

Milton Abbot School

Milton Abbot, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0PS

Inspection dates

18–19 September 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, senior and middle leaders have not fully resolved the inconsistencies in teaching. Too few pupils are currently making good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have not yet ensured that pupils make good progress in mathematics. The mathematical skills of fluency, reasoning and problem solving are not firmly established within teaching and, as a result, pupils do not make good progress in key stages 1 and 2.
- Some of the most able pupils do not achieve the higher standard that they should.
- Assessment in English is not yet accurate. Leaders have not embedded effective moderation in this area of the curriculum.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils vary. Teachers do not effectively encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Despite improved progress in reading in Years 5 and 6, pupils are not yet making good progress across the school in developing their reading.

The school has the following strengths

- The current headteacher and leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their actions are beginning to bring about the necessary improvements.
- The governing body is working effectively with senior leaders to monitor and challenge leadership at all levels to improve the school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. The school is a happy place that is well supported by parents and carers and the local community.
- Pupils are safe, and feel safe, at school.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average.
- Children in early years, including those in the relatively new pre-school provision, get off to a good start and make good progress in building their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Governors and senior leaders should ensure that the quality of leadership improves, so that middle leaders in English and mathematics raise pupils' attainment and progress in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders should ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in English improves, so that:
 - assessment is accurate and moderated effectively
 - in reading, pupils, particularly the most able, have a stronger grasp of the skills of comprehension, inference and deduction
 - pupils spell with increasing confidence and accuracy in their writing.
- Leaders should ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment improves in mathematics, so that:
 - teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics are raised, so that pupils' mathematical fluency is improved and the proportion reaching higher standards increases
 - the skills of reasoning and problem-solving are taught well and support pupils' good mathematical development.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher provides clear leadership. Since his appointment, he has improved aspects of the school's work. Nevertheless, currently, too few pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Leaders are aware that key stage 2 pupils' progress in mathematics has required improvement for the last three years. Their actions over time have had too little impact. A greater focus on this aspect by leaders has recently begun to improve some pupils' achievement in mathematics.
- Work by senior and middle leaders has not yet secured enough progress for the most able pupils, especially in mathematics.
- Leaders have planned the allocation of the pupil premium. Outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils are in line with those of their peers.
- Leaders are making better use of professional development to improve the quality of teaching and assessment and the rates of progress made by pupils. Progress is more evident where leaders have strong subject knowledge and are well trained. For example, the actions of leaders are beginning to have an impact in ensuring that pupils are making better progress in writing.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have been supported to establish credible plans to improve the quality of teaching and learning, but their actions have not yet achieved consistently good progress for pupils.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum that promotes British values through the 'Brilliant Britain' approach. Teaching of respect and equality happens where possible across the curriculum. Pupils talk about these values fluently, and comment on how they affect their lives at school.
- The school develops the spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum well. Leaders recognise the rural isolation of their community and build reflection and discussion of personal, social and economic education into lessons and assemblies.
- External support from the local authority is now more effective. Previously, external advice was sometimes conflicted and did not have notable impact. More recently, school improvement advisers have helped leaders to identify the precise actions needed to address issues.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is stronger following good training. The school has recruited additional members since the previous inspection. Governors now have greater knowledge and understanding of how to hold leaders to account and drive improvement. For example, they have ensured that leaders have improved the school's processes for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress.
- Governors have a better grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have established an Action Plan Monitoring Group, which meets regularly with the

headteacher to ensure progress against the three key priorities for school improvement.

- Governors promote the school's values within the local community. They give tirelessly of their time to support school leaders and staff in the development of plans to improve the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that the safeguarding policy is up to date and procedures are fully understood by staff. Staff are well trained and supported by knowledgeable leaders. There is a clear process for reporting concerns when these arise.
- Administrative staff complete the necessary checks on the suitability of staff, volunteers and visitors to the school. Staff and visitors receive a safeguarding briefing upon arrival and pupils know which visitors have been checked. Recruitment checks are thorough and records well maintained.
- Parents confirm that their children are safe at school. Pupils have opportunities to learn about how to keep safe. Within their lessons and assemblies, pupils learn about the risks that they may face inside and outside school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' subject knowledge is developing. However, teachers are not as confident in teaching mathematics as they are with reading and writing. As a result, assessment in mathematics has not been accurate and therefore interventions are not put in place swiftly when pupils are falling behind.
- Teachers are not preparing the most able pupils well in mathematics, so they are not regularly completing activities to develop their reasoning and problem solving. Leaders have recently introduced a more intensive training plan to support the development of this subject, but it is too soon to be able to measure the impact.
- In key stage 2, the teaching of spelling is inconsistent. Too many pupils are making simple errors in common words as teachers' expectations are too low.
- Some of the most able pupils are challenged appropriately. Pupils, particularly boys, are not expected to use a sophisticated range of punctuation to improve their writing.
- Teachers do not regularly ensure that the most able readers tackle challenging texts or comprehend, infer or deduct effectively. However, improvements in the teaching of reading are beginning to have an impact in Years 5 and 6.
- There has been a positive start in improving the quality of teaching of knowledge and skills across the wider curriculum. The school buys in specialist teachers for dance and music to widen the breadth of experience for pupils.
- School leaders have revised their approach to assessment recently. Pupils take more formal tests and assessments, which has ensured greater accuracy.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to most lessons, helping pupils to

develop their personal and social skills and maintain their concentration. On occasion, pupils receive too much direction in completing activities and this slows down their progress.

