

Milford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	122711
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	380517
Inspection dates	22–23 February 2012
Lead inspector	Paul Weston HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	378
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Strawbridge
Headteacher	Dom Magner
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2008
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Age group	03–11
Inspection date(s)	22–23 February 2012
Inspection number	380517



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Introduction

Inspection team

Paul Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector

Debbie Vials

Additional inspector

Colin Lower

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes in the school. Fourteen lessons taught by 12 teachers were observed and a learning walk was undertaken. Inspectors spoke informally with pupils in lessons and at break times. They observed the teaching of reading and listened to some pupils reading. Inspectors met with members of staff and the chair and two other members of the governing body. They took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at some of the school's documentation including that relating to pupils' learning, behaviour, safeguarding and self-evaluation. Inspectors also looked at policies, minutes from meetings, performance management documentation and the school development plan. They considered the responses to questionnaires from 94 pupils, 39 staff and 113 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Milford is a larger than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and in the early stages of learning English is below that found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average and includes pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and speech, language and communication needs. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school meets the current floor standard. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Health and Wellbeing Improvement award in recent years.

The school operates its own breakfast club and the Milford Out Of School Experience (Moose) after school club which were included as part of this inspection. A privately run nursery, Busy Bees, operates from the school site and was not included in this inspection.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is at the heart of the local community and is welcoming and friendly. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and say such things as, 'We think the school is brilliant.' The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage is good. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and attainment is rising.
- The quality of teaching is good. School records and inspection evidence indicate that the proportion of good or better teaching is increasing. Pupils say that they enjoy their learning. Teaching assistants provide sensitive and helpful support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons and around the school are consistently good. Pupils report that they all get on well together and bullying is extremely rare. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and they are very proud of their school.
- The headteacher and senior staff have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. As a result they have provided regular training and opportunities to share good practice which has driven up the quality of teaching. Performance management systems are robust.
- Leaders have successfully addressed all areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The school is not yet outstanding because high quality marking is not consistently implemented across all areas of the curriculum. While the governing body is committed to the school, it is too reliant on school leaders to provide it with information. Although appropriate areas for improvement are prioritised, some action plans lack sharpness and precision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the strong foundations already established to increase the proportion of pupils attaining above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics by:

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- ensuring that the high quality marking provided in literacy is consistently applied across all areas of the curriculum so that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve
- improving the effectiveness of the governing body by ensuring that it finds out more about the work of the school for itself so that it can hold the school to account for standards and quality
- effectively organising school management information and sharpening school improvement planning so that individual actions are explicitly linked to measurable outcomes for pupils' learning and progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enjoy their activities because they are planned well to meet their needs and interests. Consequently they make good progress in their learning and development. They feel secure with the adults who work with them and also work well on activities initiated by themselves. The development of children's early reading skills is a particular strength. Children that were heard reading demonstrated good strategies and a high level of enjoyment.

Most pupils make good progress from Year 1 to Year 6. They attain broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Standards in English and mathematics are in line with the national average at the end of Year 6, although pupils' attainment is better in mathematics. This represents good progress from their below average starting points. Last year, boys and higher attaining girls in particular made good progress. Also, those known to be eligible for free school meals performed better than all pupils nationally. Analysis of the school's data, classroom observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work show that a large majority are making good or better progress and attainment is rising.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. Effective work with external agencies helps ensure that pupils have the necessary equipment and skills to enable them to access all aspects of the curriculum. The nurture group provides good support for vulnerable pupils. In lessons, targeted support from teaching assistants helps ensure that all pupils receive the guidance they need to take part in lessons with all other pupils.

The quality of learning for most pupils is good because the work is well pitched and challenging. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, all pupils were persevering tenaciously to write a review suitable for a magazine or news article. The teacher had ensured that the challenge of the work for all pupils was pitched appropriately to their ability so that they made good progress. Pupils apply themselves well in

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lessons, working happily together. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive and pupils concentrate well. Most parents and carers feel that their children are making good progress and the school meets their children's particular needs. Inspection findings corroborate these views.

Quality of teaching

Good teaching is a consistent feature of the large majority of lessons. Most parents and carers agree that teaching is good. One parent said 'My child always comes home buzzing with stuff to tell us about her day!' Most pupils, also, agree that teaching is good. The teachers are successful in establishing an environment for learning that fosters independence and creativity. Good relationships between pupils and adults make a positive contribution to pupils' moral and social development. Support staff work confidently with small groups of pupils to engage and support them fully in their learning.

Typically in lessons, nearly all pupils work hard and have a thorough understanding of what they are trying to achieve because expectations are clearly explained. Teachers use modern technology with confidence to make learning more interesting. They also use assessment information well to plan work that is challenging and interesting for all groups, for example, in a Year 4 lesson where pupils had to use different but appropriate methods to add numbers together. More able pupils were suitably challenged and were able to work independently. They could confidently explain the differences between the 'column' method and the 'extended' method.

