

Milford Junior School

Glenthorne Avenue, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 4PG

Inspection dates	12–13 July 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
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Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders and an improved governing body have effectively tackled weaknesses in the school's provision identified at the previous inspection.
- The headteacher, her deputy, year group and subject leaders all check the quality of teaching and learning regularly, rigorously and systematically.
- Teaching has improved and is now good. Teachers have high expectations and use pupil assessment data very effectively when planning their lessons. They follow the school's policy in marking work thoroughly and giving good guidance to pupils.
- Pupils' attainment has improved, in most cases to at least average, and many pupils now attain above-average standards, especially in writing.
- Progress in all subjects has improved since the previous inspection. All groups, including the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well.
- Previous gaps in the rates of progress, particularly between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school, have narrowed significantly.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They say that they enjoy lessons and other activities put on by the school, such as clubs and visits.
- Parents and the pupils themselves confirm that pupils of all ages feel safe in school. They also feel that staff look after them well.
- Pupils enjoy the school curriculum and there are particular strengths in music and sport.
- Parents, staff and pupils recognise the considerable improvements that have taken place since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attendance is below average, especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils with learning difficulties do not always get the level of work necessary to help them make rapid progress when being supported outside the classroom.
- Pupils do not make the same progress in problem solving and reasoning in mathematics as in other aspects of the subject.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue with the efforts to improve regular attendance, particularly of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Ensure that pupils getting additional support outside the classroom always do work which has enough challenge to help them make rapid progress.
- Increase the rate of progress in mathematics by providing pupils with more problem-solving and reasoning activities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and her deputy have worked very hard and successfully to improve the school considerably since the previous inspection. Other staff and governors have supported the drive for improvement, which has resulted, in particular, in better teaching and achievement.
- Senior leaders know the school's strengths and areas for further improvement well. They plan in detail to ensure that areas which had been of concern have been addressed, and they map out further improvements carefully. The headteacher has backed this up with rigorous checking of teaching and learning. School leaders and governors now hold staff accountable for progress and teachers are rewarded on this basis.
- Subject and year-group leaders have developed their role considerably since the previous inspection. They check the quality of teaching and learning as well as supporting colleagues and helping them to develop their teaching expertise further.
- Staff report that they are given good opportunities for professional development. Staff morale is high. This has been a significant factor in the improved teaching and pupils' achievement, including that of the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have used the pupil premium funding effectively, notably to reduce the gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school. For example, there are now more trained support staff in place.
- The school's curriculum has been increasingly effective in enabling pupils to improve their progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Pupils also enjoy a wide range of clubs and visits such as the residential trip to the Isle of Wight. One of the school's strengths is music provision. Many pupils take advantage of the specialist music teaching and the opportunities to perform.
- The curriculum is further enhanced by the strong attention the school gives to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors saw this, for example, in the range of information around the school on ecological issues and displays about different religions. The school makes pupils aware of core values such as democracy and responsibility. Pupils demonstrated this to inspectors when talking about their roles as, for example, members of their 'Kids Council' and play leaders.
- School leaders have used additional sports funding effectively to raise the school's sporting profile. They have purchased equipment, provided training for staff and more opportunities for pupils, for example in swimming and inter-school sport.
- The school is very inclusive in its approach to trying to ensure that all pupils are well cared for and get the same opportunities.
- There are links with other local schools and colleges. For example, the school benefits from staff expertise and facilities in the nearby college.
- The local authority has worked closely with the school to address the issues from the previous inspection. The level of support has lessened, because the local authority recognises the increasing success of the school and its ability to generate further improvement from within.
- Staff and governors work very hard to engage more parents in school activities and their children's learning. This has been partially successful. School leaders know that they must continue to work hard; for example, to instil in parents an understanding of the desirability of regular attendance. School leaders recognise that improving the attendance of a small number of pupils remains a priority.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body is much more effective than it was at the time of the previous inspection. It acknowledges that it was not active and knowledgeable enough in holding the school to account. Governors have since rectified this. They have had extensive training for their roles. Governors are now active in checking learning for themselves and talking regularly to staff and pupils.
 - Governors ensure that their training in child protection awareness is up to date. They now have a good understanding of strengths and areas for development in teaching and they know how well Milford pupils achieve in comparison to pupils elsewhere. Governors understand the impact of pupil premium funding on achievement. They also understand the intricacies of assessment data and how it can be used to support pupils' learning.

