



Mildmay Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114892
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279467
Inspection dates 12 July 2006 to 13 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. John Paull AI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Robin Way
School category	Community		CM2 8AU
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01245 250019
Number on roll	291	Fax number	01245 265689
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Freda Mountain
Date of previous inspection	18 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs. Linda King

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most of its type. It is situated on the outskirts of Chelmsford. Very few of the pupils are from ethnic backgrounds other than White British. Most of them live on the surrounding housing estate and have attended the infant school that shares the well kept site, although some join from other infant schools or at an older age. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, learning difficulties and disabilities is considerably above that of other schools, because Mildmay is home to an eighteen place unit for supporting pupils with hearing impairment, known as the Resource Base. Attainment on entry is a little above average, although it fluctuates from year to year more widely than is usual in schools of this size. This is largely related to numbers attending the resource base in different years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection confirms the school's view of itself as a good school. It is led and managed well. The headteacher has fostered good teamwork throughout the staff that is focussed on providing high quality education and standards for all pupils. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, improvement since the last inspection has been good, and the capacity for this to continue is also good. The school provides good value for money. Standards through the school are usually above average by Year 6, although results of national tests fluctuate from year to year because attainment on entry to school varies. Nearly all pupils make good progress and achieve well as they move through the school, including those with hearing impairment, other learning difficulties or disabilities. Good management and uses of assessment of pupils' performance have correctly identified weaknesses in boys' writing and in solving mathematical problems. Programmes to rectify these matters have been put into place. Results in mathematics in Year 6 rose sharply in 2005. Personal development is an exceptionally strong feature. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding. Pupils are polite and have a strong sense of fairness, so others are not left out of their games and activities. Governors are fully involved in decisions, contributing their ideas effectively to help in achieving good value for money. A few parents, especially of pupils in Year 6, do not feel well informed about the school's provision and their children's progress as they moved through the school and inspectors agree that this aspect is due for review.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue with its strategies to improve boys' writing and their skills in solving mathematical problems. - Review and improve arrangements for reporting information to parents, so they are better placed to help and support their children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall standards are above average, although results of national tests in Year 6 vary from year to year and between subjects. Nevertheless, results have never dropped below national averages at any time since the last inspection and, although actual comparisons are not yet available for 2006, the school's own results indicate that this picture is likely to continue. Fluctuations are usually related to the numbers of pupils in the resource base for hearing impairment, as well as to those with learning difficulties whose needs are met from mainstream resources. Pupils with such needs make good progress towards their own individual targets that are, understandably, often lower than those of other pupils. Bearing these factors in mind, achievement is good. In most year groups, many pupils achieve at a level above that normally expected, indicating that able pupils are catered for effectively. In English, mathematics and science, work is sampled regularly and pupils' understanding is tested as they move through the school. Based on a careful analysis of pupils' past performances and any

underachievement, challenging future targets are set. In recent years, the school has usually met its targets and often exceeded them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils talk freely about their school's friendliness and how caring their teachers are. This makes them feel safe, knowing that concerns will be taken seriously by 'peer mediators' and staff. Everywhere in the school, pupils demonstrate enthusiasm, which contributes to their good, willing attendance, excellent behaviour and the respect they have for each other. School councillors say their new 'yellow and red cards for behaviour have definitely resulted in fewer of us needing to be stood up than used to'. This effective school council speaks with pride about the changes that they have initiated and how the headteacher and deputy headteacher take notice of them. Pupils also contribute very well to the community, through raising large sums of money for charity. They are very inclusive in their attitudes. All pupils, including those with hearing impairment and other learning difficulties and disabilities, are fully involved in classroom and playground activity. Strong personal, social and health education means that many pupils know about how to keep themselves safe. In a science lesson, for example, they were very careful when using thermometers, understanding that the glass could cut and that the liquid inside is hazardous. Pupils also know a lot about eating healthily. In the resource base, when her friend was praised for good work, a pupil commented, 'She must have had a good big breakfast'. Pupils' good progress in basic skills provides a solid basis for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Inspectors observed lessons that were consistently of this quality and included examples of outstanding teaching. Teachers plan lessons carefully to meet pupils' needs. Assessments, individual target setting, marking and discussions with pupils are used effectively to plan each new step in learning. As a result, pupils make good progress and often exceed their targets. Good questioning draws out ideas from pupils and involves them actively in their learning. Just occasionally, situations arise when teachers instruct or tell pupils too much, rather than letting them find things out for themselves. However, teachers know their pupils well and establish a strong, trusting rapport with them. In return, pupils are willing to try hard and show great enjoyment of learning. By adopting a wide range of methods and using resources effectively, including information and communication technology (ICT), teachers provide different ways of learning that suit different pupils' requirements. Support staff play a significant role in helping and guiding pupils, including those with hearing impairment or other learning difficulties. Communicators

