

Millbank Academy

Erasmus Street, London, SW1P 4HR

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Pupils start school needing considerable support for their learning, but are making exceptionally good progress to reach standards which are well above expectations by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive very effective help and soon gain confidence, becoming independent, keen learners.
- Teaching is outstanding and brings out the best in each pupil. Teachers have high expectations and pupils rise to meet them, tackling difficult and challenging tasks with determination and conviction.
- Pupils from different groups, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those who receive additional funding, make excellent progress because their needs are quickly understood and skilled support is put in place.
- Pupils' behaviour, attitudes to learning and respect for each other are outstanding. Pupils are enormously proud of their school and play an active part in contributing to the positive atmosphere.
- There is a culture of high aspiration and success for all. Pupils have a rich and stimulating learning experience, inspired by an innovative range of topics and the input of specialist teachers throughout the school. Studying art, music, PE and French helps to motivate them and contributes strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership is outstanding. School leaders are highly supportive of the vision to continually improve and are powerful role models around the school. Staff support for the headteacher has driven up standards across the school.
- The governing body plays an important and successful role in supporting and challenging the school to help drive improvements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, 11 jointly with the headteacher and school leaders. They also observed support and small-group sessions for pupils at risk of falling behind.
- Inspectors attended two school assemblies and visited the school's breakfast and after-school clubs and play centre.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in class and met with two different groups of pupils. They spoke with the Chair of the Governing Body as well as the Director of Education for Future Academies. Throughout the inspection, inspectors spoke to school staff, including senior and subject leaders.
- Inspectors noted the views of 31 parents and carers who responded to the on-line Parent View survey and spoke to parents and carers who were bringing their children to school. They also noted the contents of three emails received during the inspection.
- The inspection team reviewed the responses to 39 staff questionnaires completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' current progress, planning documents, checks carried out by leaders on the school's effectiveness, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christopher Christofides	Additional Inspector
Bimla Thakur	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Millbank Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2012. When its predecessor school, Millbank Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Millbank Academy is sponsored by Future and opened in September 2012. It is larger than most primary schools.
- The majority of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The academy is a designated school in Westminster for pupils with autism and has a dedicated class with ten places, known as Windmill.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding provided for looked after children, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed forces, is well above average.
- The breakfast and after school-clubs on site, plus the play centre, are managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Create more opportunities to challenge the most able pupils in their writing, so that they successfully achieve the highest levels of which they are capable.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress through the school. School information and current work indicate that pupils are on track to continue to improve further in both key stages in 2013.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieve well. Overall, pupils eligible for the pupil premium are half a term ahead of their peers in school in reading, writing and mathematics and exceed this against their peers nationally. The extra funding is used very effectively to provide three teachers for every year group so that targeted support is available for pupils at risk of falling behind and all pupils work in ability sets.
- Pupils' standard of reading is high and is well above age expectations across the school. Less able pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 show a secure grasp of the principles of reading. Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes and high levels of enthusiasm about their enjoyment of reading.
- Writing standards are high, and writing is woven into many class activities, visits and topics studied. Pupils write for a range of purposes with competence and confidence. They check and edit their own work so that they are constantly improving. In a small number of lessons, the most able pupils are not challenged enough and they miss opportunities to achieve even higher levels.
- In numeracy, pupils have excellent opportunities to secure and apply their skills and choose their own methods to solve problems. Using mathematical language and applying previous learning across a range of topics build on and further develop understanding. This contributes well to raising their achievement.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive exceptionally good quality support and achieve well as a result. Additional funding to provide specialised adult support for smaller groups daily has been highly effective in promoting these pupils' success.
- The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic groups is similar to that of other pupils. Those who speak English as an additional language also make good and better progress because the school identifies their language needs early on and provides suitably tailored support.
- Pupils from the Windmill class receive excellent support. Whether they are being taught in their own class, or with others across the school, they make good and better progress in all subjects. As a result of teaching that meets their specific needs, these pupils make progress that is as good as, or better than, that of other pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs in this school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers set high expectations and the pace of lessons is typically swift, containing a good variety of challenging activities and opportunities for pupils to be involved throughout. In an art lesson, a group of seven year olds were highly engaged in discussing the meaning behind a series of paintings, having created their own interpretations of Greek vases with a modern London twist.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage quickly develop high levels of confidence as their communication skills improve and adults engage their interests with a series of enjoyable, purposeful activities both indoors and outside. Early reading and writing skills develop particularly well and provide an excellent basis for their next steps in learning.
- Literacy and mathematics are taught extremely well, so pupils have lots of opportunities to develop their skills across different subjects. Teaching is enhanced by the effective use of an excellent range of resources, including the computer suite and interactive whiteboards, and other information and communication technology (ICT) is used with great effect and provides variety in the ways pupils learn.
- Additional teachers and subject specialists, such as a specialist ICT teacher, work closely with teaching assistants in teams. They plan together, which makes a huge contribution to pupils'

excellent learning and progress. They know their pupils well and are sensitive to their needs, providing the right balance of support at the right time. As a result, they help to ensure that all pupils make the very best progress that they can.

