

Milburn School

Milburn, Penrith, Cumbria, CA10 1TN

Inspection dates	24–25 November 2015
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders and governors have secured the necessary improvements that are ensuring that pupils now receive a good education.
- There is clear evidence of impact in addressing all the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection.
- Overall, achievement is good with all pupils making at least expected progress, and in most cases good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outcomes for the pupils who completed Key Stage 1 and 2 last summer were very positive.
- Pupils benefit from good teaching, alongside individual support and tuition, and make good progress in their learning across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are above average.
- Parents receive very comprehensive feedback on how their children are doing and pupils have regular opportunities to discuss their progress with teachers.
- Parents speak very highly of the individual care and support that their children receive.
- Good leadership has provided, and is continuing to provide, clear direction for the school.
- Governors play an active role in everyday school life and have a visible day-to-day presence.
- Detailed planning, especially in English and mathematics, enables lessons to be taught well and in depth.
- The partnership between Milburn and its partner schools, notably Temple Sowerby, has developed well and supports a broad and balanced education.
- Pupils benefit from attending some lessons at nearby Temple Sowerby School. They are able to socialise regularly and participate in sport and team games.
- Pupils are very well cared for because all adults who work in the school know each pupil extremely well.
- Relationships are very positive. Behaviour in lessons and conduct around the school are exemplary.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils have limited exposure to life in modern Britain beyond the confines of their immediate environment.
- Boys are careless in their writing at times and spelling and punctuation needs to be corrected more purposefully.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Some subjects, such as music, require more specialist input to make sure pupils can develop greater competency and skills.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Pupils should be provided with more opportunities to develop their understanding of other cultures both inside and outside Britain by linking with schools in contrasting locations.
- Continue to develop and improve pupils' achievement by:
 - encouraging the boys to take greater care over their spelling and punctuation when writing and making sure that mistakes are corrected or improved
 - ensuring that pupils have more frequent opportunities to solve problems in mathematics, especially in practical and real-life situations
 - providing specialist support in some curriculum areas, such as music, to enable pupils to develop new skills and enjoyment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

is good

- School leaders and governors have worked hard to secure the necessary improvements that have ensured that pupils now receive a good education.
- Although there have been three executive headteachers in charge of the school over the last two years each has left a legacy which has been further built on by their successor. This has coincided with a period of stability and sustained improvement for the school. Good leadership has provided clear direction for the school.
- Where previously there was confusion there is now clarity and organisation. The basic administrative procedures which ensure the efficient and smooth running of the school are now in place. There is clear evidence of impact in addressing all the weaknesses identified when the school was inspected nearly two years ago.
- Essential statutory requirements, such as the pay progression of teachers, are now fully in place and are linked to clear targets and improvements. Performance management is also beginning to be used to inform specific professional development. Training events are accessed and shared in partnership with local schools to make this more cost effective.
- Monitoring of pupil progress is detailed. The very small number of pupils make this process very effective and pupils' strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified. The teacher knows his pupils very well and is able to support each one individually. Parents commented very positively about the very detailed feedback they regularly receive.
- The extremely small size and intimate culture of the school ensures that school leaders know the school and individuals well. They are well aware of strengths and weaknesses. There is some formal monitoring of teaching and learning but very regular contact provides the executive headteacher with information about how things are progressing.
- The small amount of pupil premium funding that the school receives is being spent wisely in targeting, wherever possible, the specific needs of the pupil. Effective tracking is now able to identify specifically what needs to be done to support a particular pupil. For example, new reading materials are being purchased to motivate and engage boys, in particular, and encourage them to enjoy reading more regularly.
- Sports funding is being used effectively to develop pupils' well-being. The school is a member of the local primary sports partnership and pupils attend Temple Sowerby School to access lessons and professional coaches. The teacher from Milburn coaches football and cricket. As a result, pupils have access to a wide range of sports and activities from archery to Kwik cricket, gymnastics to hockey. This partnership also allows pupils to participate in competitive and team games. For example, one Milburn pupil represents Temple Sowerby at football. Other pupils have participated as individuals in athletic and swimming events.
- A great deal of effort has been made to ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced. Detailed planning in English and mathematics enables lessons to be taught well and in depth. Good use is made of joint planning with staff from partner schools alongside advice and resources provided by subject associations to teach other subjects such as science, history and geography well and with increasing confidence.
- The school is a part of the local village community. A playgroup regularly uses school accommodation one morning a week. During the recent bonfire night celebrations on the village green outside the school, refreshments and snacks were provided by pupils and parents. Pupils have also organised a 'Bear Hunt' around the village for the Milburn playgroup. They sing carols at local events and participate in the village Christmas community lunch and celebrations. There is a strong sense of belonging and community and this helps to develop pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well.
- Despite the links with local schools, there remains an element of insularity which means pupils have limited exposure to life in modern Britain beyond the confines of their immediate environment. There are no links with schools with more diverse communities and, although tolerance and respect are clearly evident from the pupils' day-to-day behaviour, they are less well informed about the cultural diversity of modern Britain.
- The school continues, and will need to continue, to remain heavily dependent on the goodwill and support provided by the local schools in the cluster. The local authority continues to provide advice in monthly strategic improvement meetings and has been involved in monitoring off-site provision in science in a partner school.

