

Millfields Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100231
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	335508
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Judith Goodchild

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	556
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alix Edwards
Headteacher	Jane Betsworth
Date of previous school inspection	8 September 2006
School address	Hilsea Street London E5 0SH
Telephone number	02089857898
Fax number	020889856966
Email address	jbetsworth@millfields.hackney.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

The inspectors visited 21 lessons that included targeted observations of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the autistic spectrum disorder unit and an assembly. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work throughout the day, the start and end-of-day provision and pupils' relationships with staff and each other. They looked at the school development plan, school improvement reports, governing body minutes, and pupil assessment data. The inspection team received 104 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress made by pupils across the school.
- the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics.
- the support for more vulnerable pupils, particularly those with autistic spectrum disorder
- the impact of the new leadership team and the governing body on driving through improvements to eradicate identified weaknesses.

Information about the school

Millfields is a larger than average primary school. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than usually found. Pupils represent a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. A high percentage of pupils start school at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The school has a base for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the overall quality of teaching and learning with a particular focus on raising pupils' standards and achievement in mathematics and science.

Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage below age-related expectations. They make good progress against their early learning goals and start Key Stage 1 broadly in line with national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 1 they have made satisfactory progress and their attainment is in line with national standards. However, over the last three years the relative attainment of pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 has been significantly below that expected in mathematics and science and there is no evidence to suggest an improving trend. During this period, pupils' attainment in English was broadly in line with national standards. National test results for 2009, show a significant decline in English, mathematics and science. Fewer pupils than the national average achieve higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2. Though pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities made better progress and achieved more highly than their peers, there was a variability in outcomes for some groups of pupils with specific learning needs.

The quality of teaching is variable across the school from outstanding to inadequate. Use of assessment information to plan lessons to meet the individual learning needs of pupils is inconsistent. Consequently, too many lessons are focused on whole group teaching with little evidence of challenge to stretch the more able and the pace of learning is often too slow.

There are significant strengths in the personal development of pupils and there is a 'rights respecting' ethos within the school. It is clear that pupils enjoy school and what it provides, particularly the extended day activities. Even when teaching does not engage them, pupils' behaviour is good and when given the opportunity pupils are active and keen learners. Curriculum provision is satisfactory with strengths in the extended day provision. It is currently being reviewed to ensure that it more effectively meets the needs of the changing school population.

Since April 2009, a new senior leadership team has been driving through a programme of improvements to the school after accurately identifying areas for development. The leadership team is given good support by the well-informed governing body who are

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working in partnership with the school to rapidly bring about improvements. The school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. A system to track pupils' progress linked to teaching has been introduced and regular monitoring is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning but this still remains an area for improvement. Links with parents and carers are good with a range of workshops to help parents support their child's learning. Partnerships with specialist agencies and other schools are good and benefit pupils. There is a strong commitment to promoting community cohesion and the diversity of cultures within the school is celebrated.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics and science by:
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge and skills.
- Improve pupils' academic progress by:
 - improving the consistency in the quality of teaching to match the best practice in the school
 - developing the ability of teachers to use assessment information to plan lessons that more effectively meet the learning needs of pupils
 - improving lesson planning so that time can be used more effectively to promote learning
 - setting challenging targets to enable more-able pupils to attain higher levels.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

National test data for 2009 show a decrease in pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science for a similar cohort of pupils to 2008. Evidence suggests that the decline in outcomes is related to the variable quality of teaching and the effect this has on learning over time. The quality of learning in lessons observed during the inspection varied widely. Pupils made good progress in a minority of lessons where they were fully engaged because work was closely matched to their learning needs. In too many instances, however, pupils' learning was unsatisfactory, especially where teachers' subject knowledge was weak and assessment information was not used to plan lessons at an appropriate level. Overall pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities often make good progress and attain standards above the national average for similar groups. However, this varies across specific groups of pupils where planned provision does not always meet their learning needs. Assessment systems were introduced in the summer term and senior leaders can now track progress on a six-weekly basis. Although it is early days, the school was able to demonstrate the effectiveness of some of its actions, with 67% of Year 5 pupils making good progress in response to well-focused intervention strategies in mathematics. However, targets are not sufficiently challenging to ensure that pupils, particularly the more able pupils, make the appropriate progress in line with their abilities.

Pupils have good attitudes to learning, behave well and, when they receive good

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teaching they are active and enthusiastic learners. Attendance is broadly average and punctuality has improved in response to recently introduced monitoring. Pupils are clear about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and respond well to opportunities to take part in physical activities and enjoy the healthy food provided by the school. Although their academic progress is weak, they are gaining the wider skills necessary for their future economic well-being, such as taking ownership of their learning through weekly monitoring of their progress against targets and enthusiastically taking on positions of responsibility such as peer mediators and friendship finders. Relationships are good and pupils work well together, supporting each other in their work. Awareness of global issues is fostered through their understanding of the concept of Fairtrade and the need to preserve resources and reduce waste. Through their work with UNICEF, pupils have a good understanding of global human rights issues.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Though assessment information is now readily available to teachers, it is not used consistently to inform their lesson planning so that all pupils receive the support or

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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challenge they need in order to make the necessary progress in their learning. Where lessons are of a high quality, pupils are challenged to think, the pace of learning is high and activities are planned to address individual learning needs. However, teachers often have to revisit previous work that has not been understood by pupils and this affects their overall achievement. High quality lessons are in the minority. Often lessons start with an overly long whole-class session that does not take into account the different levels that pupils are capable of working at; the pace of the lessons are slow and tasks set do not provide appropriate challenge. Teaching assistants are not always deployed to the best effect. However, often the support provided for pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or English as an additional language, is effective and as a result they can make brisk progress. Planning to ensure the learning needs of these pupils are met is variable.

