

Milton Road Primary School

Ascham Road, Cambridge, CB4 2BD

Inspection dates 16–17 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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 and managers have not maintained pupils' achievement since the last inspection. The leadership of teaching has not been sufficiently rigorous to ensure that teaching is consistently good.
- Leaders at every level are not all fully effective in checking progress and the impact of change.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in Years 3 to 6 have declined since the previous inspection.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2014, attainment was above average in reading and mathematics but closer to average in writing. Pupils had not made enough progress from their starting points in Year 2.
- Pupils' progress is not yet consistently good in all classes or fast enough to make up fully for the slower progress some made in the past.
- Teaching has not been strong enough in Years 3 to 6, over time, to promote consistently good progress for most pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve have not been high enough.
- Teachers do not always set work at the right level of difficulty, especially for the most able pupils.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have insufficient opportunities to apply and develop their written skills in subjects other than English.
- The marking of pupils' work is not consistently good in all classes.
- Some parents, justifiably, do not believe that information about their child's progress is communicated effectively enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in Reception get off to a good start and make good progress in the areas of learning.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Attainment is consistently above average by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, are courteous, respectful and well behaved.
- Attendance is above average.
- Procedures to ensure that pupils are safe are effective. Pupils feel safe and well looked after by staff.
- Year 6 pupils have achieved well in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Recently improved governance is making an effective contribution to school improvement, by providing challenge and support.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in most classes. Six lessons were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised and the information about their attainment and progress was analysed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other staff, a representative from the local authority and the governors and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 119 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View and correspondence from parents.
- The school did not use the Ofsted questionnaire for staff but the inspection team took account of the school's own staff survey carried out in March 2014.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents, including school policies, safeguarding procedures and the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector
Nicola Walsh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- About two thirds of the pupils are White British. Other pupils are from a wide range of heritages with other White backgrounds being the next largest group.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about 11%. This is below average.
- Around 5% of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium and this is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Some children in Reception attend part-time from their start in September but build up to full time by January.
- The school met the current government floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There have been two changes to the headship since the previous inspection. The current headteacher took up the post in September 2012. The Chair of governors took up the post in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6, so that all groups of pupils make at least good progress and reach the standards they are capable of by the end of Year 6 by:
 - making sure that all teachers expect pupils to do their very best
 - ensuring that all work set is at the right level of difficulty for pupils, particularly the most able
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills and write high-quality pieces in subjects other than English
 - making sure that teachers' marking helps pupils to improve in all classes.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that:
 - decisive action is taken to improve teaching which is less than good
 - all subject leaders effectively check pupils' progress and the impact of changes on pupils' achievement
 - the school revises how it provides information to parents about their children's progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not been effective enough in maintaining pupils' achievement and ensuring that teaching is consistently good in Years 3 to 6. The school is less effective than it was at the time of the previous inspection.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in Years 3 to 6 have declined during the past three years. By summer 2014, attainment by the end of Year 6 was above average but pupils did not make the progress they should. Weaknesses in teaching and the checking of pupils' progress contributed to the decline.
- The leadership of teaching has not been effective enough in ensuring that it is of good quality across the school. While teaching is good in the early years and in Years 1 and 2, this has not been the case in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is improving, however, some weaknesses remain.
- There are appropriate arrangements for the management of teachers' performance. The targets set to improve teachers' skills are suitably linked to pupils' progress and to priorities in the school's improvement plan. However, some improvement points are not checked with sufficient rigour. For example, improving marking is a key improvement point but there are inconsistencies in practice.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders have a clear overview of the school's performance and are taking positive action to improve teaching and to raise pupils' achievement. Subject leaders are checking pupils' progress more carefully but they are not all fully effective. Some of the changes implemented to raise pupils' achievement are too recent to have had the full impact. Nevertheless, pupils are currently making better progress.
- The leadership of the early years and Years 1 and 2 are effective and contribute well to the good achievement and teaching in these areas.
- The school has a positive atmosphere where pupils can learn and develop. Leaders and staff promote good behaviour and ensure that all pupils are safe. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective. The school promotes positive qualities such as cooperation, good relationships, respect for others and tolerance. Pupils show an appreciation and a good understanding of different cultures and faiths. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school provides an appropriate range of subjects. However, some topics are not studied in sufficient depth in Years 3 to 6. In particular, pupils' do not apply their writing skills in other subjects and topics as well as they do in English. A broad range of interesting additional activities such as clubs, educational visits and sport enhance pupils' learning and contribute well to their social development.
- All pupils have full and equal access to the activities on offer. The school promotes equality of opportunity, fosters good relationships and tackles all forms of discrimination effectively. However, not all groups of pupils are reaching their potential in Years 3 to 6. Leaders and staff are beginning to implement new assessment arrangements to reflect changes nationally.
- The primary school sports premium is used effectively to promote pupils' physical development and to extend their sporting opportunities. A physical education specialist is employed to provide good quality coaching and training to increase staff skills in the teaching of athletics and gymnastics. The school participates well in local competitions and tournaments including those for athletics, cricket, cross country running, football and netball.
- The pupil premium is used appropriately to provide eligible pupils with extra help, particularly in literacy and numeracy. While the progress of these pupils is improving, it is not yet consistently good.
- The local authority swiftly identified the school's decline in performance and is providing good advice and

