

# Milldown Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Milldown, Blandford Forum, Dorset, DT11 7SH

**Inspection dates** 10–11 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders' efforts to maintain consistently good teaching since the previous inspection have been weakened by changes in teaching staff. Leaders' actions have not been strong enough in securing the necessary improvements over time.
- Senior and middle leaders do not always check with sufficient rigour that actions to increase pupils' progress result in marked improvements.
- Additional government funding is not used effectively enough to improve the skills of disadvantaged pupils, especially those with most ability.
- The quality of teaching varies considerably across the school. It requires improvement because teachers do not always present work at the level that fully challenges pupils, especially the most able, to help them to achieve their best.
- Over time, the rate of pupils' progress has not increased quickly enough as pupils have moved through the school, leading to below average levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- Changes in staff class responsibilities and better planned teaching have not been in place long enough to fully raise pupils' basic reading, writing and numeracy skills.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, including governors, have secured positive staff morale after a period of changes in staffing. They are taking more effective steps to improve teaching and pupils' learning.
- Staff promote trusting relationships with the pupils. All pupils, including those with complex needs, develop self-confidence, behave well and work hard in lessons.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff work well with parents to help pupils feel safe, attend well and enjoy school.
- Children progress well in the Reception class where they are enthused by good teaching and exciting learning activities.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 18 learning activities and lessons and the lead inspector and the headteacher observed some of these lessons jointly.
- The inspectors observed pupils interacting and playing during morning and lunch breaks and observed an assembly.
- A meeting was held with a representative group of pupils. Specific groups of pupils read to the inspector and other pupils were spoken to during the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority staff.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents as they brought and collected their children from school. The inspectors also took account of the 28 parents' responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, in planning and undertaking the inspection.
- School staff who were mostly senior leaders were interviewed. The inspectors considered 16 questionnaires from staff.
- The inspectors examined the school's work in relation to teaching, learning and leadership and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own information from checks on pupils' progress and the planning of lessons and quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspectors consulted records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. They checked the school's safeguarding policy, procedures and practice.
- The inspectors considered the school's primary sport funding action plan.
- The inspectors also examined the school's work in updating procedures for checking pupils' progress within the new National Curriculum.

## Inspection team

Alexander Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- One in eight of the pupils in the school is a disabled pupil or has special educational needs. This proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is above the national average and varies significantly from year to year across the school.
- The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school at other than the normal times is above average.
- One in five of the pupils in the school are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after. Given the size of the school, this proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are admitted on a full-time basis and are accommodated in a Reception class. Other pupils in the school are taught within six single-age classes.
- The school moved into new purpose-built accommodation and outdoor learning facilities in 2010.
- The school has experienced significant changes in teaching staff since the previous inspection.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistently good teaching and pupils' learning across the school by:
  - making sure all teachers set consistently high expectations and ensure that pupils, especially the most able, are provided with the right level of challenge to match their abilities
  - improving the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to increase pupils' reading skills.
- Raise pupils' attainment and quicken their progress in literacy, reading and numeracy by:
  - strengthening the emphasis placed on developing handwriting and spelling and basic numeracy and calculation skills
  - reinforcing the steps taken to involve pupils in checking their own and each other's work
  - further encouraging pupils' reading at home.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - making sure that checks on the school's performance fully involve middle leaders and bring about the planned improvements in teaching and pupils' achievements as quickly as possible
  - ensuring senior staff and subject leaders make more effective use of additional government funding to develop the skills of disadvantaged pupils, especially the most able.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not always checked well enough to ensure that potential improvements to teaching and support have had the desired effect in improving pupils' achievement. Changes to teaching and leadership staff have also restricted the role of middle leaders in checking the quality of teaching and information on pupils' progress.
- The headteacher and senior leaders check pupils' work and progress regularly. Although checks of teaching have been completed less frequently, they have also been accurate. The headteacher links checks of staff performance and pay progression to raising the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. However, in recent years these checks have not always been used effectively enough to secure consistently good teaching.
- The past uncertainty about staff change has now ended and new class and leadership responsibilities, introduced in recent terms, are making effective contributions. Improved staff morale, better lesson planning and closer teamwork between staff are quickening the pace of improvement. Continued good early years provision and the promotion of pupils' personal development and better pupils' behaviour and attendance show that the school has the capacity to improve.
- The school provides an effective, well-balanced and broad curriculum and makes good use of its extensive indoor and outdoor facilities. The school has begun to strengthen the focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This is raising pupils' confidence in writing expressively and in solving problems, but their progress in all years is still constrained by weaker handwriting, spelling and calculation skills.
- Staff develop good links with the church and local community through events such as The Lantern Parade. Visits from representatives of faiths such as Islam and Judaism and assembly themes such as 'tolerance' and 'respect' promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. The school's own community is represented by pupils from diverse backgrounds and the way they mix so amicably further prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- All staff work diligently to keep pupils safe. They implement well-considered health and safety procedures efficiently and meet statutory requirements effectively.
- The school is a welcoming community where staff treat pupils equally and do not tolerate discrimination.
- At times, the most able pupils are not challenged enough to reach the standards of which they are capable. Senior and middle leaders have not always ensured that pupil premium funding is used sufficiently to enable those disadvantaged pupils who have more ability to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- The school uses the new primary sport funding well to extend the range of sports available to the pupils and this is increasing their fitness and well-being. Extra sports, such as tennis and basketball, include contributions from specialist coaches who train staff and enrich pupils' skills simultaneously. For example, additional coaching in swimming has also brought a 50% increase in the number of pupils within the Year 6 booster group now able to swim 25 metres.
- As a result of participation in a range of training opportunities provided by the local authority, governors are undertaking reviews on the headteacher's performance and identifying priorities for development effectively. These are now helping the school to improve teaching and quicken the pace of improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body fulfils its statutory duties effectively, including the safeguarding and protection of pupils. Governors work supportively with staff and parents and question staff leaders closely. They visit the school regularly to see the work of the school for themselves. Governors know what the quality of teaching is and ensure that checks of staff pay and performance are focused upon improving pupils' achievement. They ensure that good teaching is rewarded and that underperformance is tackled. Governors have been trained to interpret national data and understand how the school's performance data on attainment and progress compare with those of schools nationally. Governors question staff leaders closely to check that any areas in need of improvement are tackled. They receive information about pupils' progress regularly from the headteacher. However, this has not always included sufficient information about the use of the pupil premium. Governors strongly promote the school's links with the church and ensure that the community atmosphere of the school also prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### are good

