

Millfields Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100231
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	354818
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Robert Lovett HMI

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	599
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Kelly
Headteacher	Jane Betsworth
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 27 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 21 teachers. Meetings were held with members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders, governors and the school council. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's action plan, documents and policies detailing how pupils are kept safe, the school's tracking data to see how well pupils are doing and analyses of pupils' attainment. Inspectors scrutinised 124 completed questionnaires from parents and carers together with 21 staff and 91 pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Attainment in English and mathematics and the progress pupils make.
- The quality and consistency of teaching.
- The use of assessment information to plan learning, ensure work is closely matched to the needs of all pupils and set challenging targets.
- The impact of before- and after-school learning on the curriculum and on pupils' social development.

Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. While White British pupils form the largest group, over three quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The largest of these are pupils of Indian heritage and those of any other White background. The proportion of pupils believed to speak a first language other than English is more than twice the national average. While there is a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and statements is broadly average. The school hosts a base for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. Among the school's awards are Investor in People, Healthy School status and Rights Respecting School Level 2. There have been significant changes to the teaching staff over the last year. There is an on-site children's centre, which is not part of this inspection.

When the school was last inspected in October 2009 it was given a notice to improve because its overall effectiveness was inadequate, teaching was inadequate and pupils made insufficient progress.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement.

Since the last inspection, when its effectiveness was judged to be inadequate, the school has worked successfully to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement. The senior leadership, well supported by the local authority, acted decisively to remedy weak teaching. All teaching is now at least satisfactory and the large majority is good or better. Lessons are characterised by brisk pace, high expectations and good levels of challenge so that learning is pitched at just the right level. Pupils agree, with almost all saying they learn a lot in lessons. Parents also recognise recent improvements, as one wrote that they have seen 'lots of changes and improvements'. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory, it is because the work set is not matched carefully enough to what pupils need to learn or because the pace of learning flags. While support staff generally make a good contribution to pupils' learning, in a small number of lessons they are not active enough, particularly when the whole class are learning together. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good, relationships are strong and pupils are eager to learn. They set themselves high standards and many are keen to see behaviour improve further. While the school is a safe place to learn, some pupils say they would welcome more information about how to stay safe when using the internet.

Attainment has risen rapidly over the last year and is now broadly average. While the range of skills and knowledge children have when they join the school is wide, for many it is below what one would expect. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and most join Year 1 with skills which are broadly typical for their age. Pupils made satisfactory progress in 2010 and satisfactory progress over time. Those pupils currently in the school are making good progress. The school is working hard to embed a revised curriculum based on the application of key skills across all subjects through a more thematic approach. While this approach is enthusing staff and pupils, it is too early to see the impact in pupils' work. The school offers a wide range of out-of-school clubs and activities. Some target those with particular needs or talents. This broad curriculum and the good care and support for pupils make a valuable contribution to their learning and well-being.

The senior leadership team and governing body have a very accurate view of how well the school is doing. Governors use the good information they are provided with

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to focus rigorously on raising attainment and holding the school to account. The school's capacity to sustain the good rate of improvement is strong. Action to overcome weaknesses in teaching and learning, and in attainment and progress have been effective. Leadership and management at all levels are good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils are confident about how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Improve the quality of learning through the full implementation of a skills-based curriculum.
- Ensure all teaching is at least good through:
 - the more effective use of assessment to match teaching to pupils' individual learning needs
 - the better use of support staff in all classes to accelerate pupils' progress.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

While attainment is broadly average there is convincing evidence that this is rising. Attainment in Year 2 improved in 2010 and is close to average. Having been low at the time of the last inspection, attainment at the end of Year 6 rose in 2010, significantly so in mathematics, and is now broadly average. Pupils' progress over time is satisfactory, but because of improved teaching progress in lessons is now generally good and is sometimes outstanding. In lessons seen pupils made good progress because teachers ensured a prompt start and brisk pace. Progress was fastest when teachers routinely told pupils exactly what they were going to learn and how their work was to be assessed. Pupils have a very good work ethic and can sustain their concentration well. In an outstanding English lesson pupils worked with real focus and determination to produce high quality writing when recounting real-life experiences. In the past, pupils who speak a first language other than English have done less well than others but this trend has been reversed and the attainment of these pupils is rising rapidly. The quality of learning and progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good because of effective interventions, such as one-to-one support, good use of specialist staff and careful monitoring of their progress. White British pupils do particularly well and make good progress.