- Teachers are very effective in linking activities with learning targets so that pupils understand exactly what is expected of them and how they can achieve greater success. Older pupils understand their targets for different subjects and use success criteria when reviewing a piece of work. They have the highest motivation to achieve their absolute best.
- Marking across the school is excellent in all lessons and subjects. The very best examples refer to pupils' individual targets and offer high quality, helpful feedback to ensure that pupils reach the highest levels in their work. Pupils read and increasingly respond to comments which help them to continue to improve their work.
- Homework is set regularly and pupils have a designated homework room and club available after school so that they can continue to achieve their very best and consolidate what they have learned in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They manage their own behaviour very well and play a very active part in maintaining the positive atmosphere in the school.
- The parents, carers, and staff agree that pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent. Pupils' attendance levels are above average, and the importance of not taking extended holidays during term time is taken seriously. The breakfast and after-school clubs are very popular and have had a positive impact on attendance.
- School councillors represent pupils well and act as positive role models for others in the school. They re-enforce the school rules and the 'Speak Out' box, suggested by them, is a popular way for pupils to express any concerns.
- Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively when it occurs. Pupils understand risk, particularly as they are visited by police and fire safety officials and also learn about being safe on bicycles. They are highly aware of different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe, especially on the internet. There are few racist incidents, and discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and all speak positively about how much they enjoy and value being a part of it. Volunteers give up their free time before and after school as 'Millbank Junior Citizens' and are responsible for different jobs in the school. For example, a team checks that soap and toilet paper are replaced regularly and that good hygiene is maintained.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. If they have any concerns, they say that there are several adults who they can turn to for help.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- School leaders have been highly successful in creating the rapid improvements necessary to become an outstanding academy. They work together with a clear vision and commitment to continuous improvement. Their high expectations are reflected throughout the school.
- The transition into the Future Academies group has been sensitively managed and leadership roles have strengthened so that key aspects identified in the school's development plan continue to be driven forward. Staff responses were resoundingly positive and full of praise for the leadership team. Parents and carers who expressed their views were equally so.
- The school reviews all aspects of its work thoroughly and acts quickly to address any gaps so that the pace of improvements is not slowed. School development plans are realistic and sharply focused. Plans to raise standards are linked to close checks on the quality of teaching, learning and progress.
- Leaders make sure that teachers' pay and performance link directly to whole-school priorities and pupils' progress. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching so that all is now consistently good and increasingly outstanding. Teachers share their best practice, team teach

and observe each other in the school and partner academy. This has contributed to the high quality of teaching and driven up standards across the school, including in the specialist class, Windmill, for pupils with autism. The leadership and management of teaching are outstanding.

- Equal opportunities are rigorously promoted and no pupil is denied access to anything the school has to offer. Two free spaces are available in every club so that every pupil has the same opportunities and can access the wide range of trips and visits available. Spiritual, moral and social development are promoted exceptionally well through the rich offering of trips and visits which enhance the school curriculum.
- The Academy sponsor is working closely with the school in order to continue to secure and sustain the rapid pace of improvements seen so far.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are highly skilled and their work with school leaders is exceptional and has been integral in the drive to become an outstanding academy. They have an excellent understanding of information on pupils' progress and how it compares nationally, and use the very latest available to check on the progress being made across the academy. Governors are committed to enhancing their own skills and continuing to build strong partnerships for the school. They make regular visits to check directly on key areas of the school's work and ensure that financial resources are efficiently managed, including pupil premium funding and how this impacts on pupils' achievement. This has enabled the headteacher to do some teaching and lead others by setting a high example of the very best practice. Governors see that targets to improve the performance of staff are reviewed carefully and that teachers' pay is linked to how well pupils are doing. They check that the popular breakfast and after-school clubs and the play centre are well run and that safeguarding meets requirements.

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	138683
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	413206

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lady Caroline Nash
Headteacher	Alyson Russen
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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