■ The governance of the school

- Governance is now good. Governors are committed to ensuring that the school remains open and have a regular and very visible presence in the school, especially since most of them are also parents. They are very involved in many of the community activities that the school participates in, for example running the film club for the village children after school each Friday.
 - The governing body has been reconstituted and is a compact and determined group. They are continually looking to improve the composition of the group to ensure that there is a varied and balanced spread of appropriate skills. They have completed mandatory safeguarding training and take an active interest in the welfare of the pupils in the school.
 - Governors are well briefed about what is happening in the school. They have participated in a range of training activities to enable them to carry out their roles effectively and provide greater challenge to school leaders. A range of policies and procedures have been renewed and updated.
 - Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and have helped to tackle the issues which caused the school to go into special measures. They are looking at ways to enhance provision further. For example, they are aware of a lack of expertise to teach music and are exploring the possibilities of employing a local specialist teacher to provide greater quality in this area.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils feel very safe and are very well looked after. The school is a close-knit family. Parents are very positive about the care their children receive.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

is good

- Pupils have benefited greatly from the fact that the staffing difficulties which had affected the school in the past have been resolved. One teacher now teaches pupils regularly and this has ensured continuity and consistency in their learning.
- Pupils know, trust and respect their teacher very well and very positive working relationships have been established. As a result, pupils have responded enthusiastically, are working hard and are making good progress across a wide range of subjects. They enjoy their learning.
- Staff absence has been infrequent and, on those very few occasions when this has occurred, good arrangements are in place to ensure pupils' education is not interrupted.
- Pupils benefit from the individual support and tuition they receive on a day-to-day basis. This is possible because the teacher knows his pupils extremely well and is able to respond immediately when any individual is uncertain or struggling in lessons.
- The pace of learning in lessons is good. One governor remarked that this is because 'pupils have nowhere to hide'. Learning tends to continue relentlessly as pupils are moved on from one task to the next.
- The teaching of English is thoroughly planned to meet the needs of the varying ages in the class. In a mathematics lesson, pupils were set different problems to solve. They were challenged and when their concentration faltered or they were unsure about next steps, skilful questioning by the teacher enabled them to proceed and solve the problem on their own. Pupils get plenty of practice to calculate and use number, but evidence from books shows that they have fewer opportunities to solve problems in practical and real-life situations.
- Teaching in other subjects such as science, history and geography has also improved as the teacher has gained confidence and experience and utilised good resources and ideas.
- The school makes very good use of its links with partner schools, especially Temple Sowerby Primary School, where pupils attend for some of their lessons, especially in science, physical education and French taught by a specialist linguist. Older pupils are able to use sentences to answer questions about themselves and their favourite pets. Younger pupils recognise and are able to pronounce some simple everyday words.
- Pupils read well and regularly at home and at school. They are well supported in guided reading sessions by effective questioning which enables pupils to show a good understanding of the text they are reading. Pupils' reading is above the standard expected for their age although boys can be careless in recognising words correctly. They often speed read through the text, making some silly mistakes in recognising some words. Such carelessness could lead to misunderstanding of more complex text in the future.
- The quality of written feedback in English and mathematics is detailed and informative. This is complemented by regular and immediate verbal feedback in lessons. However, there is less evidence to show that pupils respond as carefully to the written feedback and advice.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- This is a very small and intimate school where every pupil feels they belong and looks upon school as part of their extended family.
- Pupils are extremely well cared for because all adults who work in the school know each pupil so well that they are very aware of any mood changes. Pupils have confidence in the adults and discussion and communication is easy. Any personal problems are solved sympathetically and sensitively. Adults are able to identify and support any child who feels vulnerable or has personal concerns very quickly. Response is immediate and all safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously.
