

# Milwards Primary School and Nursery

Paringdon Road, Harlow, CM19 4QX

**Inspection dates** 17–18 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Milwards is a happy and inclusive school. Parents are confident that their children, particularly those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are making good progress and are well looked after.
- Pupils achieve well. They make strong progress from low starting points, particularly in writing. By the time they leave school, their standards in English and mathematics are broadly in line with the national average.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children quickly develop their communication skills and learn how to get on with one another.
- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. They plan lessons that engage pupils well and mark their written work regularly.
- The headteacher is a very positive role model and is ably supported by a knowledgeable and well informed governing body in a strong and effective drive for continual improvement in pupils' achievement. School leaders are rigorous in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy coming to school, where they feel safe and secure, and find their lessons interesting.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching.
- Pupils are not given enough responsibility for their own learning. They are not clear enough about how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons, including three joint observations with the headteacher, and looked at pupils' written work in their books and on display.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher and other school leaders and over the telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke formally to two groups of pupils and informally with other pupils in lessons and around the school, and listened to other pupils reading.
- A number of the school's documents were examined. These included the school's information about pupils' progress and the support given to pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, the school's own checks on its performance and its improvement plan, evidence about monitoring and evaluating teaching and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of 31 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), together with the views expressed by parents as they arrived at school to pick up their children, and analysed 15 questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

James McVeigh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynne Thorogood

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Milwards Primary School and Nursery is slightly smaller than the average primary school and there is one form in each year group.
- The large majority of pupils come from a White British background and the remainder from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. There are more pupils than average who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and other groups) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action and the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are above the national average.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.
- 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?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
  - ensuring teachers, when marking, explain what pupils have to do to improve their work and provide opportunities for them to respond to that advice
  - strengthening the role of subject leaders in evaluating the quality of teaching and providing appropriate support and guidance for each teacher to improve further.
- Accelerate even more the progress pupils make by:
  - giving pupils greater responsibility for their own learning through the provision of clear information about the quality of their work, particularly to pupil premium pupils in mathematics, and guidance on how to reach the next level.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' make strong progress in all years, including those who have English as an additional language and those new to English. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics has been steadily rising and is broadly similar to national figures. Attainment in 2013 in writing, a focus for the school since the last inspection, is above the national average.
- Children enter Nursery with skills, knowledge and abilities below those expected for their age, particularly in language, social and fine motor skills. With good teaching and in a caring environment, children make good progress, quickly developing their independence and communication skills and learning to get along with others. However, when they leave Reception they are still below the level of development expected.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in the next key stage. In 2013, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in mathematics and English was broadly average, following a dip in standards in reading and writing in 2012. The dip reflected the entry of a significant group of pupils with little or no English in Years 1 and 2. This group made accelerated progress in English from their low starting points. Generally, pupils with English as an additional language make good or better progress at Milwards.
- The school makes high quality provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils are identified early and receive appropriate and well-targeted extra help. Teachers plan suitable work to meet their individual needs and teaching assistants are knowledgeable and well trained to support them. Consequently, this group of pupils make as good or better progress that their peers.
- Reading is encouraged effectively by the school, for example by promoting the use of reading diaries, though pupils are not set reading targets. Pupils enjoy reading, read regularly at school and take books home to read to their parents. A few pupils have no other books at home. Phonics (the sounds letters make) is taught well so that early readers use successful strategies to decipher unfamiliar words and those new to English make rapid progress in developing reading skills. Pupils' performance in the 2013 phonics screening check improved and was close to the national average.
- In 2013, pupils in Year 6 who were eligible for the pupil premium made better progress than others in English; the attainment gap between them and the others had narrowed from three to two terms. They made less progress in mathematics and the attainment gap was four terms. This gap is less marked in other year groups.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. They plan lessons that engage pupils well and mark their written work regularly.
- Children are taught well in the Nursery and Reception classes. Teachers plan a wide range of activities for children in an exciting environment, that stimulate interest and curiosity and develop their language skills well. Teachers regularly assess children's progress and record it in learning journals, including activities carried out at home.