from the resource base add much to this strong picture, signing in the mainstream classes, so learning for all proceeds without loss of pace or interruption.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A broad curriculum is provided. It is adapted well to pupils' needs, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. While opportunities to discuss personal concerns are provided well in most classes, contributing strongly to personal development, this is not consistently so in others. In the case of academic subjects, effective monitoring ensures that the National Curriculum is fully covered. Further adaptations to improve boys' writing more and to focus on mathematical problems are planned. Many pupils say that they enjoy their class projects. This cross-curricular work helps them to make good progress. French lessons further enhance what is provided. Pupils in Year 5 are enthusiastic about a residential visit to Ringsfield Hall. This visit emphasises historical and geographical skills. Extra-curricular activities are also good, including chess, sport, music and science, and a lunchtime signing club taken by resource base staff opens knowledge of this language to hearing pupils. Personal development is enhanced in Year 6 with a visit to 'Crucial Crew'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' care, support and guidance are good, including for those with hearing impairment and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. A typical comment from a parent was: 'I cannot praise the school enough for the good care and support given to both my children'. Good links with outside agencies and other schools are apparent and the excellent school meals were recently featured in the Observer Food Magazine. Pupils from the resource base are included very effectively in the mainstream classrooms. Child protection, risk assessments and safeguarding arrangements are in place. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and monitored. Opportunities for them to evaluate their own performance mean that many have a good idea of what to do to improve. In questionnaires, a good majority of parents expressed the view that the school is open towards them and easily approached. Nevertheless, a significant few feel not so well informed about what the school provides for their children. Inspectors agree that improvements based on a full review of parents' needs is due in order to enable parents to support their children's learning better at home. Opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to engage and shine are underway.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which is shared by staff and governors. Issues in the last inspection have been addressed well and questionnaires for parents and pupils provide opportunities for them to express views of what is provided. Good morale and teamwork amongst staff

are producing a strong commitment to ongoing development. Mildmay is a flourishing school that demonstrates good capacity to keep improving. The performance of staff is evaluated and sensible actions are taken to share the best practice. Staff and governors have a clear and accurate picture of where the school's strengths lie and where they want to see developments. At all levels of management, information from monitoring teaching and the curriculum is used effectively. Governors challenge staff to achieve more while providing support through carefully planned funding allocations. A decision to provide three smaller classes in Year 6 rather than two larger ones is an example of their effective involvement, although budgetary considerations did not permit this as this class moved through the school. Partnerships with other schools and organisations are well established. Returned questionnaires indicate that a large majority of parents regard the school highly. Typical was a comment that 'my children enjoy Mildmay, it is a bright and happy place'.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Mrs Arora, Mr Hewett and I were all very pleased that so many of you told us how good your school is and that you enjoy it. We agree with you. We found that your work is good, including the work of those of you in the resource base, your attendance is good and you behave very well indeed. One of the best things is that so many of you want to help each other and are willing to involve everyone in your games, so no-one feels left out. Some other things that we liked about your school: - Your lessons are often practical and are well planned. - Your teachers teach you well. - The adults in your school care a lot about you and look after you well. - Your headteacher and the staff keep a close check on your progress and give you opportunities to check as well. Some things that we have asked your headteacher, teachers and school governors to do - Carry on helping the boys especially with their writing and all of you with mathematical problems. - Help your parents to help you even more by finding better ways to tell them about your work and progress. I hope that you will get on very well in the future and that you will always be proud of your school.