

Millwood Primary Special School

School Street, Radcliffe, Greater Manchester, M26 3BW

Inspection dates 20–21 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Millwood provides a myriad of memorable experiences for pupils and meets their learning, physical and social needs exceptionally well.
- Achievement is outstanding. Pupils achieve as well as they do because teaching is mostly outstanding and is never less than good.
- Pupils of all abilities make at least good and mostly outstanding progress. Personalised programmes in reading and mathematics build steadily on what pupils know.
- Pupils make exceptional progress in developing communication skills which they practice every lesson.
- Sensitive and considerate support enables pupils with the most complex difficulties to make choices or express feelings with increasing confidence.
- The curriculum is very well organised and provides exactly the right kind of work for each of the school's very different groups of pupils.
- Pupils love school and say they feel safe there because all staff know them well. Their impeccable behaviour and eagerness to learn really help them to succeed.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school and appreciate the way it helps them to be partners in their child's learning.
- The school is extremely well led and senior managers ensure that pupil progress and teaching quality are rigorously checked. Governors challenge school leaders effectively to ensure the excellent standards achieved do not slip.

Information about this inspection

- Millwood provides for pupils with a wide range of special needs. All pupils attending the school have statements of special educational needs indicating profound and complex needs, severe learning difficulties or autistic spectrum conditions.
- Many pupils have additional physical or medical needs. The proportion of pupils with autistic spectrum conditions has increased since the previous inspection.
- The school caters for pupils between the ages of two and 11. Pupils can join the school at any age but most enter at very early stages of their education.
- Just over one quarter of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding); this is below the national average.
- There are twice as many boys as girls in the school and most students are of White British heritage.
- A small number of pupils experience activities in mainstream primary schools. Millwood currently has inclusion links with Gorsefield Primary School, Park View Primary School, Greenhill School and St Phillip’s Primary School.
- Millwood moved to its purpose-built new site in April 2012. It is developing its outreach role to provide advice and guidance for mainstream schools and to help their staff develop skills to meet the needs of children with more complex difficulties.

Inspection team

Linda Clare, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons, saw all teachers and one higher level teaching assistant, and all classes were seen.
- Pupils led a tour of the school; inspectors also listened to them read and discussed their work with them.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, school staff and senior leaders, the school council and a group of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Informal discussions were also held with staff and pupils.
- Information from the school's most recent parental questionnaire was taken into account. Insufficient responses were available on the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to be able to access them. Staff views were gathered from discussions and from the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at information about pupils' progress, teaching, planning and monitoring documentation. The school's documents on safeguarding were reviewed, together with records of attendance and pupils' behaviour.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the system to check pupils' work by ensuring that staff write up observations of pupils' gains as they happen each lesson in all classes, to match the best practice in the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils enter the school with skills significantly below those typically expected for their age as a result of their complex learning and additional needs.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage pupils make at least good progress as they learn to follow school routines, make independent choices and gain skills to help them in their learning. They make outstanding progress in their communication skills which provides them with a solid foundation for future learning.
- In the main school pupils with the most complex difficulties learn to make their needs and feelings known to staff and to 'have a go' before experienced support is provided. They learn successfully by choosing to use signing, pictures, symbols or the spoken word in lessons.
- Those with autistic spectrum conditions have structured and individualised work which focuses on their specific needs very effectively. More-able pupils learn to write in sentences, read fluently and some pupils help others by reading with them.
- 'Bringing Out the Best', initially for those in receipt of pupil premium funding, boosts how pupils feel about themselves by selecting an interest or 'talent' to enhance. This improves confidence, which helps pupils to make even greater progress in their reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, there is very little variation in performance between girls and boys, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, those known to be eligible for free school meals or in receipt of pupil premium funding.
- Pupils learn to use technology equipment very confidently. Switches help pupils who are unable to use speech to give their views. Interactive 'media walls' encourage pupils to take an active part in learning, for example, when forming letter shapes or grouping the same sounds by dragging words on the screen.
- All activities are geared towards helping pupils do as much as possible without relying on staff support. They learn to be more and more independent through lessons that have an excellent balance of literacy, numeracy and life skills. This was seen clearly as older pupils used money and counting skills to work out the cost of choosing their cereal or an orange at 'snack time'.
- The new 'physical literacy' sessions focus very effectively on pupil mobility, coordination, exercise and social learning. Pupils learn to follow directions, wait and take turns through enjoyable, lively and inclusive dance sessions. 'Rebound' trampoline sessions and the fantastic array of soft-play rooms with jungles, pirates and light displays contribute tremendously to pupils' outstanding physical development and sensory awareness.
- Teachers are skilled in identifying where pupils may need extra help and, if needed, this is organised very effectively. Pupils' targets are challenging and well designed. Continuous improvement is through small, secure steps.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Lesson planning is very detailed and work is matched carefully to build on what pupils know and what their next steps should be.
- Teachers frequently remind pupils of what they are to learn and skilfully ask questions to get them thinking. Pupils are regularly encouraged to express their thoughts and opinions – from feeling happy or sad to how well they think they have understood and completed their task. Patient and calm understanding of pupil needs by staff allays any anxiety that might arise.
- Teaching focuses on creative and 'hands on' learning, seen, for example, in the use of cinnamon and glitter to provide extra sensory input to the paints in mark-making, an early stage of writing. Pupils like rhythm and rhyming verse and music features strongly in all lessons.
- Enthusiastic praise and encouragement, such as saying 'good sitting' or 'good looking' rewards

