

Milford Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123724
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	359498
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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	293
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Partington
Headteacher	Wendy Chant
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 18 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Meetings were held with senior leaders, including the headteacher, subject coordinators and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at planning documentation, assessment information, examples of pupils' work and a number of policy documents. The team received and considered 74 questionnaires from parents and carers and 17 from school staff.

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

- The success of strategies adopted to raise the attainment of more able pupils throughout the school.
- The progress made by pupils who have speech and language difficulties and attend the Language Resource Base and how well they are integrated into mainstream school.
- How effectively the governing body monitors the work of the school and help to drive improvement.
- The success of actions to raise the performance of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage particularly in their personal development.

Information about the school

Milford is a large infant school just north of the centre of Yeovil. Pupils attend from a wide area. Nearly all pupils are of White British origin. The school has a speech and language resource base. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, both with and without statements of special educational needs, is above average. The school has attained Healthy School and Dyslexia Friendly status. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are accommodated within three Reception classes and one combined Reception and Year 1 class.

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 Infants' is a good school. It provides pupils with a good education and the care, support and guidance that pupils receive is outstanding and a particular strength. Parents and carers appreciate that, as one wrote, 'the school ensures my children feel safe and has helped to foster their positive attitude to learning'.

The key to the school's success lies in the outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher. She has tenaciously tackled the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Her drive, enthusiasm and commitment to the all-round development of the pupils in her care inspire others around her. This has led to improvements in every aspect of the school's provision. Information from assessments has been used well to identify where improvements needed to be made, particularly in mathematics. As a result of actions taken, attainment by the end of Year 2 has improved significantly and is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils develop good social personal and social skills and their behaviour shows good improvement due mainly to a consistent application of the 'Golden Rules' throughout the school. One parent echoed the views of many: 'This is a wonderful school. Everyone works together with the best interests of the children at the forefront. We couldn't ask for more.'

The governing body supports the school well. They visit the school regularly but these visits lack focus. To address this, a new system has been designed which provides for them to have more purposeful links with classes and teachers and thus gain a greater first-hand knowledge of the way new developments are tackled. Although the systems show promise, they have not been completely refined and are not yet fully established.

The curriculum is good and activities such as those related to the 'Forest School' means that it is becoming more creative and taking greater account of the pupils' interests. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are gaining a rudimentary knowledge of different faiths but their understanding of the diversity of different faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom is more limited. The school is aware of this and has carefully examined its strategies for promoting community cohesion. Plans are well advanced for putting in place links with a school in Birmingham, but these have not yet been fully implemented.

There is a very strong sense of teamwork in the school. This is promoted very well by the headteacher, and all staff are committed to making the best possible provision for the pupils and children. Initiatives to raise attainment coupled with the careful and accurate analysis of the school's performance and sharply focused development planning, are key factors in the school's success and demonstrate its good capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the promotion of community cohesion and the pupils' understanding of the diversity of faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom, by fully implementing the planned link with an inner city school.
- In order to more effectively hold the school to account for its work, the governors should ensure that visits to the school are more focused and closely aligned to priorities identified in the school development plan.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils tackle their tasks and challenges well in class and enjoy their learning. They generally behave well and are keen to learn. They make good progress in their lessons. This is because tasks are interesting and are linked well to themes and topics. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were undertaking a range of measuring activities based around the theme of Jack and the Beanstalk. Because the tasks were very carefully matched to their needs and abilities, all groups of pupils were challenged well. The most able were using standard measures and carefully estimating how tall their beanstalks were before measuring them. They maturely discussed what constituted a 'good' or 'bad' estimate, showing a good understanding of what this entails. They measured carefully and thus their answers were accurate. Lower-attaining pupils were using non-standard measures for their task. They successfully arranged a number of beanstalks in height order before measuring them carefully using 'giants' footsteps'. All pupils, including those with special needs and/or disabilities and those who have speech and language difficulties made good progress. They reflect thoughtfully on their work and activities and are beginning to assess the quality of their learning with some accuracy.

Although children's starting points vary from year to year, they are generally below those expected for their age. Attainment is above average by the time they leave at the end of Year 2. They make consistently good progress in acquiring language, literacy and mathematical skills. The attention given to developing pupils' progress in mathematics has been highly effective and all classrooms are 'numeracy rich' with exciting working walls and targets which are carefully individualised to match the needs of each pupil. There is no noticeable variation in the progress or attainment of boys and girls. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged particularly well. One parent writing to inspectors said, 'Staff have made an effort to ensure my child is being challenged in every way that is suitable for her age throughout the years she has been at the school.' Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those who attend the language resource base, are integrated well into the school and benefit significantly from individual and small group support which contributes well to their good progress.

Pupils are developing very good interpersonal skills. They have an excellent knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and this is reflected in the school's Healthy School status, and, for their ages, they have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe, talking knowledgeably about how they recognise visitors in school because they all wear special badges and what they would do if they were concerned. They make a good contribution to the community through a range of fundraising events. They are proud to be school councillors and proudly recount how they designed new signs in the school so

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that visitors would know how and where to find each classroom. Their good academic progress and personal qualities prepare them well for later learning.

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	1
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?

The lively curriculum appeals to the pupils and teachers make good links between subjects. The school has focused strongly on literacy and numeracy since the last inspection in order to raise attainment. The school is working now to create a more creative curriculum with the addition of theme weeks and activities such as 'Forest School'. Pupils' views are beginning to be taken into account when planning, but this is not yet fully embedded. A good range of visits and visitors further enhance pupils' learning. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities, which range from sport to music and those with a more environmental slant, all serve to enrich pupils' learning and develop their knowledge and understanding further.