support in helping the school to raise achievement and improve teaching.

- The vast majority of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, were positive about the care and education provided for their children. Some parents feel that they do not receive sufficient information about their child's progress. These concerns are justified and senior leaders are keen to address them.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance was not effective enough in challenging the school's decline in Years 3 to 6. However, governance has improved considerably. The governing body is now well led by an enthusiastic new chair. The governors collectively bring very useful expertise and skills to the school.
 - The current governing body have high aspirations, high expectations and a clear vision for the school. They were swift to inform the inspectors that pupils' achievement is currently not good enough.
 - Governors have an accurate and realistic overview of the school's performance. They analyse and understand the data on pupils' performance and are well informed about attainment and progress.
 - The governors have a good understanding about the quality of teaching, its impact on pupils' progress over time and what is being done to improve any weaker teaching.
 - They understand requirements relating to the management of staff performance and make sure that promotion and salary increases are based on the progress that pupils make.
 - They ensure that the school promotes qualities and values that prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
 - Governors check the impact of spending of the additional funding on pupils' attainment and progress.
 - Governors ensure that all safeguarding procedures are effective and meet requirements.
 - The governors' good understanding of the school's performance and data enables them to challenge the leaders and hold the school to account.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In all year groups, pupils show positive attitudes to learning and are keen to participate in the wide range of activities offered. Pupils particularly enjoy the additional clubs, educational visits and the school performances.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Good behaviour supports their learning and sense of responsibility. Almost all parents and carers who completed the online survey stated that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved. The pupils themselves stated that most pupils in the school are well behaved most of the time. The positive views from parents and pupils are endorsed by the inspection team and school records.
- Pupils are courteous, friendly, and supportive and show consideration and respect for others. Through their studies and visits they have acquired an appreciation and a good understanding of different cultures and faiths.
- Pupils enjoy school and receive good support from their parents. Over the years, attendance has been consistently above average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Of the high number of parents who completed the online survey, almost all stated that their children were happy at school, they feel safe and are well looked after.
- The headteacher and the staff take effective steps to ensure that all pupils are well cared for and protected. Regular risk assessments and the fostering of positive relationships, and a sense of responsibility help to ensure that the school is a safe place for all pupils.
- The pupils spoken to demonstrated a clear understanding of bullying and its different forms, including cyber bullying and persistent name-calling. Pupils stated that there was very little bullying in their school.

Typical comments were, 'Bullying is really rare', and 'It never happens'. The pupils were confident that should any bullying occur, it would be quickly sorted out by staff.

- Leaders and staff make sure that access to the school is secure. The effective systems for checking and recording safety matters ensure that any concerns are dealt with swiftly.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistent enough over time in Years 3 to 6 to promote good progress for most groups of pupils. Weaknesses in teaching and the checking of pupils' progress have hindered their progress.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils' can achieve have not been high enough.
- Teachers do not always set work at the right level of difficulty for pupils, particularly for the most able. When this happens, pupils do not make the progress they should because tasks are either too easy for some or too difficult for others.
- The marking of pupils' work is not consistently good in all classes. In the best practice, marking identifies good work and provides encouragement and praise. Constructive comments and pointers help to guide improvements. However in some cases serious errors in pupils' work are not corrected and at times, work is not marked at all.
- The teaching and support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is not yet consistent enough to promote good progress for these pupils across the school. Support plans are not always identifying specifically what pupils are expected to learn and this hinders their progress.
- Teachers establish positive relationships with the pupils and ensure that good behaviour supports their learning. Pupils respond well to teachers' clear instructions and explanations.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is effective and enables pupils to make good progress in acquiring early reading skills.
- The teaching of writing, in Years 1 and 2, is very strong. Pupils respond well to the teachers' high expectations and clear feedback on how to improve. Teachers promote new and adventurous vocabulary and demonstrate good writing techniques to pupils. Pupils make good progress and produce high quality pieces of writing. The teaching of writing is improving in Years 3 to 6. There are examples of high quality writing in English in Year 6. However, teachers are not providing opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- In the teaching of mathematics, pupils make good progress when mathematical operations are clearly explained and demonstrated to them. Pupils are fully engaged in their learning when teachers' questioning and the work set challenges their thinking. In some cases, pupils receive too little guidance in how to solve problems and the work is not demanding enough to fully engage them.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment and progress have declined in Years 3 to 6 over the past three years. By the end of Year 6 in 2014, attainment was above average in reading and mathematics but closer to average in writing. Pupils had not made enough progress from their above average starting points in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, particularly in writing.
- Pupils make good progress in Year 1 and 2 and attainment has been consistently above average by the end of Year 2. The school has not been effective enough in maintaining and building on these standards as pupils progress through Years 3 to 6.

