

Millwood Primary Special School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105377
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	336486
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Saleem Hussain

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Cleaver
Headteacher	Ms Helen Chadwick
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and groups of pupils including the school council. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including: the school's self-evaluation; its plans for improvement; records related to safeguarding; the school's data on pupils' progress. The inspectors analysed 22 parental questionnaires and also read questionnaire responses from pupils and from staff.

- the learning and progress of different groups of pupils
- the quality of teaching and use of assessment
- the extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs
- the effectiveness of leadership and management.

Information about the school

Around two thirds of Millwood's pupils have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many of these pupils have additional medical and other complex needs. Around one third of pupils have communication difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorders. Most pupils have high dependency needs. The proportion of pupils from families who speak English as an additional language is well above average. Most of these pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition. The school serves an area with a wide range of socio-economic characteristics. Around one fifth of all pupils are entitled to free school meals. A very small number of pupils are in the care of the local authority. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage consisting of three groups. The school has gained the National Healthy Schools award and the Activemark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is a fabulous school. The result of its excellent provision is pupils' outstanding progress, learning and personal development. The very strong commitment, shown by leaders at all levels and shared by staff is making an immense contribution towards raising pupils' achievement and sense of well-being. Inclusion lies at the heart of the school's work and each pupil is at the centre of everyone's attention. The school was judged as good with excellent aspects at the last inspection. Significant improvements have taken place and the school has addressed very well the issues identified at that time. The whole track record of improvement illustrates well the ambition and drive that senior leaders provide. Self-evaluation is insightful and very effective. The school is fully aware of its strengths and areas for development and plans very carefully and extremely successfully to address these issues. These factors illustrate the outstanding capacity that the school has to improve further. The school recognises that although attendance is good, there is a little more that can be done to make it outstanding.

The curriculum is outstanding. It includes lots of glittering and imaginative opportunities to learn and achieve. An abundance of enrichment days and weeks of activities such as 'creative arts week' attract and sustain pupils' interest very well. Pupils also love the vast array of educational visits. They enhance their skills very well through working with sports coaches, artists, musicians and dance teachers from the community. The quality of teaching is outstanding. Excellent use of assessment information ensures that each one is challenged very effectively in lessons. Teachers capture everyone's attention from the outset and through skilful prompting, questioning and excellent use of learning resources create the buzz that pupils thrive on. Pupils especially like the practical opportunities and the chances to learn using all their senses.

The pupils are wonderful ambassadors for their school. Inspectors are very impressed with pupils' self-belief and toughness as they mature into fine young people. Attitudes towards learning and behaviour are exemplary. Their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is making an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils' appreciation of different cultures and racial harmony within school are outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise overall attendance by implementation of the school's plans to extend the range of strategies used.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

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Pupils concentrate very hard to acquire new knowledge and improve their understanding. They marvel at the new facts they learn and at new experiences. Pupils take pride in their work and like to see tasks through to the very end. There is a remarkable quiet and orderliness around the school at break times as pupils take a well-earned break from lessons. These factors make a significant contribution to pupils' progress.

Although pupils' special educational needs and/or learning disabilities mean that they do not reach the levels of attainment reached by pupils of a similar age nationally, the majority make outstanding progress from their starting points. Achievement in literacy, numeracy, science, and information and communication technology (ICT) is excellent overall. All pupils achieve equally well, regardless of their special educational needs and/or disabilities, ethnicity or gender. This is because all pupils are included very effectively in the learning activities. Pupils with profound and/or multiple learning difficulties, for example, move forward in very small steps. Their achievements are just as exceptional as those with other learning disabilities who might make bigger gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Communication and language development is always a very strong focus in learning and so pupils make excellent progress in this area. They learn signing or the use of pictures, symbols and aids in order to help them to understand and be understood.

Remarkable personal development makes an excellent contribution to learning. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to lead healthy lifestyles, for example, they make very good choices of snacks at break-times. They feel very safe and secure in school and have the utmost trust and confidence in the adults around them to resolve any worries. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community. The school council makes a very strong contribution to school improvement and all pupils are keen to support fund-raising for good causes. Pupils have a very good understanding of diversity and are passionate about equality. School 'buddies' are enthusiastic and play their unique part in ensuring that everyone is safe and happy. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their future economic well-being as a result of their exceptionally positive attitudes and outstanding academic progress.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers know the pupils' learning difficulties and disabilities extremely well and match work very closely to pupils' needs. Adults know how to motivate pupils and get the best out of them. Basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught extremely well. There is excellent support for different groups of pupils, including the most-able and pupils who speak English as an additional language. This helps all pupils to achieve as well as they can. The pace of learning is excellent and so pupils get through plenty of work in lessons. Records about attainment and progress are very clear. The school has a wealth of assessment information and this is used very effectively by teachers to plan their lessons and set very challenging learning targets.

