

# Milnthorpe Primary School

Firs Road, Milnthorpe, Cumbria, LA7 7QF

**Inspection dates** 17–18 March 2015

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Throughout their time in the early years, children develop a genuine eagerness to learn new things. They build positive relationships with each other and the adults around them and achieve well.
- Following the previous inspection, there was a dip in pupils' progress. Leaders and managers at all levels have addressed this and pupils are now making good progress across subjects and year groups.
- Pupils who have additional needs are provided with a good level of support and most make the same good progress as others in school.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers provide exciting learning experiences for pupils that help them to learn well.
- A wide range of subjects and topics engage pupils' interest well. They enjoy being challenged to extend their knowledge and develop their skills. This prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. The older pupils take on numerous responsibilities and act as good role models to the younger children.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They develop a good understanding of how to keep safe beyond school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed. For example, many learn to play musical instruments and participate in a wide range of sporting activities.
- The headteacher has effectively led several whole-school changes. In a relatively short space of time, there have been significant improvements. Staff work well as a team in supporting pupils' personal development and academic achievement.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have secured improvements in the achievement of all groups of pupils and in the quality of teaching. The school continues to improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always do as well in writing as they do in other subjects.
- Teachers do not expect high enough standards in pupils' writing in subjects other than English. As a result, pupils make too many errors in their spellings, punctuation and grammar.
- Pupils are not always given enough time to respond to teachers' marking in order to learn from their mistakes.
- Governors do not monitor the workload of leaders and managers well enough to ensure that responsibilities are shared more equally among staff.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons, two of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed sessions led by teaching assistants and listened to pupils read. The headteacher joined inspectors in scrutinising work in pupils' books.
- Discussions were held with school staff, groups of pupils, the headteacher, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding documents, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance, development plans, records of pupils' standards and progress, and documents relating to attendance and behaviour.
- There were 43 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) which were taken into account. The inspector reviewed the school's own parental and pupil surveys and 18 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff. Inspectors talked to parents informally at the start of the school day and received two letters from parents.

## Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Adrian Francis

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Milnthorpe is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is similar to that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is lower than that found nationally.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- Provision in early years is part time in Nursery and full time in Reception.
- The headteacher is a local leader in education (LLE) and supports other schools. She has appointed several new staff since she took up the post at Milnthorpe in September, 2011.
- Two staff are subject leaders in education (SLE), providing support for school staff and staff from other schools.
- Sharing the same site, but not inspected during this inspection, are Sure Start Children's Centre and Joey's Nursery.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

