

# Milwards Primary School and Nursery

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114922
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	311760
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 December 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Cosway

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	214
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Amanda Tanner-Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Angela Callaway
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 March 2004
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Paringdon Road Harlow Essex CM19 4QX

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 December 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	311760

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<b>Age group</b>	3-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves a residential area to the south of Harlow. Most pupils are White British. An average proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few speak English as an additional language. There are higher than average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than nationally. These needs vary and there are more pupils than normally seen with complex learning needs and physical disabilities. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprising a Nursery and a Reception class. Standards on entry to the school are sometimes very low. The school gained the Healthy School award in 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It has undergone budgetary and staffing difficulties since the previous inspection, which have adversely affected the quality of teaching, but these issues have been resolved and the school now has good capacity to improve its provision. Parents are very supportive of the school. A typical comment was: 'The teachers all put the children first and that is how it should be!'

Pupils make steady progress from entering the school to the end of Year 2. Although pupils enter the school with levels lower than expected for their age, staff ensure that the curriculum matches their needs well, which results in a smooth transition from the Reception Year. By the end of Year 2, standards are still below average overall, but pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

In recent years, progress in Key Stage 2 has been erratic, but pupils now in Years 3 to 6 are making satisfactory progress as a result of the satisfactory teaching. Achievement is satisfactory overall and improving. In recent tests, attainment has been below the national average, but is rising slowly. Much of this improvement is due to the good leadership of the new headteacher and the dedication of the teaching staff. There is clear evidence that improvements in discipline are contributing to increasing numbers of pupils meeting their targets. However, some pupils, especially girls, underachieve in mathematics and many pupils have difficulty retaining what they have learned. The school has introduced effective strategies to support pupils who find learning hard so that they make good progress. The needs of pupils at an early stage of learning English are met effectively and they too make good progress. The curriculum is good and is enriched by the many visits the school arranges.

Personal development and well-being are consistently good. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate their roles as part of the school and local community. Their preparation for their future lives is satisfactory. They behave well and they have a good understanding of the importance of keeping safe and healthy. Cultural development is good and there are high levels of racial harmony.

Leadership and management are good and, as a result, the quality of teaching has improved and is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school has successfully reduced its large financial deficit to a balanced budget. It analyses data well to discover where pupils underperform and deals effectively with the issues raised to improve pupils' progress. The school's provision for community cohesion, which includes links with community groups and the wider world, is good. Governance is satisfactory and the current team is working hard to develop provision. Overall improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children in the EYFS make good progress. They do not attain all of the expected goals by the time they reach the end of the Reception Year, but they achieve well from low starting points, because activities are stimulating and exciting. There is a good balance between those that children choose for themselves and those that adults lead. Children make particularly good progress in their personal and social development as they settle into school quickly, make friends and work together effectively. The well-established induction process ensures that children and their parents feel welcomed into school and become accustomed to the routines. When moving from the Nursery to the Reception class, children are confident and eager to learn. All staff are good role models and assist children to learn and develop a wide vocabulary

to help them when reading and writing. Good leadership and management have identified areas where children lack skills and knowledge and these have been tackled effectively. Visits into the local area are arranged frequently so that children begin to understand the locality and what is going on around them. Visits to the local church and synagogue mean that they begin to understand about the beliefs and cultures of others. Teaching is good. Activities are well planned and cover all areas of learning. The outside area is used very effectively to help children explore many physical activities, as well as for role-play opportunities and 'messy play'. Assessments are thorough and identify the steps children need to achieve well. All children are well cared for, particularly those with complex learning and physical needs, whose welfare is checked carefully. All are included so they have equal access to learning.

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

- Raise standards and increase achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that what is taught is frequently revisited so that pupils retain and embed the knowledge and skills they have acquired in individual lessons and subjects.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards that are below the expected level. They make steady progress through Key Stage 1 as a result of a well balanced curriculum with a clear emphasis on the basic skills. The national tests and school data show that standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they reach the end of Year 2.

The results of the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 are beginning to show a rising trend. Standards are currently below average in Year 6, but have recently improved. The national tests show that standards fell at the end of Year 6 between 2003 and 2006, but they rose slightly in 2007 and again in 2008. Currently, pupils are achieving satisfactorily and most in Year 6 are on course to meet their targets. Standards in writing are still below average and the school is focusing rightly on improving pupils' written work by developing their drafting and self-assessment skills. Girls are not doing as well as boys in mathematics, but the school is aware of this and is exploring ways of increasing their confidence and competence. The impact of this work is yet to be seen, but the indications are that progress is accelerating.

