

Milton Parochial Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121982
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359137
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diana McAfee
Headteacher	Susan Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eleven lessons, taught by five teachers, were observed. Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspectors looked at records of the pupils' progress and at lesson plans, some of the school's policies and a sample of the pupils' work. Questionnaire responses from staff, pupils and 39 parents were analysed.

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

- Why are pupils not making as much progress in mathematics as they are in English?
- How are opportunities for pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills planned and delivered across the curriculum?
- Is monitoring providing a sharp insight into effective teaching and its impact on pupils' progress?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The pupils are predominantly from White British backgrounds. All of the pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a single-age Reception Class.

The school has a Healthy School Award.

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

This is a good school. The pupils make good progress and achieve well because the teaching is effective. Efforts to increase the rate of progress made by pupils in English have been successful and, as a result, attainment has risen steadily over the last few years. Attainment in English is above average. In mathematics, progress is not as rapid and not as many pupils reach the higher level of attainment as should be the case.

The headteacher and staff are striving to improve the school's performance further. They track the pupils' progress very carefully, but the monitoring of the teaching is not precise enough to improve provision in mathematics to the highest standard. Moreover, the detailed information that the teachers collect about what the pupils know and are able to do is not used as effectively in mathematics as it is in English.

The care, guidance and support for the pupils are particularly effective in ensuring that those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do well. The teaching assistants play an important role in providing support for these pupils.

The school creates a climate where pupils feel very safe and behave exceptionally well. The pupils have a good understanding of environmental issues and of staying fit and healthy. The curriculum is interesting and provides the pupils with opportunities to practise and extend their literacy and their ICT skills, but presents fewer chances to use and apply their mathematical skills.

The governing body is steering the school on a course of continuing improvement. The governors monitor the school's performance, and because of secure self-evaluation know its strengths and weaknesses. Along with the headteacher and staff, they have been successful in securing improvements since the last inspection. The school is well placed to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in mathematics so that the majority of pupils reach the higher level of attainment by the end of Year 6, by:
 - extending the range of opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills
 - making full use of the information that the teachers collect about what pupils already know and are able to do, to ensure that all groups are continuously challenged
 - closely monitoring the teaching of mathematics to evaluate its impact on the pupils' learning and progress, in order to generate further improvement.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The pupils make good progress and achieve well. During lessons their behaviour is consistently excellent, and this allows all pupils to concentrate fully on their work. Many pupils make interesting and often articulate contributions to discussions, and are eager to answer their teacher's questions. They are doing well and making good gains in reading and writing, and secure progress in mathematics. The school has successfully extended the range and standard of the pupils' writing through effective teaching. This was evident in a lesson where the oldest pupils were using rhetorical questions as part of a persuasive letter to the headteacher, asking to be allowed to set up a fair-trade tuck shop.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress. These pupils are well supported in lessons, and the work they are set is matched well to their needs. Those pupils with statements of special educational needs receive particularly effective individual support.

The good progress evident in lessons is reflected in the improved results of tests and assessments. The children enter school with the skills and abilities expected for their age. Over the last few years, the trend in the results of national tests in English at the end of Year 6 has steadily risen. This is because of the emphasis placed on writing, and particularly on increasing the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level of attainment. Results in English are now above average. In mathematics results have fluctuated and, although above average, are not as high as they should be, because too few pupils reach the higher level of attainment. There are variations in the performance of girls and boys, but no trends. Following a period when boys had considerably out performed girls in mathematics, assessments in 2010 showed the position to be reversed.

In discussion, the pupils say they feel very safe at school. They are in no doubt that any unacceptable behaviour would be dealt with immediately, although such instances are rare. The pupils enjoy school, and this is clear in the very positive relationships between the pupils and their teachers and teaching assistants. The pupils take responsibility for recycling and have a good awareness of the need to conserve the environment. They appreciate the importance of staying fit and healthy, and enjoy the sporting opportunities that the school provides for them. Attendance has improved and is now above average.

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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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?

Lessons are lively and interesting, and ensure that pupils make good progress. In English the teachers make good use of their subject knowledge to consistently challenge pupils of all abilities. This was well illustrated in an English lesson in Years 1 and 2, where the pupils were developing their knowledge of words used to describe things. The teaching of basic skills in mathematics is effective, although there are occasions when progress is slowed because the teacher does not intervene quickly enough to ensure that a consistent challenge is maintained for all groups. The teaching assistants' enthusiastic approach effectively supports the pupils. The pupils' English work is carefully marked, and teachers make helpful comments about how the work can be improved and what the pupils need to learn next. The marking of mathematics, while conscientious and sometimes carried out with pupils present, is not as consistent in highlighting what pupils need to do to improve.

The teachers make frequent assessments of pupils' progress and record this valuable information. In English, it has been used well to identify where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills, and subsequently to plan activities which make sure that the pupils practise and develop them. The approach taken in mathematics has not been as rigorous.

