

Millfield Primary School

Grange Lane, Littleport, Ely, CB6 1HW

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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 school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The proportion of pupils making the expected progress varies between year groups and in some instances between boys and girls.
- Pupils do not make enough progress when the pace of the lesson slows or when groups work on their own for too long.
- Teachers are having to address gaps in the pupils' knowledge and understanding that relate to the period when the school was placed in special measures.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy does not always reflect the best practice in the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Effective leadership has improved teaching, behaviour and attendance.
- Additional government funding (the pupil premium) has been used effectively to support a wide range of pupils who need extra help. Very effective support is helping these pupils make good progress.
- Marking is consistent and provides clear guidance on how to improve.
- Behaviour management is good.
- The new team of teachers is having a positive effect on standards and pupil progress is improving.
- The monitoring of teaching is accurate and this is improving the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make.
- Pupil progress data is used effectively to monitor how well pupils are doing and to plan further support.

Information about this inspection

- The school was contacted the day before the inspection. Inspectors observed every teacher at work and conducted joint observations with senior staff. The inspection team found the school’s monitoring and evaluation of teaching to be accurate. All staff were offered professional feedback.
- Informal meetings were held with groups of pupils. Meetings were arranged with members of the governing body, nominated staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) throughout the inspection but no responses had been recorded.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including the school improvement plan, the analysis of pupil progress, the headteacher’s reports to the governing body, and the minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

David Jones, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Mary-Jane Edwards

Additional Inspector

Full report

- In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school was placed in special measures in February 2011. HMI visited the school in July and November 2011 and again in March 2012.

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school. The large majority of students are White British. The percentage of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is half the national figure; the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average and rising. At least a quarter of the pupils in each year group receive additional support funded by the Pupil Premium.
- The proportion of the pupils in need of extra help with their learning is above average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupil progress by ensuring that:
 - all pupils acquire the reading, writing and mathematics skills that some have failed to achieve in previous years
 - time is used well in all lessons
 - thoughtful questioning drives forward discussion and learning.
- Improve teaching by giving inexperienced staff opportunities to observe the best practice in the school.
- Use the model of the successful school marking policy to develop literacy and numeracy policies that ensure consistency of approach.
- Involve middle leaders in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Previous weaknesses in teaching still show as gaps in the pupils' knowledge and understanding in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards are rising. In 2012 pupils made good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils are developing a good understanding of their letters and sounds (phonics) and the results of the Year 1 reading tests were well above the national average.
- The results of the Key Stage 1 teacher assessments which measure pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics were close to the national figures.
- The results of Key Stage 2 national tests in English and mathematics improved for the first time in three years as a result of the improvements secured in teaching. The small number of pupils in Year 6 in 2012 means that data must be treated with caution.
- The school has clearly identified the variations in pupil progress in Key Stage 2 and good teaching is focusing on increasing their rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils in need of extra help make good progress because of the effective, well-targeted support provided in-class and in small groups. Pupils at risk of not doing well make good and sometimes outstanding progress because of the very effective support team developed by the school which is partially funded by the pupil premium.
- Effective checking of how well teachers help pupils to learn is improving pupils' progress and helping to raise standards.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching was good in three-quarters of the lessons visited by inspectors. Some outstanding small-group teaching was seen, providing precise support for those in need of extra help.
- The new team of teachers and support staff work well together and inadequate teaching has been eliminated.
- Effective individual mentoring and coaching is helping pupils develop the skills and understanding they struggled to master in their previous inadequate education.
- Lessons are well organised, based on reliable assessment information and well matched to the pupils' learning needs.
- Marking consistently offers pupils guidance on how to improve their work and is consistent across the school.
- The absence of a literacy and numeracy policy is leading to inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics and writing.
- Teachers and support staff listen carefully to the pupils' ideas and adjust tasks to improve learning. Careful questioning and opportunities to think and discuss key ideas are a feature of most lessons. A mathematics lesson in a mixed Year 3/4 class was effective because the teacher's questioning made sure all pupils understood how to record time in a digital or analogue format before setting a task suitable for every pupil.
- Where teaching still requires improvement, lessons often started well but the pace of group work was allowed to slip or the teacher talked for too long.
- Some lessons missed the opportunity to be outstanding because not enough time was given to developing higher-level discussion.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Attendance has improved steadily since September 2011 and is above average. The school recently surveyed parents and carers and all noted their child was happy and felt safe. The overwhelming majority were pleased with the progress their child was making and the support available.
- Many staff are very observant of pupil behaviour and this helps them to manage the pupils who have difficulty learning.
- Behaviour is good in lessons, in the corridors and around the school at playtimes. The pupils' attitude to learning is good, they try hard in lessons, work well in small groups and enjoy learning. The pupils have been involved in decisions about behaviour; those who spoke to inspectors were keen to point out that they felt safe in school and any bullying was dealt with quickly.
- The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) led an assembly during the inspection and all literacy lessons for the week took bullying as a theme. The pupils' writing and discussions and role-play showed a clear understanding of right and wrong and a mature grasp of different points of view.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior staff and governors have done well to eliminate inadequate teaching, improve behaviour and raise attendance since they came together just over a year ago in 2011.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and school development plans illustrate the focus on pupil progress. Leaders, including governors, are uncompromising and relentless in their drive to ensure that all pupils in the school receive the best education possible.
- Teaching has improved rapidly as a result of action taken to eradicate weaker teaching, robust procedures for managing performance and opportunities for professional development. The checking of teaching, and how well pupils learn as a result, is accurate and effective. As a result equality of opportunity is now good.
- Senior staff understand how successful teachers are in making their teaching better but middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in this process and inexperienced staff need opportunities to observe the best practice in the school.
- The headteacher and her deputy consistently share their high expectations and this has been a key factor in the improvement in teaching. They joined inspectors in the joint observation of teaching and the views they offered matched the judgements given by HMI. Senior leaders have managed significant staff change very well since the last inspection.
- Local authority support provided effective help with staff recruitment and with lesson planning.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities provided add breadth to the curriculum, for example, the literacy and drama work being developed with support from the NSPCC.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide effective challenge to the headteacher and this has been important to the school's successful drive to come out of special measures. The governing body's

action in quickly appointing a headteacher with proven expertise has been the most significant factor in the removal of special measures. The performance management targets for the headteacher were an appropriate part of this process. Governors and the headteacher manage the school's budget efficiently. Improvements in the quality of teaching are taken into account appropriately when considering salary progression.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
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

Unique reference number	110776
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	407077

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community School
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Taylor
Headteacher	Deborah Hannaford
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2011
Telephone number	01353 861612
Fax number	01353 861635
Email address	head@millfield.cambs.sch.uk

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