- The school is fully inclusive and equality of opportunity is clearly in the culture which is intrinsic to the school. Pupils are very confident when they mix with other pupils and adults. They take responsibility seriously. Pupils work very well together without being asked; they play together enthusiastically and they help and support one another so that they all make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities each week to mix and learn with children their own age at Temple Sowerby School. These links are essential to enable pupils to develop their social skills and provide a broad and balanced education beyond the confines of their village environment.
- Relationships are very positive and there are no incidents of bullying. Pupils were very adamant that this 'just doesn't happen'. They are very protective of one another.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils really enjoy their learning and engage enthusiastically with all the activities and tasks set for them. They appreciate the challenges set and interact readily with each other and their teacher to ask and answer questions.
- Pupils show great maturity and are able to work independently as well as collaboratively. They are very resilient. There is no disruption in lessons.
- Conduct is exceptional. Pupils greet adults and visitors to the school warmly and ask if they can help. They are very welcoming and inquisitive. Older pupils are able to articulate opinions and express views with confidence.
- Attendance is very good and pupils have to have a very good reason to miss a day at school. They are also very punctual at the start of the day.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Stable staffing arrangements and much improved teaching over the last 18 months have enabled all three junior-age pupils to enjoy their learning and make generally good progress not only in their reading, writing and mathematics, but also across an increasing range of other subjects.
- Results for the pupils who completed Key Stage 1 and 2 last summer were very positive. At Key Stage 1, there were good outcomes especially in reading and mathematics. At Key Stage 2, higher levels were attained in all subjects, reflecting good progress.
- Boys are particularly motivated by use of number and make especially good progress in mathematics. Their writing, although increasingly imaginative, is often let down by poor handwriting and insufficient care being taken of spelling and punctuation. Boys are often reluctant to correct their mistakes.
- Achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics has improved, especially in science, history and geography. In science, older pupils benefit from and enjoy regularly completing and writing up experiments. In history, they recently completed a topic on the Anglo-Saxons which enabled pupils to understand what life was like in an Anglo-Saxon village using contemporary sources and artefacts, including those linked to the Sutton Hoo burial site.

School details

Unique reference number	112183
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10005417

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Russell Clark
Executive Headteacher	Louise Anderton
Telephone number	017683 61514
Website	www.milburn.cumbria.sch.uk
Email address	head@milburn.cmbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 January 2014

Information about this school

- This is an extremely small school. There are only three pupils in total, one in each of the Years 3, 4 and 5.
- One young child started to attend the Nursery a matter of a few weeks ago.
- There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups and none whose first language is not English.
- There are no pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- The school receives pupil premium funding for one pupil. This is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Although most lessons take place at Milburn School, several half-day sessions are held in classes at Temple Sowerby Primary school a few miles away. This enables pupils to work alongside other children and participate in science, physical education and French lessons as well as join in assemblies.
- There is one full-time teacher at the school and a teaching assistant has very recently been employed to work with the child in the Nursery.
- A new executive headteacher, from a nearby school, took up post in September.

Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised a wide range of associated documentation. This included strategic improvement meeting reports and evidence of classroom monitoring as well as individual data relating to pupils' achievement and progress.
- In addition, he examined documentation relating to safeguarding and governance.
- He met with the executive headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors.
- Discussions were held with all three junior school pupils as well as with the teacher and teaching assistant at the school.
- A meeting was held with two representatives from the local authority.
- Discussions were also held with six parents representing all the pupils in the school, including the child who has recently started attending the Nursery. Her Majesty's Inspector completed three joint lesson observations with the executive headteacher and watched her give feedback.
- In addition, he completed a book scrutiny covering all the pupils' English, mathematics, science and topic work and listened to pupils reading.
- The Nursery provision has only been open for a few weeks. As a result, it is too early to make judgements. Her Majesty's Inspector did however check provision and talked to the teaching assistant who is managing the setting to ensure that safeguarding arrangements were secure and that provision at this early stage was of a suitable standard.

Inspection team

Leszek Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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