The curriculum is well organised and provides the pupils with good opportunities, for example, to develop their writing skills and their ICT skills in a range of subjects, often through interesting topics and themes. The school's own analysis shows that the pupils have too few opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in a similarly wide

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range of contexts. The pupils develop a broad insight into the wider world through visits and visitors to the school. The older pupils are particularly excited about a residential visit planned for later this year. A good partnership with the local specialist languages college is promoting the teaching of French.

The pupils are well cared for, guided and supported in a very positive atmosphere that enables them to feel safe and confident. Provision to help those who experience difficulties to overcome barriers to learning and thus make good progress is carefully planned.

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 and staff have successfully improved the school in a number of areas since the last inspection. Most importantly, attainment has risen and progress accelerated. The school development plan sets out the school's ambition to continue to improve and raise attainment further. There are good systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for them. The school has carefully analysed the progress of girls and boys, which, although failing to establish clear trends or patterns, illustrates the strong commitment to equality of opportunity. The monitoring of the quality of teaching - particularly in mathematics - neither focuses sufficiently on how well it helps pupils to learn and make progress, nor highlights where improvements can be made in order to increase the progress made by the pupils.

The governing body has increased its monitoring role and has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. A broad range of information for parents and carers concerning the curriculum, combined with comprehensive newsletters, underpins a productive partnership. As a result, the very large majority of parents are pleased with the school and the provision that it makes for their child. Safeguarding arrangements are in line with current requirements.

The school has carried out an audit of its arrangements for community cohesion and has plans to extend them. It has developed links with a school in London whose pupils come from diverse cultural backgrounds, and also with a project in Zambia. Together, these links give the pupils an insight and understanding of other communities.

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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

The good provision for the youngest children has continued since the last inspection. An analysis of the performance of the children in the Reception class last year shows that they made good progress and reached a good level of development. The children who have just entered school are making a confident start. This is because links between home and school are strong. The school has good links with parents, particularly fathers, who also become involved in supporting activities that relate to their jobs, such as a veterinary surgeon or policeman.

The children are already demonstrating an understanding of the daily routines. Most of them play and work well together and are happy to pursue their own learning interests through the activities planned for them. The adults monitor the children's choices carefully and record steps in their progress. A journal of each child's achievements provides a comprehensive record of their good progress. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led.

The planning incorporates all elements of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and takes account of the needs of individuals. This was evident when the teacher was supporting the children in developing their letter formation. Activities flow freely from the classroom to the outside area, where there are good opportunities for the children to explore the world around them, to develop their language and to extend their personal development. Occasionally, opportunities to develop conversations which occur during role play are missed. There is good emphasis on letter sounds. At snack time, for example, the teacher used the opportunity to focus on the initial sounds of some of the foods they had eaten at snack times over the last few days.

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

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

Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire were happy with their child's experience at this school. Parents unanimously agreed that their child enjoys school and that they are kept as safe as possible. In response to most of the other questions, the very large majority of parents were in agreement. The question that drew the least positive response related to the way that the school deals with parents' suggestions and concerns. A similar response to a questionnaire sent out by governors earlier in the year led to the inclusion of an opportunity to make suggestions being included in a recent newsletter.

Several parents added additional comments to the questionnaire. A few commented on the approachability of the school, with some feeling it was easy to approach the school others finding this more difficult. During the course of the inspection, members of staff were accessible at the end of the school day. While a few parents wanted more feedback from the school, other comments referred to the school as 'wonderful' and 'excellent'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Milton Parochial Primary 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 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 105 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	51	19	49	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	72	11	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	15	38	20	51	3	8	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	49	15	38	4	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	41	19	49	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	38	20	51	4	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	46	19	49	1	3	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)	14	36	21	54	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	36	22	56	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	31	21	54	3	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	36	14	36	4	10	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	12	31	21	54	3	8	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	41	22	56	1	3	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.



14 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milton Parochial Primary School, Northampton, NN7 3AT

I really enjoyed visiting your school and talking to you about your work. I am particularly grateful to those of you who gave me your views of the school.

The fire alarm went off during one of our conversations. I was very impressed by how quickly and calmly everyone evacuated the building. It showed you have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe.

The headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants are helping you to make good progress. Over the last few years the results of writing tests have got better and better, so that now more of you reach higher standards in English than in mathematics. I have asked the teachers to give you more opportunities to develop and extend your mathematical skills by setting you activities that let you use what you learn in mathematics lessons to solve problems in other subjects. The teachers collect a lot of information about what you can do. They use this very well to help you in English, but have not made as much use of it in mathematics. To help to keep mathematics in the spotlight, I have asked the headteacher to keep a watchful eye on mathematics lessons.

Everyone gets on very well at your school. Those of you I spoke to were sure that instances of poor behaviour would be dealt with immediately. You behave exceptionally well and concentrate well in lessons. You are also very keen to answer your teacher's questions.

In the questionnaires you completed for me, all of you said you enjoyed school. This was certainly the case in the lessons I visited. I do hope you continue to enjoy school and reach even higher standards.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead inspector

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