

Milford School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125014
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	359817
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill Bowman
Headteacher	Kay Leggett
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Five different teachers were observed, teaching nine lessons. The inspectors held informal discussions with pupils and their parents and carers, and also held meetings with the headteacher, governors, staff, and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents, including the school improvement plan, monitoring files, data on pupils' progress, documents relating to safeguarding, and the results of questionnaires returned by staff and 62 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How effectively is assessment information used in planning the next steps in pupils' learning and involving them in this process?
- How good are the opportunities within the curriculum to develop pupils' independence and to use and apply their mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills?
- How effective is the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How well do children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make progress across the different areas of learning?

Information about the school

This is a small village school. Few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are from a White British background. A smaller than average proportion of pupils is identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, including speech, language and communication, and social and behavioural difficulties. Autumn born children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in a class with a small number of Year 1 pupils. Spring and summer born children make up another class, attending for mornings only in the autumn term and then full time for the rest of the year. There was some movement of teaching staff within the school at the start of this term, and a number of new staff, including teaching assistants, also joined the school. The school has Healthy Schools status.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Milford is a good school. Staff are proud to work here and share a common goal for school improvement, ensuring that pupils make good progress in their learning and personal development, so preparing them well for the next stage in their education. Their awareness of healthy lifestyles is a particularly strong feature. This is against a background of pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the good care, guidance and support provided by the school. One parent summed this up by saying, 'The school is giving pupils a well-rounded education and both my children have made excellent progress.'

From when children start in Reception until they leave at the end of Year 2, the great majority make consistently good progress towards the challenging targets set for them. Attainment in writing and mathematics was already high in 2009, and in 2010 an even greater proportion of pupils reached the higher National Curriculum levels. A relative weakness in reading in 2009 was quickly addressed through better assessment, more systematic teaching of sounds and letters, and providing pupils with both 'choosing' books and 'reading' books that match individual reading abilities and guide pupils in their acquisition of reading skills. Improvements to the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the last two years mean that this group also now achieve well. A contributory factor to pupils' progress is their generally good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Improved, good attendance is an indication that pupils clearly enjoy their time in school.

The tracking of pupils' progress has also improved, enabling leaders to quickly identify pupils who are not making the expected progress. Well-planned interventions, which are evaluated for their effectiveness, enable these pupils to make up any lost ground and also ensure the good progress of pupils with particular learning difficulties. Teachers mostly use the information they have on pupils' progress well to plan activities, so that all abilities are appropriately challenged in their learning. Although pupils are keen to work independently, these activities and their purpose are not always made sufficiently clear so that pupils are not fully sure what they are expected to achieve. Consequently, they lack confidence in evaluating how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Although pupils have individual targets to aim for, these targets and the marking of work do not guide pupils consistently well in their learning.

Leaders effectively monitor the quality of teaching through observations of lessons, sampling of pupils' work, and the regular progress meetings held with teachers to discuss pupils' progress. This has ensured that a good overall quality of teaching has been maintained, and where necessary further support provided. However, leaders have recognised that they have not provided enough training for new staff and those teachers who are now working in different key stages to ensure a consistently good quality of

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teaching and learning. This is starting to be addressed through performance management targets. A common weakness in lessons is that support staff, in particular, do not interact with children and pupils well enough to make the most of their independent play and learning opportunities. The lack of specialised training behind this weakness was reflected in some of the questionnaires completed by support staff.

The school is very accurate in its self-evaluation and uses this well to target its actions. The positive impact of these actions on the school's performance shows that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is good or better in the great majority of lessons by July 2011, by:
 - marking consistently helps pupils to see how well they are doing.
 - sharing the best practice more effectively across the school
 - quickly providing opportunities for the professional development of teaching and support staff who are new to their roles, and monitoring their effectiveness.
- Involve pupils more in their learning by ensuring that:
 - full use is made of pupils' individual targets in lessons
 - pupils always know what they are expected to achieve in lessons and can assess how well they are doing
 - support staff, especially, use questioning and discussion to further the learning of the groups they are working with

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Achievement is good for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Where pupils understand what they have to do, they work well independently and cooperatively. This was evident in a lesson where pupils were developing their writing on autumn leaves by adding further description. The more-able pupils worked well together, helping each other with suggestions and seeking out adjectives from a word bank. However, less-able pupils, supported by a teaching assistant, were slower to use describing words as these had not been discussed and fully shared and developed among the group. Pupils had their targets in front of them, providing them with helpful reminders, for example, to use finger spaces between words and not to forget capital letters at the start of a sentence. In a mathematics lesson where pupils were combining four digits to make a given number using addition and subtraction, more-able pupils did not understand the full complexity of the challenge they were given and therefore only made satisfactory progress.

Pupils also work well together when making contributions to the life of the school and wider community. They were keen to tell the inspector how the school council had used its budget 'to buy toys for children to play with', and had helped to organise fund raising for the Haiti earthquake disaster. This fund raising helps pupils to understand different global communities, but their understanding of communities throughout the United Kingdom is a weaker part of their cultural development. Pupils look out for each other in and around

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school and this contributes to their good feeling of safety. They know there is an adult they can talk to if they have any concerns. Pupils have a very good understanding of the need to keep fit and what constitutes a healthy diet. Good links with a local secondary school provide additional physical and sporting activities, along with 'Wake and Shake' at the start of the day. A large majority enjoy healthy school lunches, which provide truly social occasions.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships ensure that pupils are generally well behaved and quickly settle to work. Occasionally, introductions are too long and the pace of learning slows and a few pupils become restless and lose attention. Lessons are planned and prepared well. Teachers are clear about what they expect pupils to achieve in lessons but this is not always shared well enough with pupils for them to keep a check on how well they are doing. This was evident at the conclusion of a few lessons, when pupils found it difficult to talk about their learning and to assess how well they had done. In the introductions to lessons, teachers mostly use questioning and discussion well to check pupils' knowledge and understanding, although this is not always such a strong feature while pupils are engaged in their different activities.