Underpinning the good teaching is an effective curriculum which has improved significantly since the last inspection. For example, the teaching of phonics to enable pupils to learn to read is organised well. Pupils are taught in smaller groups based on their ability, contributing to the good progress made. These arrangements are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement in reading and writing.

Overall, the quality of guidance and marking received by pupils to help them improve their work is good, particularly in writing. Pupils benefit from detailed and meticulous advice and guidance that systematically enables them to improve their grammar, spelling, punctuation and the quality of the content. The pupils spoken to reported that the advice they receive is helpful. In other subjects, pupils benefit from supportive advice and praise, but, in some lessons, marking does not always provide pupils with a clear understanding of how well they have done and what they need to do next to improve.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour around school and in lessons is typically good. Most parents and carers agree with this. The school has a clear system of rewards and sanctions, and these are well-known by all. Pupils take responsibility readily for aspects of the day-to-day running of the school, such as by acting as mentors and monitors.

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The school has established a safe setting for learning. All parents, carers and pupils agree with this. One parent typically commented, 'Milford is a happy, safe environment. The teachers help my children and support them in their work.' Pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

All the pupils spoken to report how much they enjoy coming to school. Attendance is high. The high quality work of the learning mentor has been instrumental in ensuring regular attendance and punctuality by working directly with parents and carers. Incidents of bullying related to special educational need, disability, religion and belief are rare; however, a few parents and carers are concerned that, when it occurs, it is not dealt with as effectively as it could be. However, inspectors found that procedures to deal with bullying are swift and effective. This is confirmed by pupils, who say 'If we have a problem the adults sort it out.' Exclusions are also very rare.

The breakfast and 'Moose' clubs provide a safe and welcoming environment at the start and end of the day for those pupils who attend. They socialise well together and treat adults and other pupils with courtesy and respect.

Leadership and management

Over the last three years, school leaders, ably led by the headteacher, have strengthened the procedures for checking the work of the school and for tracking the progress made by pupils. The impact of these procedures on provision and outcomes is a greater consistency in the quality of teaching, raised attainment and good progress made by most pupils. This demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement. School leaders, such as those for English, mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage, are particularly effective. Others are relatively inexperienced, but keen and have made a good contribution to school improvement. They are supported well by other leaders to ensure that the provision and outcomes they are responsible for continue to develop while they increase their leadership skills. A wide range of data and evaluation information is gathered by school leaders, but it is not always presented in the most effective way. The school development plan and subsequent action plans are thorough, but they do not always identify precisely how the activities undertaken will lead to improvements in pupils' attainment and progress.

The governing body receives accurate and detailed information about the work of the school through reports from the headteacher and other staff. However, governors, although supportive, do not sufficiently challenge the school by asking searching questions or in evaluating the effectiveness of development work. The governing body and the school fulfil their statutory duties to safeguard pupils and tackle any discrimination rigorously. The close monitoring of pupils' progress and the good progress made by nearly all of them demonstrate how well they promote the equality of opportunity of pupils. Most parents and carers say that the school ensures that their children are well looked-after.

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The good curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. It is enriched well and enables all pupils to learn and develop. Visits to places such as the Holocaust Museum, the theatre and outdoor activities on residential visits help promote pupils' enjoyment of learning and add to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Themes such as 'arts week' and the study of 'beliefs and actions in the World' in particular help pupils enhance their spiritual and cultural development. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their mathematics and writing skills across the curriculum.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



24 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milford Primary School, Nottingham, NG11 9BT

You may remember that I came with my colleagues to inspect the work of the school and to check how well you are doing. Thank you for the help you gave us; we found you to be very polite and knowledgeable about the work of the school. Your views were very helpful to us as we carried out the inspection. I am very pleased to report that you are doing well. You can be very proud of the good progress you are making. When you leave this school, you are suitably prepared for secondary education because you are developing skills of problem solving, teamwork and independence. We found that your behaviour is good. We were particularly impressed by how hard you work and that you do not give up when you encounter difficulties. It was good to see how enthusiastic you are about your school.

You told us that teaching and the help you get to improve your work are good and we agree. You go to a good school, where you are well cared for and where the headteacher and staff have worked very hard to improve your education.

In order to help you do even better we have asked your school to do three things.

- Ensure your governing body find out more about what is happening in the school for themselves and ask the school leaders more challenging questions.
- Ensure that all your work is marked to the same high standard as your literacy work so you know how well you have done and what you need to do better.
- Ensure that the school's plans for improvement have clear targets for improvement.

You can help by continuing to work hard and playing a full part in the life of the community.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston
Her Majesty's Inspector

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