

Mildmay Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114895
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338475
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Tusha Chakraborti

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Freda Mountain
Headteacher	Miss Maxine Lingley
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons in Years 1 and 2, four short sessions in the Early Years Foundation Stage and had discussions with children, staff, parents and governors. They observed the school's work, checked arrangements for safeguarding and scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's data on pupils' progress, monitoring and evaluation records, governors' minutes and planning for school improvement. Fifty eight questionnaires from parents and carers were received and analysed.

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

- The standards reached and progress made, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 2.
- The impact of the tracking system and the actions taken to improve writing and mathematics.
- The impact of school leaders in securing improvement.
- The effectiveness of teaching on pupils' progress and learning.

Information about the school

This is an average sized school. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average. The school has provision for 12 hearing impaired pupils, all of whom have statements of special educational needs and are fully integrated into mainstream classes. A very small minority of pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. The school has achieved Healthy School, Basic Skills Quality and Active Mark awards.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school is a harmonious community where pupils enjoy learning and feel very safe and secure. All pupils develop good personal and social skills and grow up as confident learners because of the caring ethos of the school. Many parents say that they are happy about all aspects of the school's work. Comments such as, 'I feel strongly that my child's enjoyment of learning is really being enhanced' and 'I feel the school is passionate and dedicated to providing the best education' confirm parents' confidence in the work of the school. The school has good capacity to improve.

This is a good school in which pupils achieve well. Over the past year, standards in mathematics have risen in Year 2 and the number of pupils achieving Level 3 in reading and mathematics has increased significantly. Standards in writing are yet to match those of reading and mathematics. Standards have also improved in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children now reach levels that are expected nationally and they make good progress in all areas of learning. The very well co-ordinated support system for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make good progress.

The reason for these improvements lies in the successful teamwork of the headteacher and staff. The headteacher and the senior leaders, in collaboration with other staff, have put in place an effective monitoring and evaluation system to raise standards in all areas of the school's work. The performance of individuals and groups is closely monitored and the assessment data is used effectively to track pupils' progress and set challenging targets. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has resulted in higher achievement in Year 2. Governors know the school well and have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. The school has very good links with various organisations within the local community. In this respect, the school promotes community cohesion well. Nevertheless, its links with the wider community are developing and are not yet sufficiently established.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. They are continually seeking ways to enhance pupils' learning experiences and to track their progress effectively. However, more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to ensure that they consistently achieve as well as they can. Teachers place strong emphasis on extending pupils' literacy and numeracy skills but their handwriting and punctuation skills are not well developed. They identify the steps to be taken to raise standards but do not as yet set targets for individual pupils to ensure that pupils understand how to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing by:
 - providing tasks that challenge the more able pupils consistently
 - improving handwriting and punctuation skills
 - using marking to guide pupils to understand how to improve
 - setting individual targets.
- Improve the provision for community cohesion by:
 - extending the links with communities beyond the school community and, thereby, enabling pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the wider world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and all groups make good progress. Standards are consistently above average in reading, while those in writing are generally average. In mathematics, standards have improved due to the impact of the school's new tracking system and they are now above average. Pupils develop a good range of reading skills. They enjoy reading a wide variety of books and narrating stories. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson where they drew pictures to plan the sequences of their stories and enthusiastically discussed their plans in groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make thoroughly good progress year on year as a result of the consistent and well-targeted support they receive from all support staff.

Pupils behave well and learn to respect others' values and beliefs. They work well together and are considerate to others. This is evident from the way the hearing impaired pupils are integrated in all areas of learning. Pupils feel exceptionally safe and develop very trusting relationships with staff, with whom they are happy to discuss any problems, should they occur. They enjoy taking responsibilities and conduct the school council activities smoothly, making a good contribution to the day-to-day running of the school. For example, they have recently raised funds through their 'Money Week' activity. During the inspection, they were seen to be debating the best use of this fund to improve the playground provision. Pupils are well aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and most attend a range of clubs for sporting activities. They raise funds for charities and recognise the need to do so. The rate of attendance declined last year and is now average. This is because of the higher rate of absence of a small minority of pupils due to their specific medical needs.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use a range of methods to interest and engage pupils, recognising their different learning styles. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to aid pupils' understanding of what they are expected to do. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils engaged enthusiastically in a story-writing activity using a photograph from a story they read. Teaching assistants work well together with teachers and support pupils' learning well, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Effective support for pupils who have hearing impairment and physical disabilities ensures that they are fully integrated in the life of the school. Teachers are skilful in tracking pupils' progress over time. There are occasions where activities are not planned to provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils and, therefore, their progress is not as rapid as it might be.