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

- Improve teaching and learning in order to raise pupils' achievement further, particularly in writing, by:
  - ensuring that pupils use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar when they write in all subjects and not just in English
  - always giving pupils enough time to respond to teachers' written comments so that they can learn from their mistakes
  - ensuring that pupils are always clear about what is expected of them in their writing so that they reach their full potential.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management further by developing the skills of the governing body to measure the workload of leaders and managers so that responsibilities are shared equally among staff.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher knows every pupil at the school very well and is highly ambitious for each one of them. She deservedly has the full confidence and support of staff and governors and demonstrates her expertise, skill and determination by leading school improvement. For example, by raising the quality of teaching and eradicating inadequate teaching, the dip in standards prior to the current headteacher being appointed to Milnthorpe and following the previous inspection has been reversed.
- The school improvement plan and the evaluation of the school's work are both realistic and accurate. Leaders are using pupil progress tracking information effectively to ensure targets for individual pupils are always challenging. When additional support is required, this is put into place swiftly and monitored closely.
- Middle leaders have ownership for raising standards in their areas of responsibility. They have a clear view of how they can continue to raise standards. Leaders check on the quality of teaching across the school and encourage the sharing of good practice.
- Teachers are well supported to improve the quality of their teaching. This is done through rigorous staff appraisal and the high quality training they receive. They benefit from opportunities to visit other schools and see outstanding practice.
- The local authority provides a very light touch support as they have such confidence in the headteacher who has been instrumental in developing peer support from and for other headteachers.
- Disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as their classmates. This is because the pupil premium funding is used effectively. School leaders and all staff demonstrate their commitment to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. This is an inclusive school that fosters good relations within the school and the local community. The school successfully tackles discrimination with regard to pupils' personal development and academic achievement.
- The rich and vibrant curriculum provides a wide range of activities both in school and beyond. The residential trips for the older pupils give them the opportunities to develop new skills and grow in confidence through a range of outdoor activities. Pupils do well in sporting competitions, develop a love of the arts and have an excellent grasp of using new technologies. In Key Stage 2, all pupils learn to play the flute and guitar or ukulele.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of British values. An example of this was seen in the ceramic tiles they had made to mark Armistice Day, having engaged with the elderly in the community to hear about their experiences during the Second World War. Pupils engage with older people in the community to help them gain confidence in using new technologies, showing strong community cohesion. A recent visit by a local member of parliament brought the importance of Britain being a democratic society to life for pupils.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used to good effect to broaden sporting opportunities for pupils. It also pays for specialist staff from a local high school to develop the sports coaching expertise of teachers here. This has, for example, led to an increase in opportunities for pupils to try activities such as gymnastics and cricket. There has been an increase in the uptake and interest in sport since the funding started. Most pupils now take part in a wide range of sporting activities to help them stay healthy and promote their well-being.
- The headteacher has successfully shouldered much of the overall responsibility for whole-school change. Leaders and managers have clearly developed their own areas but there is no evidence of checks to ensure the balance of workload is evenly spread.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors bring with them a wide range of skills from within and beyond education. Those who spoke to an inspector have a good understanding of data showing pupils' achievement and how this compares with other schools. Each half term they are kept well informed of pupils' achievement by senior and middle leaders. Governors have an accurate overview of the quality of teaching and how it is directly linked to the salary structure of staff. Underperformance is tackled effectively. Governors are at an early stage in measuring the workload of leaders and managers to ensure the balance is appropriate. The school's finances are efficiently managed.
  - Governors are conscientious in the way they undertake their statutory duties. Required security checks on adults are recorded and staff are well trained in child protection. Governors make sure safeguarding arrangements meet requirements so that pupils and staff are safe.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons and around the school pupils are extremely courteous towards each other and adults. They wear their uniforms with pride and enjoy learning and playing within the vibrant surroundings that the school provides.
- All parents who spoke to the inspectors and those who wrote letters felt that the behaviour of pupils is of a high standard. This is reflected in the recent school surveys of parents and of pupils. However, on Parent View a minority of parents did not share this view. Accidents and incidents of poor behaviour are thoroughly recorded and analysed. As a result, the school has ordered a new surface for the playground and reviewed lunchtime supervision and activities. Inspectors are satisfied that there are systems and procedures in place that are followed and action taken. Leaders continually strive to keep pupils safe and eradicate even the few instances of inappropriate behaviour.
- Because of the school's growing reputation in the local community and beyond as a caring environment where pupils thrive, the number of pupils on roll has increased considerably since the previous inspection. Parents referred to 'highly specialist staff and top quality care' as reasons for their children attending this school.
- Older pupils take pride in their roles and responsibilities. The inspectors observed those on duty in the corridors at lunchtime helping the younger ones to zip up their coats before going outside. Their caring approach was evident during the course of the inspection. The school council organises events to raise money for various charities. Pupils recently raised money for charity by selling the cakes they had made in school at the local supermarket; the activity also saw their numeracy skills being used in a real-life situation.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe the school keeps pupils safe and well cared for. All parents who spoke to the inspectors believe their children are happy and safe at school.
- Pupils learn how to keep safe in their local environment and in unfamiliar settings. There is evidence that if a pupil is worried about a friend, they have the confidence to tell a teacher and appropriate action is taken.
- Pupils understand bullying in its different forms. When asked by the inspectors to give an example, one pupil referred to homophobic bullying and gave a clear example of how this may manifest itself. They were confident that bullying is rare at their school and say that if it did take place it would be dealt with quickly. Behaviour logs support this view.
- There are good links with external agencies to provide support for pupils and their families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Pupils receive good levels of support from all staff.
- Attendance is higher than average. This reflects how much the pupils enjoy being at school and the excellent way in which the school works together with parents.
- The school is still developing further ways in engaging pupils to participate in organised games at lunchtimes in order to reduce the number of incidents that occur.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Pupils make good progress because of the effective quality of teaching in a wide range of subjects. This is further confirmed by work in pupils' books and the school's records of pupils' progress.
- Teachers use questions skilfully to assess pupils' learning throughout lessons. Pupils discuss their ideas and learn from each other. Staff make sure that there is a good range of resources available to pupils so that they can help themselves and each other when they are a little unsure about what to do next.
- Phonics (the links between letters and sounds) are taught exceptionally well and this has led to year-on-year improvements in pupils' performance in the Year 1 screening checks. Those who read to an inspector showed how well they could blend the sounds of different letters to work out unfamiliar words. Pupils develop a love of books from an early age and this was seen at first-hand during the inspection.
- The headteacher has led the drive for improvements to the quality of teaching across the school. Teachers make mathematics exciting. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils were clearly enthralled learning equations and algebra using unfamiliar methods. The most able who grasped concepts quickly moved off and settled down to complete further challenges unaided. Those who were not so sure stayed a little longer with the teacher until there were shrieks of 'I get it now' and they too were able to get along with their work

without help.

