

Millhouse Infant School and Nursery

Tavistock Road, Laindon, Basildon, SS15 5QF

Inspection dates 4–5 July 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start, particularly in their development of language, literacy and communication skills.
- The good progress they make is then continued through Years 1 and 2.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- The school's leaders responded promptly and successfully to the dip in results in 2012 and the quality of teaching has improved.
- Much of the teaching is now good or outstanding.
- The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well and this has a positive impact on behaviour.
- Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the school. This is the view of parents and pupils and all agree that the pupils feel safe and cared for well.
- The governors of the school are actively involved in checking standards within the school and working with the staff on making further improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is still some teaching that requires improvement.
- Pupils do not always receive clear guidance on how to improve their work through teachers' marking and the use of targets.
- Expectations in lessons are not specific enough for pupils to assess their progress.
- Results in writing are not as good as they are in reading and mathematics.
- Expectations about the presentation of work are not yet high enough.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write longer pieces of work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, of which four were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. All classes were observed at least once.
- A selection of pupils' English, mathematics and topic books were scrutinised from all classes.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, the Chair of Governors and several members of the teaching staff, including the senior leadership team and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the school's local authority representative.
- Inspectors attended two assemblies and checked how pupils behaved during playtime and lunchtime.
- There were 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Parents' views were also sought through discussions at the start and end of the school day.
- The inspector also took account of the 22 questionnaires completed by members of the school staff.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, documents relating to safeguarding, and the minutes of various meetings.

Inspection team

Nigel Grimshaw, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynda Beale

Additional Inspector

Paul Burton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and three Reception classes.
- The large majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional funding provided for children in the care of the local authority, from service families, and those children known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average. There are currently no children who are looked after by the local authority and there are no pupils from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is in line with the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is below the national average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - making sure that the expectations shared with pupils about what they are to learn in each lesson are more specific so that the pupils can check how well they are doing
 - maintaining the pace of learning throughout each lesson so that progress does not slow
 - making sure that the guidance given to pupils on how to improve their work is more consistent.
- Improve attainment in writing so that it is more in line with attainment in reading and mathematics by:
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work in a range of subject areas
 - raising teachers' expectations of the presentation of work
 - making better and more consistent use of writing targets, with new targets given to pupils on a more regular basis so that they are clear about what they have to do next to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The children join the school with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age, and well below in the basic skills of literacy, language, communication and numeracy.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because the quality of teaching is consistently good or outstanding and the procedures for settling the children into school life are very effective.
- The good progress is now maintained in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' attainment in 2013, from the school's own data, the end-of-year assessments and from the work seen in lessons and in pupils' books, is on course to be the best for three years in reading, writing and mathematics and be above the average by the time the pupils leave.
- This is a major improvement on the results in 2012 when the school had an unsettled period with staffing absences and changes. As a result, school leaders focused very strongly on improving the quality of teaching this year and this has proved to be very successful.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because the school's special educational needs coordinator has put in place excellent structures to support their learning, often in small groups led by learning support assistants who have been trained well.
- School leaders have used the pupil premium funding wisely to employ additional learning-support assistants to work with small groups and eligible pupils are now making better progress than their peers. In 2012 the eligible pupils were about one term behind their peers but the gaps in attainment have now closed. The end-of-year assessments show that there are no inequalities in performance this year.
- Pupils enjoy reading and their progress in this area is particularly good because the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is consistently good or better. This good teaching has not yet had an impact on improving pupils' writing.
- Pupils' attainment in writing is still lagging behind that in reading and mathematics, despite improvements in progress this year. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write more extensively in all subject areas and so they miss opportunities to apply their literacy skills.
- Pupils enjoy having literacy and numeracy targets to help them improve their progress. However, they are not updated frequently enough and some of the pupils' motivation is therefore diminished because of this.
- From the recent school questionnaire, the responses on Parent View and conversations at the start of the school day, parents have very positive views on their children's progress. One parent said, 'My child has come along a lot in a short time. We are very impressed indeed.'