Pupils say they feel very safe in school, that bullying or any form of unfriendliness is

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rare and that they know who to turn to if they have problems. They have a very strong commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This commitment is central to the ethos of the school and is reflected in the charter of rights established in every classroom. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is invariably good and is sometimes outstanding. Pupils treat each other and adults politely and with respect. They are friendly and concerned for one another’s progress and well-being.

The development of those skills which will contribute to pupils’ future economic well-being is good. In addition to the popular and innovative whole-school ‘work week’ and enhancing the debating skills of gifted and talented pupils through work with local solicitors, pupils have very well-developed collaborative and independent working skills. Attendance has risen over the past year and is now above average. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with significant strengths in pupils’ moral and social development. Pupils enthusiastically embrace the many opportunities they are provided with to understand the lives of other pupils, such as those working in a school in Kenya and in a small rural school in Hertfordshire. Pupils celebrate those things which make them unique individuals and those which unite them in their humanity. Pupils have a very strong sense of shared values and self-worth.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

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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How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning have improved significantly and are now good. Most teaching seen was at least good, some was outstanding and none was inadequate. The best teaching is characterised by brisk pace, particularly at the start of lessons. This was achieved through good use of challenging introductory activities such as the outstanding use of problem-based starters in mathematics, and the good use of assessment to ensure work was well matched to what pupils need to learn. The use of day-to-day marking to support learning is a significant strength. Marking is used very effectively to initiate a dialogue between teachers and learners. This has been highly effective in accelerating the progress pupils make. Parents and carers recognise the value of this approach to marking and are keen to see it used regularly. Almost all pupils say they know their targets and what they need to do to improve further. Gifted and talented pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to excel, for example the Maths Enrichment Club and membership of the British Film Institute to develop their skills of critical analysis.

Much work has already been done to embed a skills-based approach to the curriculum so that core skills are planned for in all subjects. Teachers, pupils and curriculum leaders are excited about the learning potential of this initiative but it is too early to see the full impact on pupils' learning. Learning outside of the normal school day makes a good contribution to the curriculum. There are a number of clubs and other activities such as football, cricket, art and drama. The school has been rigorous in evaluating the impact of recent strategies for improvement and retaining only those which have proved effective. Pupils say they greatly enjoy the range of special events such as One World Week, Trips Weeks, when there is a focus on educational visits, and Roots Week, which celebrates the school's diversity. Language teaching is well established, with Spanish taught in every class, from Nursery to Year 6.

Arrangements for the care of pupils are well organised, sensitive and thorough. Parents comment positively on this, especially some of the parents of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. Carefully planned interventions have a good impact on pupils' well-being, social development academic progress. The school can point to some striking examples of where they have helped vulnerable pupils to overcome significant barriers to learning.

Good quality academic advice and pastoral guidance are provided regularly throughout the school to families and pupils. Transition arrangements are good. The school works closely with families, local community groups, teachers from the Early Years Foundation Stage, community-based nurseries and secondary schools.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership team have been very successful in embedding ambition and ensuring a real desire to improve. This drive for improvement has resulted in robust action to improve teaching and learning and raise attainment. All staff who returned the questionnaire said they know what the school is trying to achieve and feel involved in bringing this about. The school's improvement planning has an appropriate focus on raising attainment. It has been successful in addressing weaknesses identified in the last inspection but does not show clearly enough how its actions are to be measured for their impact on attainment and progress. This would enable the already effective governing body to focus even more rigorously on raising attainment and holding the school to account. The school makes a strong contribution to community cohesion locally and nationally. Pupils make a particularly good contribution to the life of the school through roles such as peer mediators, school councillors and the peace corps, who encourage friendship on the playground. While pupils, staff and parents talk enthusiastically about the strong sense of school community, the evaluation of the impact of the school's work to promote community cohesion could be more rigorous, so that the school can identify and build on its strengths. Partnerships with parents and carers are strong, with the school offering good pastoral and academic support to families and their children. The on-site children's centre is fully integrated into the life of the school. Partnerships provide good enrichment activities through links with other schools and effectively promote pupils' welfare.

