



# Millfields Community School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 100231  
**Local Authority** Hackney  
**Inspection number** 285749  
**Inspection date** 18 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Keith Williams

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hilsea Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		London
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11		E5 0SH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8985 7898
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	580	<b>Fax number</b>	020 8985 6966
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Rex Brough
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Dame Anna Hassan DBE
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 November 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Millfields is a much larger than average primary school. Pupils represent a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with the largest groups being those of Asian, White, Black Caribbean and Black African heritage. Most pupils speak English as an additional language and a large proportion are at the early stages of learning the language. A small number are the children of refugees or those seeking asylum. The school serves an area of significant deprivation and the percentage eligible for free school meals is much higher than usually found. The school takes a lead in a wide range of local and national initiatives and has received many awards, including Healthy Schools status and Investors in People. It is a UNICEF Children's Rights Champion, an adult learning centre and a teacher training school. The school hosts a base for pupils with autism and is a leading school in extended school provision.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. The headteacher, very ably supported by other senior managers and staff, provides excellent leadership and management. There is a very strong focus on achieving the highest possible standards through a rigorous evaluation of the school's work. A very close check is kept on pupils' progress and this information is used very well to drive up standards, to hold teachers to account for the performance of their pupils and to improve provision further.

The attainment of pupils when they start school covers a range but, overall, it is well below average. Outstanding teaching means that they make excellent progress to reach average standards. This has been reflected in the national tests in recent years. The school's performance in English and science is particularly noteworthy and, given pupils' starting points, this represents excellent achievement. While still reflecting a good level of achievement, results in mathematics have shown greater fluctuation and, in recent years, they have been below average. The school has rightly recognised that pupils' progress in mathematics is not as marked as it is in the other subjects and the school leaders have set about tackling this determinedly. A number of initiatives, including improved planning and the grouping of pupils of similar ability, are beginning to make a difference, but have not yet had time to secure the level of improvement sought by the school.

The school is not just interested in pupils' academic progress, however, and the vast majority of parents are very appreciative of the high priority given to promoting their children's personal development, their care and welfare. One parent represented the views of many in noting that 'the school makes every effort to make children enjoy being at school.' Indeed, all pupils are valued, regardless of age, background or ability and this makes a significant contribution to their achievement and progress. Given their excellent achievement, their positive attitudes and high self-esteem, pupils are impressively prepared for their future lives. Their positive attitudes to school are reflected in the rapidly improving attendance rate, which is now good.

Children make a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes because of excellent teaching and provision. Pupils with autism are very well supported by staff in their excellent special base and, when appropriate, they are successfully and sensitively integrated into classrooms. Very strong links with outside agencies ensure that those with learning difficulties, and other vulnerable pupils, are very well cared for. Many pupils are at an early stage of learning English. They, too, receive excellent support, rapidly gain in confidence and achieve very well. The school has worked hard to increase the level of challenge for more able pupils and provides very well for those who are gifted and talented, contributing to their excellent progress.