- Governors work hard to communicate with parents, for example through the website and regular newsletters. As well as supporting the school, governors now challenge the leadership much more effectively, for example by asking searching questions about the effective use of additional funding and staff deployment. School policies are up to date.
- Governors oversee the process by which staff are supported and their performance is appraised. Compared to two years ago, governors now play a significant and valued role in school improvement and the school's recent progress shows that it has the capacity to make even more strides towards excellence.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors work hard to ensure that vulnerable pupils feel safe. They make sure that safeguarding policies are robust and that all staff, and pupils themselves, understand their responsibilities in keeping the school a safe environment. For example, staff teach pupils about the various types of bullying and how to deal with it and work with a local special school to raise awareness of the importance of care and welfare. They also make sure that pupils understand the dangers associated with radicalisation. They have regular training in safeguarding issues and know the importance of vigilance and keeping the appropriate people informed about any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers set work which is appropriate to the learning needs of pupils. A particular strength is the quality of feedback which teachers give pupils. Teachers follow the school's policy on marking consistently and giving detailed and constructive feedback on how pupils can improve their work further. Pupils know their targets.
- The leadership's systematic checking of teaching is confirmed in the monitoring records, along with the evidence of extensive opportunities for teachers to develop their skills and confidence. This results partly from collaborative work done with staff from other schools in the local partnership and from the support of external consultants. Staff told inspectors how much they value the support they receive.
- Teachers work hard to improve the learning of those pupils in danger of underachieving. For example, the school has a phonics programme for the benefit of those pupils whose language and reading skills are below expectations when they join Year 3. (Phonics refers to letters and the sounds they make.)
- Teachers ensure that the most able pupils now make good progress. These pupils do challenging tasks in writing which enable them to reach a high level of attainment. Teachers ensure that pupils develop good literacy skills when studying subjects outside of literacy lessons, such as science and history.
- The teaching of reading has improved, as the school has developed a well-resourced and more systematic programme of regular reading at school. However, the amount of reading which pupils do at home is variable.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved, as is evident in the greater progress made. However, some teachers are less confident in teaching problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics, and school leaders recognise this as an area for the school to work on further.
- Support staff are effective in improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special needs and/or disabilities in the classroom. Inspectors saw this in lessons, when the support staff were working with small groups of pupils. However, when support staff are working with small groups outside of lessons, the progress made is sometimes slower. This is because the resources and tasks set do not always give the pupils the opportunity to make the more rapid progress of which they are capable.

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 feel safe and well cared for in school. Most parents and pupils confirm this. The quality of care has contributed to the good progress which most pupils make. The school makes effective use of facilities such as its nurture room.
- The morning club, introduced about two years ago, has been very popular with a substantial number of pupils from within the school and from the on-site infant school. It provides breakfast and a range of play activities which make for a healthy and enjoyable start to the school day.

- Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy the opportunity to take responsibility. They like their Kids Council, and older pupils become sports leaders and play leaders.
- There are good links between Year 3 staff and the infant school, from which most of the Milford pupils transfer, so that the new pupils settle well into school.
- The school gives an appropriately high priority to teaching pupils how to be safe. Pupils learn, for example, about the importance of e-safety.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It is not outstanding because there are some pupils with challenging behaviour, which the school manages well. There is a very positive learning ethos in lessons; for example, pupils are keen to contribute ideas and read out their work, and their classmates listen well to each other.
- Pupils behave well in the playground, around school and in assemblies.
- School records confirm the good behaviour. Pupils know that behaviour is not always exemplary but they are confident that bullying is not an issue and that their teachers deal with any incidents well. There was an incident of racist comments recently and the school managed it well.
- The great majority of pupils act very responsibly. They complement their very positive attitude towards learning with enjoyment of activities outside the classroom. Pupils are invariably polite and friendly towards visitors.
- Attendance has varied in recent years and is currently just below average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved but is still below that of other pupils. The school works hard to impress upon parents the importance of regular attendance and the attendance/welfare officer works to support the families involved. The school recognises that they must still focus on improving attendance and thereby help the pupils concerned make even more progress.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- The attainment and progress of pupils currently in the school have improved since the previous inspection.
- The school now has a much stronger focus on using assessment data and regular progress meetings to identify those pupils in danger of underachieving, and then supporting them. This has been instrumental in improving progress. These pupils now get more systematic support. The new assessment system in place makes it impossible to compare current assessments with national test data from previous years. However, analysis of the school's new assessment results, along with extensive analysis of pupils' work done over the past year and currently, shows that many more pupils than before are now reaching national expectations or progressing at a faster rate than is expected nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities now achieve much better than at the previous inspection. Although there is still a gap between their rate of progress and that of pupils in the school, it has narrowed considerably. This is due to the more focused support for these pupils.
- The most able pupils achieve well. Their progress has improved as the result of teachers' higher expectations. It is particularly evident in their writing. Pupils take pride in their writing. This can be seen in their very good presentation and the range and depth of work. Inspectors saw good-quality writing not only in English books but in work completed in other subjects.
- Reading skills in the past were below average, partly because several pupils read very little at home. Reading standards have improved and pupils make much more rapid progress because the school now gives reading a higher priority, on a daily basis, and also works hard to engage parents. Inspectors heard pupils reading during the inspection. Several pupils read with levels of enjoyment, fluency and accuracy which were good for their age.
- Attainment and progress have improved in some aspects of mathematics, although problem solving and reasoning are less evident in pupils' work, so these aspects remain areas for further development.
- Attainment and progress in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics are mostly in line with, or above, expectations.

School details

Unique reference number	123723
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10017406

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shaun Kitto
Headteacher	Sarah Elliott
Telephone number	01935 474 477
Website	www.milfordjuniors.com
Email address	Milfordjuniors@educ.somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those that are looked after) is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations of attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a 'Morning Club' which provides breakfast and activities before the school day begins.
- The school website meets requirements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited several classes, mostly jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher, to observe learning and behaviour.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading. They also looked extensively at pupils' work in all year groups.
- Inspectors met with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with five governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, information about safeguarding and assessment information about pupils' current progress.
- Inspectors analysed 35 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View). They also read several written comments from parents and talked with parents in the school playground.

Inspection team

John Laver, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Vaughan	Ofsted Inspector

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