- Teaching of religious education covers an appropriate diversity of world religions. As a result, pupils are helped to develop their spiritual and cultural understanding well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Teaching assistants provide good support that develops the personal and social skills of the most vulnerable pupils well. Pupils take on positions of responsibility across the school.
- The emotional well-being of pupils is a priority in the school. This is a strength of the school and appreciated by the pupils. As a result, they develop confidence and resilience.
- The school council meets fortnightly to discuss issues of concern. Consequently, pupils feel involved in making decisions about the school, which improves their motivation. For example, recently, they asked the chair of the parish council to come into school to hear their worries about the busy road at the front of the school.
- Bullying is rare in this school and pupils know that staff will help them if they seek support. Pupils demonstrate respect for each other in lessons and around the school. Older pupils support younger pupils in the playground. Pupils demonstrate compassion, care and kindness.
- Parents are clear that their children feel safe. Pupils have opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe, staying healthy and positive relationships. Pupils enjoy assemblies, for example on football and tackling racism, and learning about coping with disabilities.
- Teachers place a clear emphasis on the core values for life. Pupils talk about how these make them more responsible and caring members of the school. For example, whole-school assemblies every Friday are a celebration of success with awards given out. Pupils say that they feel proud to receive them.
- The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and attendance by pupils is high. The physical education and sport premium funding is used well to support these clubs.
- Pupils have some understanding of British values, especially equality and respect. They are less clear on what laws are for and what democracy is.
- Levels of independence vary as pupils are too often over-reliant on the high number of adults who support them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Attendance rates and levels of persistent absence are better than national averages. Most pupils arrive at school on time and are ready for their lessons.
- Staff are following the school's behaviour policy and procedures consistently now. Pupils share this understanding of expectations.
- Behaviour in lessons is positive. Low-level disruption only occurs when pupils are insufficiently challenged by their teachers and so lose interest.
- Behaviour out of lessons, and on the playground, is mostly good. Pupils say that when games become too rough, staff intervene and calm things down.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The proportion of pupils making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics combined in the tests at the end of key stage 2 is below national averages and has been for the past two years.
- Some of the most able pupils are not making the progress that they should. Their progress in developing their reasoning and problem solving is not good.
- For the past two years, pupils' progress in mathematics has been in the lowest 20% of schools nationally. Work in books shows that pupils' progress in mathematics across the school is beginning to improve.
- Most pupils are on track with their phonic knowledge and can apply this successfully in their reading.
- Changes in the approach to teaching reading are helping pupils to improve their reading comprehension skills in Years 5 and 6. However, this is not consistent across the school and pupils' progress in developing their inferential and deductive reading skills is not consistently good across the school.
- Despite children achieving a good level of development in Reception, pupils do not make good progress across key stage 1 so that they achieve well in teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 1. This is because teachers' expectations of pupils are variable and do not help pupils to maintain the level of progress made during Reception Year.
- Moderation of teachers' assessments has not been sufficiently robust and changes to strengthen this are very recent. Until recently, pupils did not receive timely interventions to help them catch up. Teachers are now tracking pupils' progress systematically. As a result, when pupils fall behind in their work, teachers are planning for interventions more effectively.
- Pupils' handwriting is good in key stage 2. Pupils are joining their letters and taking pride in their written work.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of early years is strong. The leader has high expectations and has developed an exciting learning environment, both inside and outside the classroom. Children make

a positive start to their schooling.

- Early years staff, including the pre-school key workers, are well trained and share the early years leader's high expectations.
- The school has established a successful pre-school which is popular with parents. The pre-school provides appropriately for children aged two and three. The staff support the children well, with places for these children to rest and sleep if necessary. Staff develop children's understanding well across the prime areas of learning.
- The pre-school is a safe, calm and orderly place. Staff listen and respond sensitively, helping children to make good progress in developing their verbal and non-verbal communication. Transitions into school are well managed and early assessment establishes an appropriate starting point for teaching.
- The children interact well with key workers in the role-play area. They encourage cooperation, sharing and turn-taking.
- Assessment is consistent across early years and parents contribute to this. Teachers track the progress of each child, using national benchmarks to support assessment. As a result, teachers' planning and provision quickly build upon the interests of the children.
- Children show increasing levels of independence, motivation and engagement because of the staff's skilful intervention and questioning. Children, some aged two and three, plan their learning experiences for the next week with staff. As a result, staff stimulate children's exploration within different activities effectively.
- During the last two years, more children are exceeding expectations by the end of Reception because of strong teaching in the specific areas of literacy and mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	113258
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10058299

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Smerdon
Headteacher	Christopher Luxford
Telephone number	01822 870273
Website	www.miltonabbot.devon.sch.uk
Email address	head@miltonabbot.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 November 2016

Information about this school

- Milton Abbot Community Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are three classes and a pre-school.
- The governing body has established a pre-school, which offers places for children aged two to four years.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons jointly with the headteacher.
- A wide sample of pupils' work from every year group and a range of subjects was scrutinised.
- The inspector met and talked to several groups of pupils from key stage 2, as well as with pupils informally across the site.
- The inspector listened to a selection of pupils read and discussed the books they were reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, middle leaders and members of the governing body. Two telephone conversations took place with the school's local authority improvement partners.
- Information and other documentary evidence were evaluated, including that relating to safeguarding, school self-evaluation of recent outcomes, school improvement planning and external reviews.
- The inspector took account of 17 responses and 12 comments on the online questionnaire, Parent View, the 11 responses from pupils to their questionnaire, and the eight responses to the staff online survey. The inspector also spoke to 12 parents and grandparents at the beginning of both days of inspection.

Inspection team

Mark Lees, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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