The curriculum provides well for all pupils and contributes well to their personal and social development and to their enjoyment of learning. The school has made good progress on developing a thematic and creative curriculum. In this respect, it has used the 'Creative Partnerships' project imaginatively to enrich pupils' experience of art work, including African art, and to develop cross-curricular links. This was seen from the high quality three-dimensional artwork around the school, including that of the 'Very Hungry Caterpillar', which also supports work on healthy eating. The curriculum provides well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring that they have full access to all areas of learning. There is a good range of clubs to enhance pupils' learning experience, and the participation rate is high.

The school provides good pastoral support for all its pupils and its good links with

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external agencies strengthen the pastoral system continually. Pupils are central to the work of the school and their needs are well known to all staff. The support and care arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are exemplary. Carefully targeted interventions for vulnerable groups are very well supported through a whole school approach and through dedicated support assistants. As a result, these pupils achieve as well as others. The arrangements for transferring children between the classes within the school as well as between Year 2 and the junior school are good and well established.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported by the senior leaders, has strengthened the assessment and monitoring system to drive improvement at various levels. The new system ensures continuity and consistency in analysing data and tracking progress for individual pupils. A comprehensive monitoring timetable with senior leaders and classteachers is used to review progress of all pupils, to raise expectations of those who may be capable of learning at a quicker rate, and to identify those who need additional support. Analysis of data informs planning for the next stage in the school's development. The newly restructured leadership team has a clear focus on the professional development for staff and, as a result, the middle leaders are playing an increasing role in leading improvement. Governors use their expertise successfully to provide good support to the school, and their strategic role in planning and self-evaluation is generally well developed.

The school is highly committed to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination for all its pupils. This has ensured sustained improvement in the performance of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Safeguarding procedures are robust and all requirements are met. The school is very successful in liaising with outside agencies and local schools, including the adjacent junior school, and this supports pupils' learning and well-being effectively. The school actively promotes community cohesion within the local community but its engagement with the wider community is limited. Senior leaders recognise that this is an area for development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved over the past year and is now good. Children make a good start because of the school's carefully planned induction programme. This means that, although the inspection took place at the beginning of the term, children were settling well and were thoroughly enjoying their experience in school. Standards improved at the end of the Reception Year in 2009 as a result of actions taken to improve the curriculum and assessment. Consequently, from below average starting points, children make good progress in their learning to reach the standards expected for their age in most areas when they begin Year 1.

Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. School routines and expectations are clear and relationships are very positive. Behaviour is good and well managed by all adults. An attractive learning environment, with vibrant displays and a good range of resources, interests and engages them. As a result, children thrive and enjoy their learning.

Children are encouraged from the Nursery onwards to be independent learners. For example, they take responsibility for hanging their coats up for themselves and putting away the resources, and they respond well to the change of activities. Planned activities meet the children's needs well. During the inspection, 'Money Week' had taken place. This generated much enthusiasm and enhanced their mathematical skills. There is a good balance between activities children choose and those led by adults.

Teachers assess children regularly but, as yet, do not guide them explicitly enough in identifying the next stage of learning. The school has identified the need to focus on writing for children entering Year 1 this year. Good leadership and management have resulted in effective teamwork.

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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

In their responses to the questionnaires, all parents and carers say that their children enjoy the school and most are confident that children are safe in school. They say that teaching is good and that the school is managed efficiently. They praise the way staff support pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. One parent states, 'The school's support for my child who has special educational needs is fantastic and he makes very good progress'. Inspectors agree with these views. A very small minority of parents feel that they are not sufficiently informed about their children's progress and that their concerns are not taken into account. Inspectors found that the school works in good partnership with parents and provides a great deal of information about pupils' performance. The school is, however, looking into further improving communication with parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mildmay Infant and Nursery 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 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 235 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	57	25	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	48	28	48	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	29	30	52	6	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	38	27	47	5	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	38	31	53	3	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	38	30	52	4	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	45	30	52	0	0	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)	18	31	25	43	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	40	28	48	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	31	30	52	6	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	22	34	59	6	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	38	26	45	4	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	53	23	40	3	5	0	0

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.



14 October 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Mildmay Infant and Nursery School, Chelmsford, CM2 8AU

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers. You and your parents told us that Mildmay is a good school and we agree.

You are polite, well behaved and hard working. We saw how you help the school to run smoothly and you work very well together. It was good to see you enjoying playtimes and lunchtimes together and eating healthily.

We found that children in the Nursery and Reception classes are happy and work well together. Teachers and other adults help you to learn well and find lots of interesting things for you to do. They also look after you well. They listen to your views and act on them. You know that the adults will help you if you have any problems.

Your headteacher and other teachers run the school well. They are always trying to make improvements to your school. We have asked them to improve your writing skills further. We also would like you to learn more about people in different communities outside your area. We are pleased to see that you have already started learning about the schools in South Africa.

You can help by doing your best and continuing to take good care of each other, so that your school continues to be a happy place.

Yours sincerely

Tusha Chakraborti

Lead Inspector

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