pupils' responses immediately and this boosts confidence. Pupils are keen to get on with their work and readily show delight in the fun of classroom activities, singing or when discovering new experiences.

- Pupils show a love of books and stories. Those more able are eager to read and were pleased to display their skills when reading to the inspector. Reading is very well taught using a structured programme which matches letters to sounds. Mathematics is equally well taught.
- Relationships in the school are outstanding. Support staff are valued and play a vital part in helping pupils to get on with their work. They work closely with teachers in skilled class teams. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for by all staff, they feel secure and this helps them to concentrate to the best of their ability and try hard in their lessons.
- Staff check pupils' progress by observing them in the classroom and noting small changes and improvements in learning. The school has accurately recognised that in one or two classes, staff do not write up these small changes in pupils' skills as they happen, which would help to speed pupils' progress further.
- A high quality system records step by step progress and learning programmes are tweaked regularly to take account of any tiny gains made. Pupils are well prepared for their next school by the end of Key Stage 2.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils take a pride in their behaviour. They are polite to visitors, show good manners and like to know what is going on. They are respectful when listening to each other, can name friends and play happily alongside others.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils say that they 'love coming to school' and as one pupil said, 'can't wait for the holidays to end'. Behaviour is managed very effectively by staff, and pupils glow in the praise they receive.
- The school has had no exclusions. Pupils are adamant that bullying is not a problem and are aware to the best of their abilities of different kinds of bullying. As one pupil noted 'it's mean to make people cry, we don't do that' and all have great confidence that staff will sort any kind of problem for them.
- The reward system is well understood and pupils work hard to gain their rewards. Celebratory assemblies create 'stars' for a week and fame extends to the school's webpage and newsletters.
- Parents say they feel school to be a secure environment which keeps their children very safe. Risks are assessed for individual pupils, around school and in the community to ensure pupils receive the best possible care.
- The school works very effectively with a range of medical, social and therapeutic services and has good links with numerous mainstream primary and secondary special schools.
- Pupils attend school whenever they are fit and able to do so. Attendance has risen since the last inspection – when it was good – and a sharp watch is kept by the school and its governors to ensure all absences are meticulously followed up.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The dynamic headteacher continues to have high ambitions for the school and has managed its relocation very successfully. She is ably assisted by senior leaders whose complementary individual strengths combine to create a highly successful management team. Pupils' progress has continued to improve since the school's previous outstanding inspection.
- The school's view of itself is perceptive and accurate. School planning focuses appropriately on raising achievement and ensuring equality of opportunity. Teachers are set relevant and challenging targets which link extremely well to the areas identified for improvement and to pay

levels. All staff share the same clear goals for future improvement and morale is high.

- Effective systems are in place to check pupils' progress and senior managers tackle areas for improvement which arise both speedily and rigorously. Literacy and numeracy are both well managed.
- Teaching is efficiently checked and new staff are mentored. This ensures consistency for pupils taught the 'Millwood way'. Staff attend regular training to maintain the school's highest standards in teaching and learning.
- The school is a happy and harmonious community. An extensive range of trips and visits enhance pupils' real-life experiences. They enjoy their role as ambassadors for Millwood when visiting local shops, parks, churches and libraries and are very effectively introducing the school to its new neighbours.
- The curriculum is rich, vibrant and focused to pupils' needs. Pupils learn about life in other countries and have worked hard to achieve the full International Schools award this year.
- Parental links are strong and parents hold both chair and vice-chair positions on the governing body. Daily progress reports, newsletters and an interactive school website provide parents with excellent opportunities to share their child's experiences and enhance what they learn.
- There is a very positive and productive relationship with the local authority which supports the school well. Senior managers and governors have worked very closely with the local authority on the new school and plans for its future development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is keen to make a difference and not afraid to constructively challenge the school's senior managers. Governors ensure they have up-to-date information about pupils' progress, teaching and overall school performance through regular visits, link roles with subject teachers and detailed school reports. They monitor finances efficiently and ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve pupils' work in literacy and numeracy. Governors meet their statutory safeguarding responsibilities very well. They share senior managers' determination to achieve the highest levels for the school.

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	105377
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	403777

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debi Walker
Headteacher	Helen Chadwick
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2009
Telephone number	0161 724 2266
Fax number	0161 724 2277
Email address	millwood@bury.gov.uk

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