

Milton Primary School

Leek Road, Milton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST2 7AF

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Over time, the leadership and management of the school have been inadequate. Too little has been done to tackle underachievement in English and mathematics, or to eradicate inadequate teaching in Key Stage 2.
- By Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is significantly below average, especially for the most able. It has declined sharply since the previous inspection and shows little sign of improvement.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in English and mathematics as they move through Key Stage 2. This is because not enough is done systematically to develop pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is inadequate overall. In Key Stage 2 teachers do not use the information they collect about pupils' progress well enough to ensure that pupils receive the necessary support or challenge. This means that some pupils find tasks too easy, while others find them too difficult.
- Pupils do not always receive the guidance they need to improve their work, particularly the accuracy of their writing and spelling.
- Where teachers' expectations are too low in Key Stage 2, pupils become distracted and their behaviour requires improvement.
- Subject leaders, such as those responsible for leading English and mathematics, are in the very early stages of developing their roles. They are not fully involved in improving the quality of teaching or pupils' achievement in their subjects. They have had neither the training nor the time they need to fulfil their roles.
- Additional funding such as the pupil premium and the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding are not being used effectively to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Over time governors have not challenged the school effectively or held senior leaders to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Good leadership and management of the early years have underpinned good teaching and good achievement in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The interim executive headteacher has a very clear understanding of what the school does well and what should be improved. She is starting to provide clear direction and has won the confidence of staff and pupils alike.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and most are keen to do well.
- The school's work to ensure that pupils are safe is good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons and made short visits to other activities led by teachers and trained assistants. Inspectors carried out most of these observations jointly with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher.
- Two groups of pupils met with inspectors and inspectors also talked to a number of pupils in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff, including senior leaders. They also conducted meetings with the Chair and other members of the Governing Body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also held discussions with a small number of parents. They also took account of the responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with senior leaders and considered a range of documents. These included documents about the school's strategies to enable leaders to gain an accurate view of its performance, school improvement plans, data on pupils' progress, policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Judith Tolley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marilyn Massey	Additional Inspector
Hilary Ward	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Milton Primary School is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very low, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Children attend the Nursery on a full- or part-time basis and Reception on a full-time basis.
- The school shares a site with the Milton Care Club. This is inspected separately and receives a separate report which is available on the Ofsted website.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in the teaching staff. The interim executive headteacher took up her post in December 2014. The governing body was reformed in December 2014 under the guidance of the local authority.
- The school is supported by Greenways Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is at least consistently good and ensures that pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring that the work given to pupils matches their varying needs and abilities, so that work is never too easy for the most able nor too difficult for other pupils, including those who find learning more challenging
 - ensuring that pupils develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics systematically as they move through Key Stage 2
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and of their accurate use of punctuation, correct grammar and the quality of their handwriting
 - improving marking so that pupils are given good guidance about how they can improve their work, especially the quality of their writing and the precision of their spelling
 - making sure that teaching assistants always provide good support for pupils in lessons, including providing timely help for those who find learning more difficult.
- Urgently improve the impact of leadership and management, including governance, so that advancements made by the school are effective and rapid by:
 - making sure that governors further develop their role so that they can challenge the school to improve teaching and pupils' achievement effectively
 - making certain that subject leaders work closely with teachers in order to improve their practice
 - providing appropriate training and time for subject leaders so that they can fulfil their roles effectively
 - making sure that the pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that the use and impact of the primary PE and sport funding is evaluated rigorously, and as a result, is used effectively to improve the quality of the teaching of PE across the school and hence impact positively on pupils' well being.