- Effective teamwork by teachers and teaching assistants ensures a high level of support for all groups of pupils.
- Most pupils enjoy their homework and the fact that some is based on using the latest technology really grasps pupils' imaginations. One pupil commented, 'It is fun and it budes you up to the next level', while another said, 'It's not boring homework, I really like it.'
- There are opportunities for writing across a range of subjects. In science, pupils record their findings from experiments which help them to use their literacy skills. However, there is not always enough clarity about how pupils can measure for themselves whether or not they have reached the standard of writing that their teacher expects of them. Pupils achieve well in spelling, punctuation and grammar tests. However, there are too many errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar in subjects other than English because teachers do not always expect pupils to use the same good quality English in all subjects.
- A whole-school approach to marking is now established. Marking is usually of a high quality, but in some classes pupils are not given the time to respond to marking comments and so they repeat the same mistakes.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Following the previous inspection, standards dipped. A raft of changes led by the headteacher has seen standards rise in the last three years.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected level in the Year 1 reading screening check is higher than the national average. This is because teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in the teaching of phonics. The few pupils who struggle to read are given very effective support and this usually leads to rapid improvements.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014, there was a significant improvement on the previous year leading to standards reached being higher than the national average. The proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics were in line with the national average, showing an improvement on the previous year.
- In 2014, standards reached at the end of Year 6 were just above the national average but given their results by the end of Year 2, this represents good progress. The proportions of those reaching the higher levels were in line with the national average in mathematics and writing but significantly lower in reading. The school has taken swift action to address this and the schools' data show significantly more pupils currently in the school are already reading at the higher level than was the case last year.
- Pupils achieve well in spelling, punctuation and grammar tests but there are nevertheless too many errors in pupils' work.
- Pupils are making good progress across year groups and in subjects. This is evident from the pupil tracking system, work seen in lessons and from work in pupils' books over time. Almost all pupils made at least the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014. The proportion of those making more progress than expected in writing and mathematics was much higher than the national average. The school has effectively addressed the instances in the past of too few pupils making more progress than expected in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress. This is because their additional needs are identified early and are fully met through tailor-made sessions delivered by highly skilled teaching assistants. Strong links with external agencies support both the academic and personal needs of individual pupils and also support their families. These pupils are fully integrated into all aspects of school life.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively and is directed towards supporting the disadvantaged pupils. This ensures that they make equally good progress as their classmates. At the end of Year 6 in 2014, the disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium were approximately three terms behind their classmates in mathematics and two terms behind other pupils nationally. In reading, they were three terms ahead of their classmates and two terms ahead of other pupils nationally. There was no difference in standards in writing reached between disadvantaged and other pupils in school and the disadvantaged were a term ahead of other pupils nationally. As disadvantaged pupils move through the school the pupil premium funding is used well to close the gaps.
- The most-able pupils benefit from the school's strong links with local high schools. Specialist teachers are regular visitors to the school and high schools provide a range of specialist workshops depending on the needs of the pupils to help to raise pupils' aspirations. For example, they provide enrichment sessions which extend pupils' learning in mathematics and science. Pupils have the opportunity to work alongside

Key Stage 3 role models, which they find highly motivating.

### The early years provision

is good

- Since the previous inspection there have been significant improvements to early years with the result that all aspects are now good. Children settle very well into early years. Prior to starting school, children and parents visit the early years setting. This gives staff an insight into what children enjoy doing and so activities are planned to engage them fully in a range of activities.
- Children join early years with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age, although skills in communication and language are not as strong. During their time in early years children make good progress. In 2014, the proportions reaching a good level of development were higher than the national average. All children are well prepared for learning in Key Stage 1, whether they are supported by additional funding, are disabled or have special educational needs, or are the most able.
- Communication between school and home is strong. Staff are available at the start and end of the school day so that everyone can share relevant information with each other. Parents are kept well informed of the progress their children are making through records known as learning journeys. These are used by staff and most parents to record each child's achievements throughout their time in early years both in school and at home. Such records help staff to plan challenging activities to ensure children build on their experiences and make good progress.
- Good care is taken to keep children safe and ensure their good behaviour. When they are given free choice of activities in which to engage, pupils show respect for each other and they learn to be patient and take turns to use the equipment available to them.
- Children achieve well in the early years because of the good quality teaching from the dedicated staff team which is well led and managed. Staff meticulously follow up pupils' interests to extend their learning. For example, children having been captivated by the class book, *Goldilocks and The Three Bears*, staff prepared kitchen areas both indoors and outside so that children could make porridge. Their development of number skills was extended by using the weighing scales and weights to get exactly the right amount of oats. Skilled questioning from staff made children think about how many 10g weights would be needed to make 20gs and the importance of ensuring that the scales were balanced. The children thoroughly enjoyed this practical and fun way of developing numeracy skills.

## 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>	112184
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	448435

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dianne Chaplow
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tanya Hughes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01539 562344
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