Pupils make good progress in lessons because teachers carefully assess pupils' learning from day to day and review previous learning at the start of each lesson. Targets are carefully matched to pupils' abilities and are challenging but realistic. Planning is meticulous and ensures that the needs of pupils, including the more-able and those with speech and language difficulties, are met by carefully matching activities and tasks to their individual needs.

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Staff and pupils make good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning and maximise enjoyment. Teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and academic achievement. Firm boundaries and consistent systems for dealing with inappropriate behaviour help all staff to maintain an atmosphere in lessons which promotes exploration and enjoyment and which is still conducive to good learning. Occasionally explanations are not always completely clear as to what pupils are expected to achieve and this can hinder their progress. Teachers are well supported by a team of skilled teaching assistants who make an important contribution to all groups of pupils' learning.

The school cares for and supports all its pupils highly effectively. Induction arrangements are comprehensive and ensure that children settle into the school quickly and happily. Transition between key stages and on to junior school is excellent and very well handled to ensure that it is accomplished smoothly. The care for more vulnerable pupils is exceptional. The involvement of outside agencies to ensure that the school provides just the right kind of support is sensitively handled. Teaching assistants are very well trained to help those pupils who have complex needs, particularly those in the Language Resource Base. They support pupils highly effectively and ensure that they make similar progress to their peers.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher works very closely with all staff, particularly her deputy headteacher and senior leadership team. She has very high aspirations for all children, pupils and staff and there is a climate where all feel responsible and committed to their part in school improvement. The quality of self-evaluation is good. It is well focused on improving standards and accelerating pupils' progress based on the results of rigorous monitoring.

The governing body have ensured that all safeguarding procedures are robust and the safety and security of the pupils is of high priority. All pupils whatever their ethnic or cultural background are valued. Good attention is paid to ensuring that pupils of all abilities are provided for. The pupils attending the language resource base are very well integrated into the mainstream school and make good progress because of the excellent leadership and understanding shown of their individual needs. The school works hard to ensure parents and carers are fully involved in their children's education. Regular newsletters provide parents and carers with excellent information. Invitations into school to participate in activities such as mathematics games or story sharing enable them to play an active part in their children's education. The school has a good understanding of, and participation in, the local community. A good audit has been carried out to evaluate the

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effectiveness of the school's community cohesion policy. It has identified that pupils' understanding of the range of ethnic and cultural diversity in the United Kingdom today is still a little limited. Steps are being taken that are designed to fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of other communities.

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	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

From the time they join Reception, children are presented with a wide range of activities and teaching which reflects all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. There has been significant improvement made in provision since the last inspection, particularly in the development of the outdoor learning environment. This has led to an overall improvement in children's performance. At this early stage of the school year there is a particularly good focus on developing children's social and personal skills. This ensures that they are really ready to learn. Children enjoy learning because interesting themes make the curriculum relevant and appealing and teaching is lively and exciting. Tasks are planned which promote literacy, language, communication and numeracy skills well through a range of activities. As part of a phonics activity, objects beginning with three initial letter sounds were frozen into ice shapes and emptied into a large tray. Children were not only excitedly identifying the initial letters and matching them with plastic letters, but also enthusiastically exploring the properties of ice. One little boy was elated when he remembered that the proper term to describe ice changing back into water was 'melting'!

There are many opportunities for children to pursue their early literacy and numeracy skills, and writing and number areas are used successfully in all classrooms. The outdoor environment is used well. It presents children with a wide range of learning opportunities reflecting the quality of the indoor learning area. Children learn to share and take turns. They develop independence and the ability to make choices. The care and attention given

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to children's welfare are excellent. Children's individual needs are known and acted upon and children feel very safe and secure. Leadership and management are good. Ongoing monitoring of the progress children are making ensures that activities are well matched to their needs on a day-to-day basis. Learning diaries are comprehensive and children's activities are recorded conscientiously. Occasionally next steps in learning are not identified in sufficient detail, so opportunities to identify how to extend or support a child are missed.

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

Parents and carers are very happy with the school. The questionnaires that were returned were almost totally favourable with only one disagreement with one statement expressed. There were many favourable comments particularly in respect of the care and guidance provided for the pupils, the dedication and hard work of the headteacher and staff and the friendly atmosphere which promotes a happy and secure learning environment for the pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Milford Infants' 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 293 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	82	13	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	74	19	26	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	48	65	25	34	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	68	22	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	68	22	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	68	23	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	61	29	39	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)	42	57	24	32	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	66	23	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	54	28	38	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	49	32	43	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	70	20	27	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	76	18	24	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 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.



8 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milford Infant School, Yeovil BA21 4PG

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so happily outside. You showed us how much you enjoy your school and told us you are pleased with how well you are doing. You are right to be pleased, because it is a good school!

What we found out about your school:

- You really enjoy school and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You behave well in class which helps you to do well in your learning, and out in the playground which makes it a happy place to be.
- Your headteacher and teachers are good at managing the school and understand well how they could make it even better.
- You understand extremely well how to stay safe and live healthy lives.
- Your teachers work hard to plan interesting lessons and mark your work carefully.
- You have some exciting activities to follow and I enjoyed being with you in the Forest School on Friday.
- All staff take very good care of you and keep you safe.
- All the children in the Reception classes get a good start to their school life.

We have now asked your school to:

- make sure that the governors who help to run the school check up regularly on the things that need improvement
- complete the planned link with a school in a city so that you learn even more about the different cultures in the United Kingdom.

Best wishes for the future. You can help your teachers by always trying as hard as you can in your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Christine Huard
Lead Inspector

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