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

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Over time leaders and managers, including governors, have had too little impact on the work of the school. They have not established a culture where there is strong leadership of teaching. As a result, attainment and the rate of progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 have declined sharply. Too few pupils make the progress expected from their starting points. This contrasts sharply with the good leadership and management in the early years which has underpinned good teaching and achievement in this key stage.
- The procedures for checking on pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 have not been used to hold teachers to account effectively nor have they been used to identify underachievement quickly enough. The school's work to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve their potential is, therefore, ineffective.
- The pupil premium funding has not been used to good effect to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, gaps between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils have widened in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Similarly, the PE and sport funding has not been used to improve the quality of teaching in physical education across the school and its impact upon pupils' well-being has not been evaluated.
- Middle leaders, including subject leaders, are not sufficiently involved in checking on the performance of the school or in school improvement-planning procedures. They are not directly involved in improving teaching and learning in their subjects through, for instance, working alongside teachers to improve their practice or to drive improvement in their subjects across the wider curriculum. They have not received the training they need to do this, nor have they been given the time to do so.
- In the very short time the interim executive headteacher has been at the school, she has created a new senior leadership team, carried out an accurate evaluation of the performance of the school and clearly identified what needs to be improved. All staff now have a clear understanding of their role in this because performance management procedures have been put into place. They participate regularly in open and honest discussions about improving the quality of teaching and learning. Expertise from the partner school is being used to ensure that assessments are accurate and to improve practice. Staff are unanimous in supporting these changes and express their confidence in the new leadership to improve teaching and learning in the school. However, it is too early to see the impact of this upon pupils' achievement and the school does not have the capacity to move forward without extensive external support.
- Pupils' progress is now tracked closely and teachers are now held to account. New policies for assessment and marking are being implemented, but are not yet applied consistently. Interventions have been put into place to enable pupils to make up lost ground and there are early signs that teaching and learning are beginning to improve as a result.
- The curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 2 has not been planned to ensure that pupils make progress or develop their understanding of citizenship in modern Britain. It is now being reviewed to better meet the needs and interests of pupils in the school. However, this is in the very early stages of development and it is too soon to measure its impact upon pupils' achievement or their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. New systems of rewards and sanctions are designed to foster good relations and tackle discrimination, but it is too early to measure the effect of these. The curriculum is enriched by a variety of extra-curricular activities such as sports, gardening and other clubs, enjoyed by pupils.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust and meet government requirements. The school keeps comprehensive records and works effectively through the home-school link worker to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils in its care.
- The school works well with parents and outside agencies to overcome barriers to learning. The home-school link worker works alongside the assistant headteacher to ensure that early help is in place to support families. Some parents say that they are concerned about the progress their children make and about the leadership and management of the school. Others appreciate the opportunities they have to talk to teachers and to be involved in their children's learning. The school uses newsletters to inform parents about the life of the school and has recently canvassed their views. It is developing its website to inform them better and involve them more in their children's learning.
- The local authority has provided extensive support for the school, but this has had no impact because the school was reluctant to implement the advice it was offered until very recently. The local authority has now brokered support from the partner school and encouraged the reformation of the governing body.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

■ The governance of the school:

- Until very recently the governing body did not have an accurate view of the performance of the school and did not hold leaders effectively to account. Therefore, it had little impact upon the quality of teaching and learning and consequently pupils' achievement declined rapidly.
- The newly formed governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and of the areas which need to be improved. Its members have focused upon improving teaching and progress and frequently check on the school's performance, including data that show pupils' attainment and progress. They are able to talk confidently about how the school is addressing the significant underachievement.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and the performance of staff, including how good performance is rewarded and any underperformance is tackled through the recently introduced performance management procedures. The efficiency of spending is scrutinised. They have strong, positive relationships with senior leaders. As a result they are able, through open and honest challenge and support, to hold leaders effectively to account although they have not had the time to impact on achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although pupils' conduct is often good and they are kind and considerate to each other, overall, behaviour requires improvement. This is because pupils sometimes lose concentration or are distracted by others. This happens when lessons fail to motivate pupils, particularly the boys, or when activities are too easy or too difficult. Pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, are unsure about what is expected of them.
- When teachers' expectations are too low or they do not challenge poor presentation or accuracy, pupils' work deteriorates and they take little care with their work or the accuracy of their writing. Too often they do not respond to teachers' comments. However, this is sometimes because they are not given clear enough guidance about how to improve their work.
- When they are given the opportunity they take responsibility seriously and eagerly, for example, as part of the school council or as prefects and house captains.
- Attendance is broadly average. Pupils are punctual and come well prepared for lessons. Exclusions are rare.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that any poor behaviour is dealt with promptly and effectively. They are aware of the different forms of bullying, such as name-calling, homophobic bullying and cyber-bullying that can take place and know how to deal with it. School records indicate that the school's procedures to foster good relations and tackle discrimination are having a positive impact, but these have been implemented only recently.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy using the equipment in the playground and the opportunities to participate in sporting activities, which are having a positive impact on their health and well-being. However, at present the school does not measure how effective the extra funding is in increasing the proportion of pupils who participate in these activities or their progress in developing their sporting skills.
- Pupils who may have challenging behaviour are supported effectively to make appropriate choices and, as a result, they are able to learn alongside their classmates. Incidences of poor behaviour are rare.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The impact of teaching over time in Key Stage 2 is inadequate. This has been the case for several years and has led to underachievement and gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers do not take what pupils know, understand and can do sufficiently into account when planning their next steps in learning. As a result, activities and resources are not matched well enough to pupils' needs and capabilities and so middle ability pupils and the most able often find tasks too easy or too difficult. Too often all pupils are given the same tasks and the same resources, regardless of their ability.
- Lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 are not always given the assistance they need to complete tasks