The quality of teaching is good

- An analysis of the school's own records shows that the quality of teaching has improved this year. School leaders have rigorously monitored classroom practice and the outcomes for the pupils on a regular basis. They have provided guidance to teachers on how to improve their

practice and this has been implemented successfully. However, there still remains a small minority of teaching that requires improvement.

- Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school because they find the learning interesting and fun. This is echoed by their parents. Teachers plan work that the pupils find enjoyable. As one parent commented, 'The staff have turned the school into a fun learning experience'.
- The staff have created an attractive, stimulating and informative learning environment across the whole school that also celebrates the pupils' work.
- Teachers have high expectations. This was particularly true in an outstanding lesson in one of the Reception classes where the children were learning to tell the time and were able to identify 'quarter to' and 'quarter past' the hour using their own individual clocks.
- Relationships between the pupils and teachers and between the pupils themselves are very good and all the pupils are eager to please and to do well with their work. This is shown in the good improvements in their progress this year.
- This eagerness of the pupils is sometimes hindered by a lack of clarity about the specific expectations of what is to be learnt in lessons and the teachers' marking does not always give enough guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.
- In most lessons observed the pace of learning was brisk and the pupils respond well to the challenge that this brings. However, in a small number of lessons the pace slowed when the resources were too complicated or where teachers spent too much time managing behaviour where this was not necessary.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons and over time, as seen by the amount of work produced in their books. Teachers, and the pupils themselves, do not have high enough expectations about the presentation of the work.
- The teaching of phonics is a particular strength as illustrated by the teacher's excellent subject knowledge that led to excellent progress for a group of Year 2 pupils.
- Every parent who responded to the Parent View questionnaire stated that his or her child is taught well at the school and makes good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The caring and welcoming atmosphere is a significant factor in the good behaviour that the pupils show in most lessons and generally around the school. Pupils play together harmoniously and show respect for each other's views in lessons. They show good manners and are courteous to each other and to adults.
- The good behaviour observed during the inspection is also evident over time from the school's records of behaviour incidents since the previous inspection.
- The management of behaviour is consistently applied across the school and, consequently, the pupils are clear about expectations and the rewards available for good behaviour, such as the weekly 'politeness award' presented in assemblies. However, in some lessons observed, the management of behaviour took too much time away from learning and progress slowed for the

pupils.

- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that bullying is very rare and is dealt with promptly and effectively by the adults in school. This is also the almost unanimous view of the parents.
- Attendance rates have improved for the last three years because of the determined efforts of school leaders and governors.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have shown drive and determination in their swift response to the dip in outcomes for pupils in 2012. They have brought stability to the staffing and, through a rigorous approach to monitoring classroom practice, have brought about good improvements in the quality of teaching this year. All staff have valued the support provided for them as part of their professional development.
 - They are very well supported by the enthusiastic and committed subject leaders who have taken on more responsibilities and are keeping a close watch on standards and, where appropriate, are working well with staff to improve standards further. The school leaders have therefore shown that the school has the capacity for further improvement.
 - The improvements in standards this year are linked to the varied and interesting curriculum provided by the school that is also enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors. The curriculum supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils very well.
 - The engagement of the school with parents is demonstrated by initiatives such as 'Stay and Play' and 'Parent and Pupil Reading mornings' for all classes during the week. This has led to very active involvement of parents and their positive views expressed in the questionnaires.
 - The school has worked closely with other local schools to develop a comprehensive programme for the professional development of staff and governors. The school has also valued the light-touch support received from the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The experienced and knowledgeable Chair of the Governing Body has moulded the governors into an active team who work with the staff to bring about improvements. They are now more involved in monitoring the work of the school and have been helped by training they have received. They have a clear view of the pupils' attainment and progress and how this compares with other schools. They have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching, how pay rises are linked to the performance of staff and what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. Financial management is strong, and governors evaluate the effectiveness of the pupil premium. Staff and governors make sure that pupils are treated equally and there is no discrimination. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and staff fully meet statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 114915 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 412424 |

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

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 289 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Dave Davies |
| Headteacher | Wendy Foster |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 February 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01268 542597 |
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