

Milford Primary School

Chevin Road, Milford, Derbyshire DE56 0QH

Inspection dates

7–8 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and governors have responded positively to the outcomes of the last inspection to secure rapid school improvement.
- The headteacher's vision of excellence for the school has given staff clear direction and raised expectations for pupils' achievements. Staff have a renewed sense of purpose as a result.
- Subject leaders have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have well-developed plans showing what needs to be done to improve pupils' outcomes further.
- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors strike a successful balance between meeting the needs of the pupils and those of the community the school serves.
- Safeguarding procedures and systems are strong. Staff and governors place the highest priority on reducing the risk of harm to pupils.
- Pupils are motivated and enthusiastic learners because teachers' planning considers pupils' individual learning needs.
- Pupils achieve well as they progress through the school. The least able, pupils who are disadvantaged, and pupils who have special educational needs or disability make progress which is at least good and this helps them to attain well.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school's values are evident in a curriculum that teaches responsibility, diversity and fairness.
- Pupils' attendance is consistently high. Pupils' attitudes to learning and each other are good.
- Children make a good start to their education in the early years. They benefit from the high expectations and aspirations of staff and the recently improved classroom provision.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not use their assessment of pupils' progress well enough to maximise their learning in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not use sufficiently challenging questions often enough to deepen pupils' learning and understanding.
- Staff do not plan well enough for the use of outdoor learning activities in the early years.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the use of assessment across all subjects to ensure that pupils make progress which is at least good in all areas of the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teachers' and teaching assistants' questions to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding of subjects is deepened and embedded.
- Ensure that the outdoor provision in the early years is well planned to extend children's learning and that children are clear about what they are learning outdoors, and why.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders have ensured that the school has made strong progress since its last inspection. They have addressed the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection with a sense of urgency, and this has brought about significant improvements in pupils' outcomes in a short time. They have improved procedures for the management of the performance of staff, using this successfully to address any underperformance and promote key priorities in moving the school forward.
- The headteacher has been a major feature of the school's turn-around. She has communicated her exceptionally clear vision for the school to staff and governors very effectively, and they share her ambition and high aspirations for every pupil.
- The headteacher has reviewed all aspects of the school and its performance, prioritising her actions to maximise their impact in a short time. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms has improved, with procedures for recording information on pupils' progress much more robust than at the time of the last inspection.
- Subject leaders have a renewed sense of purpose – understanding their roles better and rising to the challenge of increased accountability for their actions in securing improvements in pupils' outcomes. Their contribution to securing further school improvement is increasing because the headteacher has delegated responsibilities so effectively.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They use a wide range of information to assist in setting priorities for further school improvement. An example of this is the recent review of the school's aims and values which has included consultation with pupils and parents.
- Leaders monitor the academic progress and social welfare of each child with great diligence. They use this information to identify support strategies for children of different abilities. For example, pre-learning tasks to prepare the least able for the next stages in their mathematics learning, and activities involving external expertise specifically directed at the most able to extend their skills further in a range of subjects such as art and physical education (PE). These actions have resulted in accelerated progress for the majority of pupils, and particularly the least able.
- The school's values of 'care, share, respect and learn' are woven throughout the curriculum. The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is evident in their attitudes to each other and their work. Focused topic weeks highlight the importance of preparing pupils to live in a multicultural society, as do links with another school in an inner-city setting.
- Pupils celebrate the fundamental British values of democracy through elections to the school council, visiting and canvassing Parliament through petitions on issues such as the protection of hedgehogs. Pupils show tolerance and respect towards adults and classmates, while experiencing service to others through charitable collections and singing for older community residents.
- Leaders use the additional funding provided through the pupil premium very effectively, looking beyond direct adult support within the classroom to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. In addition to monitoring the performance of disadvantaged pupils assiduously, leaders have ensured that this group of pupils are given every chance to participate and excel in all aspects of timetabled and extra-curricular activities.
- Leaders use the additional funding from the physical education and sports grant to very good effect. Not only have they ensured that teachers have received additional training to improve their teaching and coaching skills, but they have also increased participation rates for pupils in a variety of traditional and less traditional activities. For example, in 2015, all key stage 2 pupils received tuition in karate as part of the PE curriculum, with all achieving their yellow belt and a number of pupils choosing to extend their skills through regular attendance at a local club.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school's leadership. The level of support provided by the local authority has been reduced over time as it has become clear that the school's leadership is moving the school forward at pace.
- Assessment practices are underdeveloped in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, leaders and teachers do not yet have a clear enough view on the progress and attainment of pupils in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.