independently, so they struggle to complete work or have to rely on direct help from adults. Often these pupils have to wait for this aid and this slows their progress. Similarly, middle and higher attaining pupils are not always given sufficient challenge to achieve their potential, so they find tasks easy or dull.

- In the lessons where learning is good, pupils are given opportunities to work with a partner or in small groups to explore ideas and solve problems. Teachers ask pupils searching questions to see how much they have understood and to encourage them to think for themselves and share their ideas. In whole-class activities, teachers give pupils mini-whiteboards so that they can check on pupils' learning and correct any misunderstandings quickly. When teachers demonstrate activities clearly, pupils' understanding of new ideas and concepts develops quickly. Year 2 pupils, for instance, were confident in halving and doubling numbers because tasks and resources were well matched to their needs. Therefore with the most able using simple division and multiplication and the least able using counters, they were able to complete the same activity successfully.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils develop their writing skills effectively, practising their handwriting and applying their knowledge of sounds and letters to write their own stories and accounts. They swiftly increase the complexity of their sentences and using punctuation with more accuracy. Explanations and demonstrations are clear which helps them know how to do this. However, in Key Stage 2 pupils fail to build on this because they are not given clear guidance about how to do so. Their skills are not developed systematically because the learning outcomes for writing tasks are unclear. Pupils do not know how to improve the quality of their work and they continue to make the same mistakes in spelling.
- Similarly, in mathematics in Key Stage 1 pupils quickly increase in confidence and competence in applying their mathematical learning; for example, when making bar charts and Venn diagrams to explain ideas and identifying which calculations to use to solve word problems. In Key Stage 2, however, they do not develop these skills in a systematic way and many spend time completing very simple calculations that do not challenge them.
- The teaching of reading is effective in the early years and Key Stage 1 and children enjoy their reading. Most read fluently and with understanding, are able to explain in detail what they have read and draw inferences. However, pupils do not build effectively on this secure start and their progress in developing their reading skills is too slow throughout Key Stage 2. The teaching of reading is inadequate in Key Stage 2 as it does not enable pupils to build well enough on what they already know and can do. When pupils are taught together as a whole class, the work provided is not adapted well enough to match pupils' varying skills, knowledge or abilities.
- There are some examples of good marking of pupils' work. Pupils are involved in reviewing their own progress, discussing it with their teacher in order to agree and plan what they need to improve and learn next. Pupils have 'Fix It' sessions at the beginning of each day to respond to teachers' comments but, too often, teachers' marking does not give pupils clear enough guidance about how to improve their work. Some work is left unmarked or errors are ticked as correct so pupils continue to make the same mistakes. Opportunities are missed to improve pupils' writing in subjects other than English.
- The quality of support provided by teaching assistants is too variable. Some teachers and teaching assistants work very well together and complement each other as a result of effective planning to meet pupils' needs. However, this is not always the case and, too often, teaching assistants lack initiative and have to be directed to support pupils during lessons. On occasions their work with a small group is too noisy and distracts the rest of the class.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is low compared to the national average. Since the previous inspection, standards have declined sharply year on year. The proportion of pupils that reach the nationally expected Level 4 at the end of Year 6 is much lower than seen nationally in both English and mathematics. This is borne out by the low standards seen by inspectors in pupils' work in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils make inadequate progress across Key Stage 2 and, as a result, there is significant and widespread underachievement by the end of Year 6. The school's analysis of pupils' progress indicates that very few pupils achieve the progress expected of them in Years 3, 4 and 5. However, there is some improvement in Year 6 as a result of better teaching and extra help in that year group. Pupils have fallen so far behind they are still not able to achieve as well as they should from their various starting points.
- The most able pupils fail to make the progress expected of them because they are not challenged effectively. Too few achieve the higher levels of which they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.