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- From the moment they enter the school, children are taught to show respect towards each other and to all the staff. The way pupils share friendly relationships with others at the school shows that they know what is expected of them. Pupils appreciate the supportive atmosphere across the school.
- The vast majority of staff and parents who responded to the questionnaires believe that pupils' behaviour is good and that any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively. School records also show that when pupils have needed firm support they have responded positively. Pupils who spoke to inspectors also said that most pupils behave well.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. Lunch times and break times are joyful occasions, with pupils mixing happily with each other and making good use of the school's spacious facilities. The pupils' eagerness to learn stems from the way all staff clearly value their efforts and use praise and encouragement so that they grow in confidence.
- Pupils are keen to share ideas during lessons and their wholehearted contributions significantly enrich their learning and progress. Although the pupils' handwriting skills are not always well developed, most pupils take pride in how they present their work and are striving to improve their writing.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because, on occasion when teaching fails to stimulate their interest or does not challenge them enough, a few pupils lose concentration and need reminders from staff to focus more on their work.
- Pupils respond well to the rewards used by staff to encourage their academic and personal development. For example, pupils on the school council expressed particular appreciation of the headteacher's awards for good work and helpful behaviour. These are presented in assemblies, during which themes, such as 'tolerance', are used to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Parents and staff express the view that pupils are safe and well looked after. Pupils say they feel safe because 'staff are always there and willing to help us'.
- All staff are diligent in the way they supervise pupils both in and out of school. Staff are checked rigorously prior to appointment and health and safety procedures are implemented consistently and regularly reviewed to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and talk with appreciation about the way they have been taught to use computers safely. They know, for example, not to communicate with people they do not know and cannot trust.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take, including, for example, verbal, racist and cyber bullying. They say that incidents of bullying are rare and that should any occur they have no hesitation in contacting staff and have confidence that they would deal with such behaviour effectively.
- The staff's supportive relationships with pupils and their parents and the headteacher's strong encouragement sustain above average attendance.

## The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, over time, it has not enabled pupils to make progress and achieve well enough, especially in developing basic literacy, reading and numeracy skills.
- At times, the levels of challenge presented to the pupils, especially those with most ability, have fluctuated and slowed pupils' progress as they move through the school.
- Although showing improvement in some classes, teaching of phonics also varies. On occasions, especially in Year 1, teaching is not advancing the pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters make. As a result, their reading and spelling skills are not developing quickly enough. The degree to which pupils are encouraged or supported in reading at home also varies and is not always used well enough in extending pupils' reading skills.
- Much of this variation in the quality of teaching has stemmed from changes in teaching staff. As the staff have settled into new roles and classes, the quality of teaching has shown some improvement. However, this is not happening quickly enough.
- Staff are stimulating pupils' interest in learning more effectively and have focused well on improving the

way pupils present their work in books. This is supporting better progress, especially in mathematics.