■ The governance of the school

- Governance has strengthened significantly since the last inspection. During discussions with the inspector, governors' enthusiasm and ambition for each child to succeed could not have been made clearer. They are impatient for excellence in all aspects of the school. Minutes from governors' meetings illustrate their ability to ask searching and challenging questions of school leaders.
 - Governors have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are well organised to maximise the variety of talents and skills they bring to the school. This allows them to hold school leaders to account for improving the outcomes for all pupils, with great success.
 - Governors are keenly aware of the importance of the school within the local community. They use different methods to consult with parents and to gauge parental opinion, including 'surgeries' run by the chair of the governing body. However, since the last inspection, they have rightly placed a greater emphasis on raising pupils' academic outcomes while maintaining the school's caring and nurturing ethos. As a result, pupils' outcomes in key stages 1 and 2 have improved.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher and governors place the highest priority on keeping pupils safe and are constantly striving to reduce the risk to pupils. The headteacher and safeguarding governor regularly review and analyse well-kept incident records, using this information to strengthen practice further. Staff and governors' training is current and leaders use regular safeguarding audits to ensure that practice is up to date and as effective as possible.
 - Pupils' personal, social and health education is a strength of the school. Year 6 pupils, for example, explained to the inspector their awareness of the risks posed by, and ways to keep themselves safe from, different forms of abuse. Regular curriculum input from external visitors such as the local police community support officer (PCSO) and representatives of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) underlines the school's commitment to keeping pupils safe from harm.
 - Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that adults will address any issues, such as bullying, quickly and effectively. Parents, spoken to by the inspector at the start of the school day, agreed with this, with a number sharing examples of the openness of staff to their concerns and the speed with which concerns are addressed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers plan lessons that take account of the different ability levels of pupils in the mixed-age classes of key stages 1 and 2. Pupils usually know what they are learning and why, with most being able to identify what they need to do to improve further through the consistent use of target statement cards in their work books.
- The school's thoughtfully developed pupils' assessment and tracking system, introduced this year, has ensured that teachers identify pupils' learning needs precisely in reading, writing and mathematics. This has been particularly successful in accelerating the progress of less-able pupils in mathematics, where teaching strategies have secured basic number and calculation skills. For the most able pupils, who are secure mathematicians, there are increased opportunities to use and apply their skills and knowledge.
- Pupils are industrious in their lessons and eager to learn. Pupils of different abilities and pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils feel appropriately challenged in their work. For example, one Year 6 pupils told the inspector, 'I like the teachers because they know our strengths and weaknesses and how far we can go.'
- Work in pupils' books is presented consistently well throughout the school. In their writing and their reading, pupils use their well-developed knowledge of phonics, the sounds that letters make, to spell or pronounce tricky or unusual words. This helps them to write and read with fluency from an early age. Key stage 1 pupils read fluently to the inspector from books that were well matched to their ability. Pupils are eager readers who enjoy reading and are well supported from home.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is a consistent feature across the school. On occasion, teachers do not review pupils' corrections diligently and misconceptions are not addressed promptly.
- Teachers make good use of enrichment activities and specific topic weeks to promote and celebrate equality and diversity. The inspector observed an example of this during a Year 5 and 6 lesson that was part of a topic week on India. The teacher provided pupils with extracts of poetry that highlighted aspects of Indian life, such as poverty and limited access to education. Using drama and performance to develop their understanding of these issues, pupils later expressed their thoughts and opinions, which were often heart-felt and insightful, in writing.

- Teachers' and teaching assistants' questioning skills are not consistently effective in stretching pupils' learning and understanding. Too often, opportunities are lost to challenge pupils' thinking even further in order to deepen and embed their learning. As a result, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of factual information, but their reasoning skills and ability to bring different elements of their learning together is limited.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils take pride in their school, their appearance and their work. Teachers and teaching assistants treat all pupils with dignity and respect and are very effective role models for pupils.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations. They are particularly aware of online safety, the risks associated with social media and who to talk to if they have a concern. By Year 6, pupils are knowledgeable about issues such as protecting their identity when using the internet, cyber bullying and 'Bikeability'.
- By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are eager to take on increasing roles of responsibility. Pupils understand that elections to the school council and activities to support charities are part of their preparation as future citizens living in a democratic society.
- School leaders are vigilant to all forms of risk to pupils such as extreme views and domestic violence. Pupils and parents report little bullying in school and the very few experiences of derogatory or offensive name-calling are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of collaboration when asked to work together. However, there are occasions when some pupils are less good at listening to, and considering, the views of others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well as they move around the school and at playtimes. They show respect and consideration for each other and adults.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive. There is no low-level disruption. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and pupils are eager to meet these expectations.
- Attendance is above the national average and there is virtually no persistent absenteeism. Pupils are punctual and parents do much to support this.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the last inspection. In 2015, pupils' attainment in key stages 1 and 2 exceeded national figures in reading, writing and mathematics. This represented a particular improvement for key stage 2 pupils over previous years. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Children enter the early years at levels of development that are broadly typical for their age. By the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment exceeded that seen nationally in 2014 and 2015. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels is above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- By the end of key stage 2, historical information shows that attainment was typically below that seen nationally. However, in 2015, there was a significant improvement, with all pupils attaining at age-related expectations or above. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels was broadly in line with national averages, given the small cohort size.
- Historical information shows that pupils make good progress over time. In 2015, as a result of improved teaching and learning, and raised teacher aspirations for pupils' academic achievements, the least able pupils made particularly strong progress. This enabled them to attain at a much higher level than was the case, previously. Although the most able pupils made the levels of progress expected for their age, they did not make more than expected progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress as they work their way towards the end of key stage 2. As a result, the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally close by the end of key stage 2.

- Outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs or disability exceed those of similar pupils nationally and, in reading and mathematics, the gaps between this group of pupils and other pupils, nationally, were closed in 2015 because of the good progress they made.
- Leaders review pupils' progress at least termly and teachers use the information from the school's assessment system very effectively and quickly to identify and address any pupil underachievement.
- Current pupil assessment information, and work seen by the inspector in pupils' books, shows that the majority of pupils make progress which is at least good in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs or disability, and the least able pupils continue to make rapid progress and this is helping to close any attainment gaps between them and other pupils, nationally.

Early years provision

is good

- Leaders' decision to create a specific class for the early years, following the last inspection, has strengthened the overall provision for children. Staff and parents told the inspector that they believe this action has had a significant impact on raising achievement in the early years. This belief is confirmed in assessment information for 2015 which shows that children attain well in all areas of their development.
- Children make good progress in the early years. The vast majority of children enter at levels of development which are broadly typical for their age. The proportion achieving a good level of development consistently exceeds the national figure by the time the children leave the early years. Consequently, children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The class teacher, who is also the early years leader, is rapidly increasing in experience and confidence because she has been very well supported by the headteacher and external consultants. Her vision for the early years is based on high aspirations for each child's outcomes. She places high expectations on the children and, as a result, the majority display good levels of concentration when undertaking, often quite challenging, tasks in the classroom.
- Children's reading, writing and mathematical skills are well developed by the time they leave the early years. Their proficiency in writing is the result of learning tasks that support physical development, as well as the effective teaching of key skills such as phonics. Topics and themes give meaning to children's learning. Their enjoyment and enthusiasm for their learning is clear to see. For example, during a lesson on writing instructions which was observed by the inspector, the teaching assistant involved children in the weighing and measuring of ingredients to make biscuits. At the same time, the teacher worked with another group on writing the instructions. The children were confident in their writing and used their wide phonetic knowledge if they were unsure of a spelling, for example, using 'drigh', as a plausible alternative attempt at spelling 'dry'.
- The class teacher keeps extensive assessment information on each child. This helps her to plan for the next steps in learning and ensures that she utilises the skills of the teaching assistant well. Currently, the assessment system is computer based and parental access to this information is very limited. However, the teacher asks parents to complete 'proud moment slips' which provide valuable child development information from home. The teacher uses this information to support her assessment and planning of next steps in learning that will further enhance children's development.
- Children are thoughtful and considerate towards each other because adults ensure that the school's values are put into practice at an early stage. Children quickly adopt routines and respond promptly to instructions. They are regular and prompt attenders.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and the provision meets statutory requirements. Staff are vigilant for any signs of harm and undergo regular training to ensure that their knowledge is current. Children benefit from the positive relationships between the early years team and parents. Parents feel valued by staff and believe that communication is very effective.
- Teachers' planning does not maximise the learning potential of the outdoor provision. Children are not clear about what they are expected to learn outdoors because there is not enough guidance provided. Activities are not linked closely enough to the planning for other areas of childhood development and, as a result, pupils' concentration wanes when they are outdoors.

School details

Unique reference number	112788
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10009123

This inspection 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	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Taylor
Headteacher	Paula Fox
Telephone number	01332 841316
Website	www.milfordprimaryschool.org.uk
Email address	headteacher@milford.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2014

Information about this school

- Milford Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. It serves a semi-rural village with a number of pupils travelling from surrounding villages to attend the school.
- Key stage 1 and 2 pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. Children in the Reception class attend full time. Following the previous inspection, they are now taught in their own classroom.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average. This funding provides extra support for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are children looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above the national average.
- In 2015, the school met national floor targets for key stage 2 achievement.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The headteacher has been in post for 18 months.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a number of lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. He observed the teaching of early reading skills and pupils were heard to read. The inspector also talked to pupils about their school and looked at examples of pupils' work in all year groups to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Meetings were held with the school's senior leaders and representatives of the governing body. The Inspector also spoke to the school's local authority associate adviser.
- The inspector spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day. He also received an email addressed to Ofsted. He considered the 25 responses to the Ofsted online parent questionnaire (Parent View) to provide any further parental opinion. The inspector also considered the three responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents including: the school's own self-evaluation, the school's most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils, information relating to the safeguarding of pupils and the school's most recent data relating to the attendance and punctuality of pupils.
- The inspector considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

Stephen McMullan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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