- Many pupils join the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. In the early years children make good progress and most begin Year 1 with good levels of development. This is because activities are planned well to enable children to develop their understanding and skills. They continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. As a result they begin Year 3 with standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are above average. However, as they move through Key Stage 2, they fail to make the progress they should and fall further and further behind.
- Pupils' inadequate progress and low attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 adversely affects their ability to do well in other subjects and does not prepare them adequately for the next stage in education. Pupils do not have enough chances to improve their literacy skills in English lessons or when completing work in other subjects. Too many pupils have difficulty reading and writing and their mathematical skills are not secure.
- The quality of pupils' writing is well below average. In reading, and writing pupils have gaps in their knowledge and learning, and as a result, struggle with spelling, punctuation and grammar and too many mistakes are repeated. Some pupils' handwriting is poor.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is slower than that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. At the end of Year 6 in 2014 they were approximately two terms behind other pupils nationally in reading and writing and around four terms behind in mathematics. They were approximately one term behind other pupils in the school in writing and mathematics and the attainment gap appeared to close. However this is because the attainment of other pupils declined. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment in reading was similar to that of other pupils in the school; this was because there were small improvements in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the attainment of other pupils failed to improve. Both groups of pupils reached attainment levels that are significantly below the national levels and underachieved.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs make better progress than their peers as a result of the intensive support they receive from teaching assistants. However, they still underachieve in relation to their individual starting points, because expectations are too low for all pupils in Key Stage 2 and their needs are not addressed adequately when they are taught in whole-class situations.

The early years provision is good

- Children make good progress and achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes as a result of consistently good teaching. Most children start in the early years provision with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age, but some begin with skills that are low, especially in their communication, language, personal and social skills. Most achieve good levels of development in all areas of learning during their time in the early years provision. They begin Year 1 as confident learners, well prepared for the Key Stage 1 curriculum.
- As a result of very well established routines, children settle in quickly and behave well. They clearly enjoy the activities planned for them, take turns and learn and play well together. They know how to stay safe and respect and help one another.
- Children make particularly good progress in developing their speaking, reading, writing, mathematical skills, as well as their personal and social skills. They are keen to talk about their learning. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children are confident in using numbers and in simple reading and writing skills in their play, for example, in sorting toys into sets according to colour and size, matching figures with numbers of objects and working out simple addition and subtraction.
- The provision is led and managed very well, promotes good teaching and learning and a high level of consistency across the key stage. Adults work together very effectively to ensure that all children are able to make good progress. They monitor individual progress on a daily basis and use this information effectively to plan next steps for children's learning.
- Activities led by teachers and teaching assistants are well planned and designed to excite and interest children. For instance, children became more and more confident in climbing around the pirate ship outside, and were delighted to use their imagination to invent and act out stories about finding treasure.
- Adults take every opportunity to engage children in conversation to extend their learning and to consolidate their mathematical, reading and writing skills and children respond enthusiastically. As a result, they make rapid progress in developing their language and communication skills. The outside area is used effectively with well planned activities which excite children's interest and enable them to take the next steps in their learning.

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	123984
Local authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	456285

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	367
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jon Lovatt
Headteacher	Christine Dean
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2011
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