- Encouraged by the teachers, pupils are increasingly looking back at work they have completed earlier to help them understand better how to take their learning forward. For example, in an English lesson in Year 3, pupils drew ideas from previous work to make more effective use of similes, metaphors and alliteration to enrich their storm poems.
- Effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is enabling them to give closer support to pupils when they need it most. For example, pupils with complex special educational needs receive consistently good pastoral support and enjoy a boost in their confidence, which is improving their learning.
- Teachers have also improved the quality of their marking and are giving more information to pupils on how to improve. Some teachers are also encouraging pupils to check their own and each other's work to quicken their progress. But this positive involvement of pupils in moving their own and each other's learning forward is not fully secured in all classes.
- Although the most able pupils are not always stretched enough, including those entitled to pupil premium support, some teachers are now presenting a better level of challenge to them. For example, during a story writing lesson in Year 2, pupils were given work that provided the right amount of challenge. As a result, pupils rose to the teacher's high expectations by sustaining concentration and made good progress in making their sentences more interesting for the reader. However, this is not yet a consistent feature in all classes and the focus on promoting pupils' handwriting, spelling and basic number facts is not always strong enough.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- National tests at the end of Year 6 and school checks of pupils' developing skills show that pupils' progress through Key Stage 2 has fluctuated over time. This has led to a fall in levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 and shows that achievement is not yet consistent enough for overall achievement to be judged as good.
- There is evidence of improved progress in recent terms in response to changes in teaching. For example, pupils have improved their ability to write descriptively and now record their work in mathematics more effectively. The pupils' wider range of vocabulary, evident in their spoken responses in lessons and their increasing confidence in tackling problems in mathematics, also reflects their improving skills.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from additional support and specially chosen programmes of work and make the same progress to that of their classmates. All staff provide very caring pastoral support for pupils with complex needs. They boost pupils' self-confidence and include these pupils fully in all the school has to offer.
- Increasingly, other pupils who have joined from different schools are also having their needs checked and met more effectively.
- At times, a large proportion of pupils entitled to pupil premium support within the relatively small year groups also have special educational needs or have joined the school later than the normal time of entry. Consequently, information about their progress, especially national test results at the end of Year 6 over the past two years, needs to be considered with care. Even so, the progress of pupils entitled to pupil premium support requires improvement.
- Results in reading, writing and mathematics show attainment of pupils known to be eligible for additional support to be below other pupils in the school by an average of five terms progress. Their attainment in these subjects was about six terms below pupils of their own age nationally.
- The school's own checks of pupils' progress also show that the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is not closing quickly enough. This is because pupil premium funding is not used effectively enough for those disadvantaged pupils who have most ability to help them reach the standards of which they are capable.
- There are indications that some most-able pupils who do not come from disadvantaged backgrounds are now having their needs met more effectively. Although their progress still varies at times, the increased proportion of pupils attaining the high Level 6 standard in mathematics this year reflects improvement.
- There is inconsistency in the development of pupils' phonics' skills in Year 1. However, pupils' home-school reading record books and other records of pupils' reading show that pupils derive increasing benefit in Year 2 by having reading books and support that provide an appropriate level of challenge. As a result, by the end of Year 2 most pupils are developing their phonic understanding well.
- As they move through Key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading varies, with those reading at home and more often for pleasure making better progress. Over time, pupils' attainment has fallen to below average at the end of Key Stage 2 in recent years, showing that reading requires improvement.

**The early years provision****is good**

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. The teacher and teaching assistants make good use of the stimulating indoor and outdoor facilities to enthuse children in their learning. Children make good progress across all the areas of learning with most reaching, and some exceeding, a good level of development by the time they enter Year 1. This shows that children achieve well during their time in the Reception class.
- All staff work well together and are diligent and effective in keeping children safe. The teacher and teaching assistants also promote very supportive relationships with the parents and liaise well with the nearby pre-school. As a result, children settle quickly, feel safe and develop their self-confidence in learning with and from each other.
- Teachers and teaching assistants relate warmly and supportively towards the children. They promote regular routines and set consistent expectations that children should respect each other's efforts. As a result, the children behave well, are eager to help each other to learn. All the children try hard to please adults and persevere in their learning activities.
- Children achieve well in the Reception class because teaching is good. For example, during the inspection, lively teaching sparked the children's enthusiasm as the children happily extended their early writing skills when labelling parcels and writing greetings cards in Santa's Workshop.
- Adults encourage the children to talk and through thoughtful questioning value their ideas and extend their language and understanding. Adults support children carefully when they choose their own learning activities and show good skill in the subtle way they channel children's ideas toward new learning. For example, children were 'Number Smart' and thought about numbers as advised by adults, when counting chocolate coins and taking it in turns to play skittles and count and record how many they knocked over.
- As a result, children across the range of ability, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those with most ability, extend their language, mathematical and creative skills effectively.
- Adults collect observations and photographs of the children's individual contributions to learning and parents' views in Learning Journals. These give a picture of the children's developing skills. A new system of recording this information electronically is being introduced. Currently, the Early Years Foundation Stage is not better than good. This is because improved teaching of phonics and the new system of recording children's progress have not yet been in place long enough to secure outstanding provision and children's achievement.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113755
<b>Local authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	448452

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	179
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Wheatley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Ryall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01258 452456
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