The curriculum provides rich and very stimulating learning experiences for all pupils. The sensory curriculum is very effective. Pupils benefit very positively from working in the sensory room and also the outdoor environmental area. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is excellent. There are many opportunities to develop self-confidence and where possible, take responsibility for others.

Pupils are cherished and treated with dignity and respect at all times. As a result of the outstanding care, guidance and support, all pupils, including the most vulnerable, feel there are many people they can turn to, should they need help. Careful assessments of pupils' personal and social needs are used to provide specialist and carefully targeted support. Parents value very highly the availability of a full-time school nurse on site and also the therapists who provide support frequently. Very good care is taken to ensure that the school provides a safe environment. This is assisted by very clear procedures to manage behaviour. The school is clearly focused on raising attendance to even higher

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levels. It has planned good strategies and actions to build upon its strong work in this area.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The effectiveness of leadership and management can be seen in the quality of provision and outcomes achieved. The headteacher has developed robust management and improvement systems across all areas of the school's work. Teaching is monitored frequently. The sharp focus on lesson planning and progress has moved teaching from good to outstanding since the last inspection. Governors are very supportive of the school and fully involved in setting priorities. They use their expertise very well in financial and educational matters. All leaders are very effective in communicating high expectations. The determination to constantly improve the work of the school is shared by all staff. Pupils' progress is monitored very thoroughly and any underachievement is quickly identified with additional support put in place where required. The school knows exactly what it needs to do to improve even further because self-evaluation is very accurate.

At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were found to be excellent. The procedures are very well understood by staff and implemented with great care. Managers have established excellent monitoring systems to check that all government requirements are met. Meticulous attention is paid to the recruitment of suitable staff. Arrangements for training staff in safeguarding and child protection are very good.

A very effective strategy is implemented to ensure community cohesion. The school does sterling work to promote diversity and equality. Many positive actions are taken to increase the representation of minority ethnic people in staff and governance positions. Engagement with parents and external agencies makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' outcomes. The school takes excellent actions to engage parents effectively in their children's learning. Parental workshops are organised regularly, as are focus groups to help parents to support their children's learning disabilities at home. Links with other schools are very well developed, for example, a good number of pupils are able to participate in inclusion activities with other schools to enrich their learning. Many other schools benefit from the school's teaching expertise in relation to severe and complex learning difficulties, for example, some pupils from other schools regularly take part in lessons at Millwood.

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The management of resources is very effective. For example, although classroom space is limited, it is managed very well to ensure that it does not impact negatively on learning. The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Office staff and the site manager make an excellent contribution to this. The school provides outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The impact of very effective leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage can be seen in the outstanding outcomes. Children's progress is outstanding. It is best in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. Health and safety are given top priority by leaders and all adults. Teaching is very carefully planned to ensure that children's academic and pastoral needs are fully met. The quality of teaching is outstanding and the classrooms very bright and stimulating. Children take part very enthusiastically in the wealth of learning activities. For example, they make supreme efforts to mix ingredients and manipulate the dough as they make biscuits. There are lots of exciting opportunities for children to satisfy their sense of curiosity as they learn about the world around them. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader evaluates its success very well and knows exactly how well the children are doing.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A significant proportion of parents returned questionnaires. The inspection supports parents' overwhelmingly positive views of the school. Representative views from parents include, 'my child is really happy; the staff are all very committed and the school enables my child to achieve his best'. Parents were keen to express their appreciation of the quality of teaching, leadership and management and the fact that the school keeps their children safe. They feel listened to and valued as partners in promoting their children's learning and well-being.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Millwood Primary Special School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 22 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 76 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	82	4	18	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	64	6	27	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	77	5	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	59	8	36	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	55	8	36	1	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	55	8	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	77	4	18	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	55	9	41	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	55	9	41	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	59	8	36	1	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	82	4	18	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18th November 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Millwood Primary Special School, Bury, BL9 9RX

Thank you for making inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you and you were all very helpful. This letter is to tell you some of the things I found out about your school. You told me how happy you are. This is because the teachers and other adults make sure you are safe and provide lots of exciting things for you to do. You know what you need to do in order to be healthy. Your behaviour is outstanding and you work really hard to learn as well as you can. I was amazed with the work of the school council and the way they help everyone.

You have excellent teachers and this is why you all learn such a lot. This also helps to make sure you all achieve your best.

The headteacher, staff and governors all work very hard to make sure you all keep learning very well. Your parents and carers think Millwood is a fabulous school and I agree with them. It is outstanding.

Everything about your school is outstanding except attendance which is good. I have asked the school to make attendance outstanding as well!

I send my best wishes to each one of you.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Saleem Hussain

Lead inspector

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