The school's safeguarding procedures are generally sound and fully comply with statutory requirements. Appropriate checks are carried out on those adults who work with children and staff training is up to date. The school promotes equality of opportunity very well. All pupils feel valued and all of those spoken to feel they are viewed as important individuals within the wider school community, and their rights respected.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

From starting points which are often low, particularly in reading and writing, most children make good progress towards their early learning goals and most reach age-related expectations by the end of the Reception year. Children who speak English as an additional language make good progress because their individual needs are recognised and they receive good support. Children with communication difficulties and other special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress. Children make good progress in developing the personal qualities that enable them to take responsibility for small tasks and develop skills for the future. They enjoy their time in Nursery and Reception immensely. They learn in the stimulating indoors and outdoors environment with great enthusiasm.

Children form very good relationships with each other and behaviour is often excellent. They are learning to respect each other's differences and are keen to learn about the wider world. Teachers use a good range of teaching skills to promote good outcomes across all areas of learning. Daily routines are well established and ensure teachers and children make the best of the time available. Skilled observation and assessment ensure children's needs and interests are well catered for. Staff know the children very well and careful attention is paid to children's individual interests and needs.

Leaders and managers of the school have implemented changes rapidly to maximise the benefit of the children's centre to all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The vision for improving children's achievements and progress is ambitious and priorities for action are well thought through. The school has implemented the effective changes in structure of the Early Years Foundation Stage and children's centre management very rapidly. Parents' satisfaction with the Nursery and Reception is high.

Managers and staff work in very close partnership with the children's centre and other early years providers to ensure a good, positive start for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Policies and practice to promote equality and eliminate discrimination are consistently applied, and reflect the inclusive ethos of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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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

All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire believe the school keeps their children safe and almost all say their children enjoy school. Of those spoken to all were full of praise for the school as a highly inclusive place to learn and recognised the significant improvements since the school was last inspected. A few parents and carers feel that the school could do more to recognise their suggestions and concerns. While others feel that communication between school and parents is 'excellent', the school and governors are eager to strengthen the partnership further. In written comments, parents and carers were divided on homework: some feel there is too much, some too little and some that it is not marked quickly enough. The school has a homework policy, which is available for parents and carers to read and discuss with the school. Some individual concerns were raised which inspectors shared with the headteacher while maintaining confidentiality.

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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 599 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	66	53	54	44	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	72	58	52	42	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	48	39	64	52	9	7	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	30	72	58	7	6	5	4
The teaching is good at this school	46	37	69	56	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	46	37	63	51	8	6	4	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	40	66	53	6	5	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)	43	35	65	52	8	6	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	44	35	66	53	8	6	4	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	35	64	52	10	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	29	65	52	18	15	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	39	61	49	7	6	4	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	58	47	60	48	5	4	1	1

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.

13 December 2010

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Millfields Community School, London E5 OSH

May I begin by thanking you for the warm welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we inspected your school recently. I would like to particularly thank those of you who gave up part of your lunchtime to speak to us.

You and your parents told us that the school has improved a lot since it was last inspected and we agree. Teaching and learning are better, most lessons now proceed at a good pace so that very little time is wasted. The work you are asked to do is usually, but not always, set at just the right level for each of you. You all get along together really well. You were very keen to make sure we knew all about your work in respect of recognising the rights of all children and caring for one another. We think this ethos of care and respect is an important part of what it is that makes your school unique. Because everyone is working hard to help the school improve, you are making much better progress than you did last year.

We were impressed at how well you work together in groups and with partners. This is an important skill for life. Even schools which are doing well can improve and we have made some suggestions for how the school can improve further.

- You told us that you now have more of a say in some aspects of what you learn. Your teachers are keen to plan work in all subjects which helps you in your reading, writing and computer skills. The school should carry on with the good work it is doing.
- You enjoy using the internet to carry out research but some of you were unsure about how to keep safe when using computers. We have asked the school to make sure you all know how to keep yourself and information about you safe.
- Most teaching is now good. We have asked the headteacher and her colleagues to ensure that all teaching is good, that the work you have is just right for you and that all adults are able to help you in your learning.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett
Her Majesty's Inspector

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