you need to do to improve your work.

Your headteacher and the staff all work hard to make your school effective. You attend a good school and it is improving. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a really good start. The staff look after you extremely well and you feel safe and happy in school. Overall the standards you reach in your work are a little below average, particularly in reading and writing, but you make good progress in lessons and you are achieving well. Teachers make sure that they involve you in a lot of interesting activities and visits, including many visits to places of historic interest and the Year 6 residential visit to Lineham Farm where pupils learnt how to make wonderful masks.

Your behaviour is good so you are able to listen and learn. We noticed that you take very good care of each other so that you can all enjoy school. Many of you attend school regularly and arrive on time but some of you have too much time off school. You know how to stay healthy and safe and make the most of all the exciting activities the school provides before and after school, including all the musical and creative opportunities that the school offers. I really enjoyed listening to the Year 6 brass band playing the theme tune from Titanic. It was a wonderful start to the school day.

One of the reasons for my visit was to see how your school can improve. I have asked the school to improve standards in reading and writing. I have also requested that the school takes action to improve the attendance of that minority of pupils who do not attend regularly.