A significant strength of the curriculum is the extended day provision which is well attended by pupils. Activities are well organised and staffed with a wide range of activities that enrich pupils' experiences. For example, pupils have the opportunity to take part in a drama workshop or study Italian. Strong links with local secondary schools ensure continuity in learning and enhance the curriculum provision. For pupils with autistic spectrum disorder there is an appropriate focus on developing their social and communication skills and there is a satisfactory programme of integration into lessons alongside their peers.

The support provided to pupils and their families is good. There are good partnerships with specialist agencies, and learning mentors provide effective support to vulnerable pupils. There is a clear focus on raising attendance and the school has successfully introduced measures that have improved punctuality. Reading and numeracy recovery teachers have recently been appointed to work with the parent support advisor to ensure that targeted pupils have additional support at home.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders are already able to demonstrate their success in tackling some of the identified weaknesses, such as attainment and progress in mathematics and improved punctuality, but are aware there is still a long way to go. They have started a six-weekly programme of monitoring teaching through pupil progress meetings that hold teachers clearly to account for the progress of their class. This closer monitoring of individuals

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and groups is beginning to close some gaps in achievement and satisfactorily promote equality of opportunity for pupils. A recently appointed middle leadership team is fully supportive of the changes required to improve the school but at present its monitoring role is insufficiently developed.

The headteacher has encouraged the governing body to take a more active role in monitoring and challenging the school. Governors are fully aware of the problems the school faces and are already working in partnership with the leadership team to implement the programme of improvements required. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

The school has developed a good partnership with its parents. The parental questionnaire showed a high degree of satisfaction with the school. Following pupil progress meetings all parents are informed of how their child is progressing and are encouraged to work in partnership with the school if difficulties occur. The weekly family learning sessions are valued by parents. Diversity evenings have resulted in members of the community volunteering as storytellers and reading volunteers. The school promotes community cohesion well. There has been a focus on developing pupils' awareness of the wider and global community, pupils are well aware of human rights issues.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress towards meeting their early learning goals from a low starting point. They attain age-related expectations by the end of their Reception Year. In 2009 children made good progress in all areas of

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learning but particularly in communication, language and literacy. Children learning English as an additional language make very good progress because of the high-quality support they receive. Children really enjoy their learning and quickly settle into the warm and welcoming learning environment. They gain self-confidence and relationships and behaviour are excellent. Children learn and play well together and are developing a good understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Skilled observations by staff track children's progress against early learning goals. This information informs planning and there is a good balance between child-initiated learning and adult-directed activities. There are good partnerships with relevant support agencies that promote children's well-being. Links with parents are strong and they are encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning journey.

The two managers in the Early Years Foundation Stage work well together and provide a seamless provision for children in both Nursery and Reception classes. They plan jointly to ensure that, at each stage, children's learning needs are addressed. All adults are well qualified and resources are used well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A high percentage of parents responded to the questionnaire and they were overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its work. They felt the school had a happy and co-operative atmosphere and there is a high standard of care especially for more vulnerable pupils. They were particularly pleased with the after-school provision they described as 'excellent'. A few parents felt their child was not making sufficient progress in their work and did comment about the variability in the quality of teaching. More contact with the class teacher would also be welcomed. The inspectors found that the school has recently set up a regular system to communicate progress to parents and is working towards consistency amongst teachers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Millfields Community School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The received inspection team received 104 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 556 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	61	40	38	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	58	56	44	42	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	45	43	54	52	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	45	49	47	6	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	56	54	41	39	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	43	50	48	8	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	42	55	53	4	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	30	63	61	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	42	53	51	6	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	36	61	59	3	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	26	67	64	4	4	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	43	41	54	52	2	2	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	56	43	41	1	1	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Millfields Community School, Hackney E5 0SH

I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently and talking to us about your school and work.

You told us that you enjoy coming to school, particularly the extra activities that are provided for you before and after school. We found that you are courteous to visitors and each other and your behaviour is good. When lessons are interesting you are keen to answer questions and work hard at the tasks the teacher gives you. You have a good understanding of the need to respect the rights of people from different cultural backgrounds.

However, there are areas of the school's work that need improvement in order to raise standards. These have already been recognised by senior leaders and the governing body and a start has already been made. However, to help the school make the progress it needs, it requires a 'notice to improve', this means that your school will be visited by another inspector within the next six to eight months to check it is making progress against the areas for improvement identified below:

- make sure that all teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to improve the progress you make in mathematics and science
- make sure that all teaching is of a high standard.
- use information on how well you are progressing in your work to make sure that lessons are planned to meet your learning needs and there is the appropriate amount of challenge.
- improve the planning of lessons so that time is used to maximise your learning opportunities.

You are already playing your part by behaving and listening well in lessons.

Once again thank you and I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Judith Goodchild

Lead inspector

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