- Teachers manage their class groups well so that the atmosphere in lessons is calm and orderly. They have established how pupils should behave, for example, how to listen to others and how to ask for help. Children in the Nursery are taught how to wait for their turn to speak when sharing ideas about activities because the teacher models what is expected and praises those who respond well.
- Good relationships have been developed between teachers, pupils and support staff. Pupils like their teachers and the teaching assistants. They say teachers always help them if they get stuck.
- Pupils enjoy lessons, finding the activities interesting and engaging. Year 5 pupils worked well together in groups to film the scenes from 'The Wind in the Willows' that they had written. When planning, teachers carefully consider the roles of teaching assistants and the different learning needs of their pupils. They usually plan challenging activities for pupils. However, sometimes the more able pupils do not move onto the more demanding tasks quickly enough.
- Teachers always explain to pupils what they expect them to be able to do by the end of the lesson and how to set about the tasks. Ideas in lessons develop logically and at an appropriate pace for good learning. Pupils are helped to develop their understanding further through the good use of 'partner talk', where pairs of pupils share their ideas in brief discussions. Teachers often use effective questioning to make pupils think more deeply about their answers and improve their learning.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and often in detail, but the effectiveness of marking is inconsistent. They correct pupils' mistakes and praise what pupils have done well, but pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond to the comments on how to improve. Pupils do not have enough responsibility for their own learning and are not set targets for improvement. They are not clear about the quality or level of their work, nor the steps they need to take in order to get to the next level.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils enjoy coming to school, where they feel valued, safe and secure. As one parent said, 'They go to school happy and come home happy.' Pupils find their lessons interesting and know their teachers value them. Their confidence develops quickly, for example, when talking in front of their peers or to their teachers.
- Pupils understand the school's behaviour management system. They get on well with one another and behave well around the school and in lessons. They know their behaviour affects their progress and have positive attitudes to learning. However, occasionally where activities are not well matched to their abilities, pupils become restless and do not produce their best work.
- Pupils cooperate well with each other in 'partner talk' and group activities. For example, they share materials fairly and listen to one another considerately during 'partner talk'.
- Pupils' attendance has been above or close to the national average for the last three years due to the school's successful strategies to promote good attendance.
- Pupils have learned how to be healthy and keep themselves safe, for example, when using the internet or crossing the road. They have a good understanding of bullying for their age. They know about the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and think that bullying at school is rare and quickly sorted out by teachers.

- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well through assemblies, visits to different places of worship and a cultural week, where pupils sample foods and costumes from around the world. Pupils are aware of the variety of beliefs and cultures – the multicultural nature of the school community is celebrated well. They are respectful of and care about each other, which further supports their good behaviour.
- Parents, governors and staff agree that pupils' behaviour at school is good. The school's records on behaviour show very few incidents of misbehaviour over the last few years. There have been no permanent or internal exclusions in the recent past.
- Pupils have a fair range of responsibilities that they are proud to take on, such as school council representative, play leader and running the tuck shop.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Milwards is a happy and inclusive school with a calm and orderly atmosphere and a strong sense of teamwork. Pupils respect one another and all pupils, including those with disabilities and special educational needs, are integrated well into the community. Pupils and parents are rightly proud of their school.
- The headteacher is a very positive role model with high expectations and a clear vision for the school, encapsulated in the acronym MILWARDS, and a challenge for every pupil 'to be the best you can.' The perceived lack of aspiration of many pupils is tackled, in part, by widening their experiences through residential trips, such as to Edinburgh and Lincolnshire, which pupils remember vividly.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. The headteacher regularly monitors and evaluates the quality of teaching through formal lesson observations and by talking to pupils and looking at their work. Every pupil's book is seen over the course of a year. Teachers are set challenging targets for improvement, including raising the achievement of pupils and self-improvement. Other school leaders are involved in monitoring teachers' work and sharing examples of good practice across the school, but the feedback given to individual teachers does not link the impact of their teaching on pupils' achievement sufficiently closely to support teachers' improvement effectively enough.
- There is a strong focus on improving teaching practice. The school takes part in school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT). Weekly staff meetings revolve around sharing the best practice seen by school leaders and teachers are well supported in their professional development through in-service training sessions, partnering with another colleague and external courses. Some teaching assistants are working towards professional teaching qualifications. However, no visits to outstanding schools have been planned, for staff to experience best teaching practice.
- School leaders have a detailed and accurate knowledge of the school. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly and their performance is recorded and closely analysed so that pupils who underperform can be given appropriate support.
- The school works hard to foster good relationships with parents, who are very confident that their children, particularly those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are making good progress and are well looked after. Still, many parents are reluctant to engage closely with the school, for example, by helping pupils read at school.
- Parents and pupils know that the school is effective in ensuring equality of opportunity for all

and discouraging all forms of discrimination.

- The school offers a broad and balanced range of subjects, including topics appealing to both boys and girls. Topics begin with an exciting activity to stimulate pupils' interest, such as the arrival of 'Roman soldiers' for the topic on Greece. Further enrichment is provided by a good range of visits and visitors, such as evacuees from the war, and the use of the exciting school grounds, with copses, pond and beehives. A good range of clubs is available including memorable Forest School activities. Pupils and parents have access to an internet-based mathematics learning platform.
- The well-attended breakfast club provides pupils with a healthy breakfast and a calm start to the day in a safe and friendly atmosphere. The school offers funding for those eligible for the pupil premium.
- The local authority recognises the strengths of the school and the improvements that have been made and offers effective, light-touch support.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a good range of relevant skills and individual governors have roles closely matched to those skills and their experience. Regular training is undertaken, for example, to understand information about school performance. Governors are well informed and knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They get clear information from the headteacher and gather their own through regular, focused visits and canvassing pupils' views. They ask challenging questions about the impact the school has on pupils' achievement. They are involved in ensuring that the rewards teachers receive are warranted and based on meeting performance targets. Governors are involved in setting robust targets for the headteacher. They ensure the school makes sound financial decisions, such as allocating the pupil premium to promote better achievement. All statutory arrangements for safeguarding are securely in place.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114922
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	428851

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	239
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Amanda Tanner-Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Downie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01279 435850
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