The curriculum provides memorable learning experiences that are relevant and purposeful, and relate well to pupils' different needs and interests. Whole-school topics often have a

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subject bias, such as 'Crash Bang Wallop', which focuses on science and music, and 'Friends and surprises', which focuses on personal, social and health education. Topics such as 'Cogs and Wheels' particularly engage boys and provide a stimulus for their writing. Although good opportunities are provided for using and applying writing skills within topic work, improving opportunities for mathematics and ICT forms part of the school's current development plan. A good range of well-attended lunchtime and after-school clubs help to foster pupils' personal and social development. Many visits and visitors provide first-hand, enjoyable learning experiences, such as the visits to Brooklands Motor Museum and the Woking Mosque.

The school provides a safe learning environment for pupils and ensures a high level of pastoral care. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is planned and managed well. There is especially good support for the few pupils with emotional, social and behavioural needs or with speech, language and communication difficulties. Good links with outside specialists contribute to this, for example through the training of support staff. The home?school link worker, provided through the local confederation of schools, plays a valuable part in supporting more vulnerable pupils and their families. Transition arrangements for pupils transferring to junior schools are well developed and effectively support those making this move.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are clear about the actions needed to drive school improvement. This is reflected in the measures they have taken to raise attainment and progress, especially in reading over the last year, and to maintain a good quality of teaching. Lesson observations are perceptive and identify both strengths and areas for development, which are followed up in subsequent observations. The governing body supports the work of the school well, and ensures that equality of opportunity is promoted well and any discrimination quickly tackled. It challenges the school on its performance, for example by questioning the progress of girls in mathematics and the subsequent impact of a girls-only mathematics group. Different roles within the governing body have now been shared more evenly so as to further focus and enhance its monitoring role. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory and statutory requirements are fully met regarding child protection and the safe recruitment of staff. Some minor technical issues were pointed out to the governing body. Links with parents and carers are good. They are kept well informed of what is happening in school and encouraged to play a part in supporting their children's learning. One parent commented, 'We have noticed improvements over recent years, particularly in the communication between home and

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school.' Leaders fully appreciate the importance of promoting community cohesion and have made a thorough audit of the school's work in this area and taken decisive action. Whereas pupils' understanding of different communities and cultures, both locally and globally, is increasingly well promoted, the school has yet to develop first-hand opportunities to expand pupils' understanding of other communities at a national level.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their time in Reception. Good induction procedures and close relationships with parents and carers ensure that children quickly settle. Parents and carers appreciate the visits their children make before starting school, and the meetings they have with staff to learn about the Early Years Foundation Stage and to allay any concerns they might have. Effective management and good provision ensure that children quickly become active learners and learn the skills to work independently. This was seen as three children worked together sweeping up leaves and putting them into a wheelbarrow with much fun and laughter. Children behave well and understand the rules set for their own safety. Although children make good progress in all of the areas of learning, attainment in writing remains a relative weakness. They willingly participate in all activities, for example when learning and combining initial sounds and playing a game to speed up their recall. Adults, including parents and carers, support learning well. Observations and assessments ensure that activities build on children's acquired skills. Good use is made of both the indoor and outdoor areas, which are organised to reflect the different areas of learning. Staff engage well with children in their play and directed activities, but, occasionally, opportunities are missed to channel and develop children's learning through further talking and questioning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned by parents and carers was above average. Their views of the school were generally very positive. A few expressed concern about the progress their children are making, and that the school does not take account of their concerns. Written comments suggest that the main area of concern is the new approach to reading, although a number of other comments showed that this had met with strong approval; this new approach has had a positive impact and progress and attainment in reading have risen over the last year. Other individual comments were discussed confidentially with the school, but did not reflect any general pattern of concern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Milford 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 148 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	73	15	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	66	19	31	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	31	39	63	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	34	31	50	5	8	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	24	39	35	56	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	42	32	42	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	60	25	40	0	0	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)	28	45	25	40	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	42	29	47	5	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	40	33	53	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	40	27	44	4	6	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	29	47	29	47	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	56	24	39	1	2	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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



15 October 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Milford School, Godalming, GU8 5JA

Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and found you interesting to talk to, and very polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all the things you take part in. We find that Milford is a good school.

These are some of the things that the school does well.

- Children get off to a good start in Reception.
- You work hard in lessons.
- The school looks after you well and ensures that you all have the same good opportunities to learn and develop.
- Your behaviour is good and you always look out for each other.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and fit. It was good to see so many of you enjoying school lunches.
- The school encourages your parents and carers to support you in your learning.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are doing a good job.

We have asked the school to work on the following things.

- Much of the teaching in the school is good. However, this term some teachers have moved to new classes, and some staff are new to the school. The school must work closely with staff to ensure that these changes do not lessen the quality of teaching, so that you all continue to make good progress.
- Staff must help each one of you to be more aware of how well you are doing in school, and the particular things you need to work on. They can do this by talking more with you about what you are learning in lessons, encouraging you to think about your targets, and showing you through marking how well you are doing.

Thank you again for your help. You can do your bit to help by continuing to work hard in lessons and enjoying all that you do in school.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead inspector

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