The school offers an impressive range of clubs and other activities outside of the school day and these are well supported by pupils. Parents, and other members of the local community, are encouraged to see the school as the focal point of their own learning, too, and many benefit from the wide range of adult learning opportunities.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve pupils' already good progress in mathematics.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' attainment when they start school is well below average. They make an excellent start in the Foundation Stage and most are on the way to achieving the goals expected of them by the end of Reception. This excellent progress continues in Years 1 to 6 and pupils' achievement in reaching average standards in English and science is outstanding. Standards in mathematics are below average, but this still represents a good level of achievement. These standards are reflected in the national test results in Years 2 and 6. Results in Year 2 are rising steadily because of improvements in planning and teaching. In Year 6, taking account of pupils' starting points, their performance in 2005 represents excellent achievement in English and science. The results for mathematics, while still representing good progress, were below average and they fell slightly in 2006. Despite this, they still reflect a good level of achievement when compared with the performance of this group of pupils when they were in Year 2. There is no significant difference in the progress made by pupils of different age, gender, background, ability or English language experience. Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. A strong focus on increasing pupils' self-esteem is very evident in the confident way that pupils of all ages approach their work and play. Pupils flourish in the school's safe and happy environment. Their enjoyment, positive attitudes and excellent behaviour contribute strongly to their outstanding achievement and give them an excellent base upon which to secure their future economic well-being. Relationships are excellent. The rate of attendance is improving and is now above average. The school is aware that a few pupils do not enjoy mathematics and has plans to increase its appeal. Pupils enjoy playing energetically and speak animatedly about the healthy options available at lunchtime. They feel that their school council 'really makes a difference.' They are particularly proud of the improvements to lunchtime equipment and their plans for a healthy tuck-shop. Strong links with the local community help extend their awareness of good citizenship.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Excellent teaching has a significant impact on pupils' learning. Work is planned thoroughly to take account of pupils' differing needs. Teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff form a highly effective team and ensure that those pupils who need extra help get it. Support for pupils new to learning English is timely and effective. Pupils appreciate the help they are given. Teachers' expectations are high, regardless of pupils' ability so that, for example, a high level of challenge is given to more able pupils. Teachers make very good use of interactive whiteboards to extend pupils' understanding and enjoyment. Ongoing assessment is impressive and is enhanced by a new electronic 'voting system' that enables teachers to keep a close check on pupils' understanding and gives them information that is checked after the lesson and used to plan the next steps. Previous weaknesses in the planning and organisation of mathematics lessons are being tackled robustly and are beginning to make a difference to pupils' learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent curriculum that provides pupils with a rich experience and plays a central part in their outstanding achievement. Subjects are linked together very well to enhance pupils' understanding and make learning enjoyable and there is a very strong emphasis on planning for pupils' personal development. Senior leaders keep a very close check on what is taught and staff review and improve the curriculum regularly. They are imaginative and are willing to try out new ideas to foster pupils' enthusiasm. The curriculum is enhanced by regular visits locally and further afield, and pupils benefit from residential opportunities. Extra-curricular provision is exceptionally strong and includes a vast number of clubs that offer the chance to develop interests and talent in a wide range of disciplines. As a result, pupils' learning and enjoyment are promoted seamlessly during and well beyond the school day.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

Providing outstanding care, guidance and support is at the heart of the school's work. The welfare and safety of pupils is paramount and the school attaches great importance to the emotional development of pupils and their families. As a result, pupils report that they feel safe in school and are able to reach their potential, regardless of background, ability or gender. Procedures to support pupils thought to be vulnerable are carried out rigorously but sensitively. Excellent planning and provision for pupils with autism ensure that they are fully integrated into school life, but also receive the specialist help that they need. Other pupils with special educational needs, and those with learning difficulties, are equally well supported. Assessment and tracking systems

are exceptional and are used to check closely the progress of each pupil, identify those who would benefit from extra help or challenge, and guide them to achieving their best.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and other senior leaders is the driving force behind the school's effectiveness. A strong sense of teamwork is promoted and staff at all levels contribute to the high quality achievement, teaching, learning and personal development. Governors provide excellent and assured support and strategic direction for the school. Staff have exceptionally high expectations of themselves and their pupils and complacency is not tolerated. All aspects of the school's work, including the performance of pupils and teachers, are monitored rigorously, strengths are celebrated and weaknesses are tackled remorselessly. For example, improvements in mathematics are being secured under the co-ordinator's astute leadership. The commitment of staff extends well beyond the school day and many contribute to the excellent after-school provision. The school leaders have a very accurate view of pupils' performance and the school's strengths and weaknesses, although they are modest about their overall effectiveness. Since the last inspection, they have secured higher standards and improved teaching and learning. Given their track record, they clearly have excellent capacity to improve even further.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for the very friendly way you welcomed me to your school. I enjoyed talking to you and your views and opinions have given me a lot of helpful information. I am writing to tell you about my findings.

Many of you told me how good you think your school is and how well you think you are doing. I agree with you. It is outstanding and there are many things happening that are much better than I usually find.

Your headteacher and staff are excellent. They work very hard to make your school a safe place so that you can do your best. You clearly enjoy school and I saw you work hard in your classrooms. I was very pleased to see that your work is much better than it was when your school was last inspected. You are doing particularly well in English and science. Your teachers keep a careful eye on your work and they would like you to do even better in mathematics.

Your behaviour is excellent and you work and play together very well so that everyone can get on with their learning. I was very interested to see Year 6 using the 'activote' handsets. They help your teachers check on how well you understand the work and they look good fun, too! Well done to those of you who are on the school council. You really make a difference and the other children appreciate what you do. You have obviously learned a lot about healthy eating and I was pleased to see so many of you choose healthy food at lunchtime. Many of you told me how safe you feel in school and that the adults take good care of you. I agree with you and I am pleased that more and more of you are coming to school every day. You are right to be proud of the excellent clubs before and after school.

Once again, thank you very much for your help. Even though your school is excellent, your headteacher and staff want to make it even better and I know that you will help them, particularly by working even harder in mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Keith Williams

Lead inspector