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

### **Grade: 2**

All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils have a good understanding of different beliefs and cultures and respect each other. They report that behaviour is good and that there is no bullying in the school because staff deal quickly with any disagreements. Behaviour in classes and around the school is good. Pupils talk enthusiastically about keeping safe and healthy and have a good understanding about balanced and healthy diets. The school council is particularly proud of the money it raises for local and national charities and its work towards a new playground. This involves visiting the local council and raising money to buy extra land. The skills pupils have learned mean that they are

satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education. They are enthusiastic about learning and enjoy their many visits and residential opportunities. Pupils know what their targets are and how to improve their work. Many of the older ones respond to the comments written on their work and pupils are beginning to assess accurately for themselves how well they are learning and what they have understood.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are some good features in lessons, especially when teachers promote a fast pace and have high expectations of pupils. Teachers work well with classroom assistants during group work, where the needs of pupils who find learning hard are met effectively. All teachers manage behaviour well, resulting in lessons that are calm and well ordered with pupils keen to do their best. Staff ensure that there is different work to match varying pupils' needs and they use a good range of strategies to help retain pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning. They try to make lessons fun by introducing hands-on activities and modern technology, using the interactive white boards well. Teachers use questioning to check pupils' understanding and keep their attention. However, although pupils cope well in lessons, they do not retain the information they have learnt. This is because teaching does not reinforce learning by regularly revisiting work done previously. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to practice their skills and knowledge in formal test situations.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Recent innovations are strengthening provision. Good improvements to writing and numeracy include a clear emphasis on building the skills that pupils need. There is good enrichment through many visitors and visits to places of interest such as Boulogne and Edinburgh all of which make learning meaningful to pupils. Effective personal, social and health education ensures that pupils' personal development is good. Provision for information and communication technology is strong.

The Key Stage 1 curriculum builds systematically on the rich variety of experiences that children benefit from in Nursery and Reception. There is an effective emphasis on the development of basic skills of literacy and numeracy across subjects, with suitable attention paid to correct writing and accurate mathematics in topic work. At Key Stage 2, interesting topics provide a stimulating range of learning opportunities that are relevant to the pupils. This is beginning to have a positive impact on their achievement. The school provides a good variety of clubs that enrich the curriculum, along with full involvement in the Harlow Arts Project.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well cared for and receive good guidance and support from all adults. Pupils who find learning hard are particularly well supported by skilful staff who understand their needs very well. This enables pupils of all abilities to be fully included in the school. Strategies, such as visual education plans for very young children mean that they can be involved in assessing how well they are doing and what they need to do next. Teachers set appropriate targets for all pupils so that they know what it is they have to do to improve their work. Systems for

safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. The arrangements for welcoming pupils new to the country are firmly established and pupils quickly learn to communicate with their classmates and enjoy school. They make good progress as a result of the support they receive.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The senior leadership team is accurate in its evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the headteacher has worked hard to successfully reduce the large budgetary deficit. As a result, the school is able to make decisions, firmly based on the analysis of performance data, that have produced measurable improvements. For example, the introduction of rewards for pupils who come to school regularly has helped to increase attendance effectively.

Subject coordinators monitor and develop their subjects well. The school now has very effective systems for checking the quality of teaching, and managers use the information gathered to help teachers improve their practice. Governance is satisfactory. There is a genuine commitment to good community cohesion and strong links have been established with parents, local groups and places of worship, as well as areas overseas. These successes illustrate that there is good capacity for future improvement.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

**Annex B**

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

5 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milwards Primary School and Nursery, Harlow, CM19 4QX

Thank you for being so very welcoming to us when we came to your school. You were all very friendly and so helpful in answering our questions. We are writing to let you know what we found out.

You told us that you love your school and we liked it too. It is giving you a satisfactory education and is improving under the guidance of your headteacher. All the staff take good care of you. Your parents told us they are very pleased with how the school helps you to learn and grow. Your personal development is good. You are friendly to everyone and you know what to do to keep healthy and safe. Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting for you and in turn you behave well and you try hard to do your best.

We have asked the school to work harder to ensure that your work gets better in literacy and numeracy and that you have more opportunities to practice what you have learned so that you do not forget it. We want you all to try hard and become confident in numeracy lessons and tests.

We wish you the very best for your future lives and we hope that you continue to enjoy learning in a school that is such a happy place where everyone is working together for your good.

Yours sincerely

Paul Cosway

Lead inspector