- The headteacher, key leaders and staff are taking positive action to raise pupils' achievement. Pupils are now making faster progress but it is not consistently good in all classes. Some pupils are making up lost ground from the past.
- The few Year 6 pupils supported by the pupil premium in 2014 attained much lower standards than the others in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils were about nine terms behind the others in mathematics, eight terms in reading and six terms in writing. When the pupils supported by the additional funding are compared to other pupils nationally, they were about seven terms behind in mathematics and reading and six terms behind in writing.
- The wide fluctuation in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, at the end of Year 6, over the last two years reflects the very different make-up of these two small groups of pupils. In 2013, disadvantaged pupils outperformed other pupils in the school. In 2014 the position was reversed. The information the school collects on current pupils' attainment shows a positive picture. Pupils are making better progress and gaps in attainment are closing.
- In Year 2, the proportions of pupils who attained the higher levels in 2014 were above average in reading and writing but average in mathematics. By the end of Year 6 in 2014, an above average proportion of pupils attained the higher levels in reading and mathematics but this was not the case in writing. Most of the most able pupils made the progress expected of them from Years 3 to 6. Pupils' learning in lessons and the study of their work indicate that the most able are not always sufficiently challenged and extended in Years 3 to 6, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is too variable to be good and therefore requires improvement. Inconsistencies in teaching and support planning contribute to some pupils' lack of progress.
- The proportions of pupils that reached the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check were well above average in 2014. In Years 1 and 2, good reading helps to form the basis for good writing skills. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are capable readers, but the lack of depth to some topic work indicates that reading skills are not being used fully to gather information and explore topics in greater depth.
- Pupils' achievement in writing in Year 1 and 2 is a key strength. For example, pupils in Year 2 wrote detailed and factual accounts of the life of Florence Nightingale. They used imaginative vocabulary and successfully structured their ideas in chronological order. The quality and quantity of writing was impressive.
- Writing in Years 3 to 6 is improving. Punctuation, grammar and spelling are developing well. Most pupils take care with handwriting and presentation. However, in Years 3 to 6, pupils are not always applying their writing skills well enough in different subjects. As a result, the quality and quantity of pupils' writing in English is better than it is in other subjects.
- Pupils are making good progress in mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Progress in Year 3 and 6 is improving but is not yet good. Most pupils show clear knowledge and understanding of how to make calculations using all four operations. They apply their numeracy skills competently to solve problems. Progress is hindered when activities are not suitably challenging.

The early years provision

is good

- Children enter Reception with knowledge, understanding and skills typical for their age.
- Good teaching and the interesting range of learning activities provided contribute to children's good progress in the areas of learning. Children attain above average standards by the end of Reception and are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Children are making good progress in recognising and saying letter sounds. They enjoy books and home

reading routines are well established. Adults encourage children to talk about their learning and they develop speaking and listening skills well. Just occasionally, activities are not sufficiently demanding to extend the learning of the most able children.

- Children make good gains in working with numbers and solving number problems. Children made good progress in gathering data and producing a pictogram to show favourite vegetables of the class.
- Children’s personal and social skills are developing well. Adults establish strong relationships with the children and manage them well. The children respond well to the adults’ effective guidance and instructions. They are safe in the setting and consequently grow in confidence and relate well to adults and to other children. Their positive attitudes and behaviour support their learning well.
- The early years provision is well led and managed. Staff work well as a team in planning interesting activities for the children. The attainment and progress of children is carefully checked. Children’s achievements and learning experiences are well recorded in learning journeys.

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

Unique reference number	133930
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	449344

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	443
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sylvie Baird
Headteacher	Graham McArthur
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2009
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