

Milverton House School

Park Street, Attleborough, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV11 4NS

Inspection dates

29–31 January 2019

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although improving, the quality of teaching and learning is not yet consistently good across the school. As a result, pupils do not reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can learn, or consistently set work that is well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Pupils' progress is inconsistent across the school and in different subjects. There is no strategic overview of the curriculum.
- Senior leaders are new to post and do not yet have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- The drive for further improvement is hindered by the lack of a strong strategic development plan.
- Continuous provision in early years is not well developed. It does not support children's independent learning effectively.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is determined to improve the school. She and her new leadership team have made a positive start in improving teaching and standards. They ensure compliance with the independent school standards. Green shoots of improvement can be clearly seen.
- The new staff team is very committed and keen to improve its skills.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective. Pupils say they feel safe at school and are well looked after by adults.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. Pupils behave well and are keen learners. They are proud of their school.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally strong. Pupils have well-developed social skills.
- Leaders correctly identify and work to remove the barriers to learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils with SEND make strong progress from their starting points.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - sharing the best practice that exists within the school and in other schools locally, so that even more teaching is consistently good or better
 - building on the improvements already made, so that staff continue to develop their skills in modelling and explaining in order to further improve their teaching
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to use their mathematical skills in reasoning and problem solving
 - ensuring that teachers plan and set work that matches the varying needs and abilities of all pupils and challenges them to make good progress from their starting points and reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - developing the strategic view of the new headteacher to ensure that self-evaluation is accurate, underpinned by robust monitoring and used to drive school improvement
 - developing a clear, long-term plan for the school that guides and supports staff in improving teaching and outcomes for pupils
 - continuing to develop a rich, engaging curriculum, which meets the needs of all pupils and enables them to develop skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects.
- Improve the provision in early years, by:
 - improving the quality of the provision to support children's independent and investigative learning across all areas of the curriculum
 - ensuring that adults use every opportunity to challenge and extend children's thinking and reasoning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have a better understanding of the independent school standards than at the time of the last inspection. They have worked hard to ensure that appropriate policies, procedures and systems are in place. As a result, the independent school standards are now fully met.
- Since her appointment in September 2018, the new headteacher has worked sensitively to develop an accurate view of the school. Through building staff morale, she has successfully created a strong staff team whose members are fully committed to developing their skills and improving the school further.
- The headteacher has actively sought external advice and developed links with other schools to support her drive for improvement. Middle leadership roles in English, mathematics and science have been identified and new leaders empowered by the headteacher. They are keen to play their part in improving the school. However, the work of new leaders is not yet fully embedded in practice.
- Although the headteacher has introduced more regular checking of the quality of teaching and learning across the school, self-evaluation is not wholly accurate. A systematic approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact is not yet embedded. Consequently, areas for improvement are not clearly prioritised and a long-term plan for the development of the school is yet to evolve. Leaders do not have a clear strategic view of the school.
- The headteacher is keen for pupils and staff to achieve much more. She is taking steps to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes. She has introduced a cycle of performance management. Working with the deputy headteacher, she has provided support and guidance to help improve teaching practice and ensure greater consistency across the school. Actions taken by leaders are beginning to have an impact on teaching and learning.
- Professional development opportunities are now identified. Training is provided for all staff to further develop their skills and knowledge, particularly in the teaching of English and mathematics. Staff now share ideas and support one another to develop appropriate schemes of work.
- The school's leadership of provision for pupils with SEND is effective. The leader is knowledgeable and committed to providing pupils with additional needs with good support. Systems to identify pupils with SEND are effective, and timely intervention helps these pupils make good progress.
- The curriculum is successful in engaging pupils' interest and enthusiasm. For example, pupils in Year 2 talk in detail about their work on The Titanic and a previous topic on the Second World War. There are many opportunities for pupils to work with specialist teachers in a range of subjects, including art, music and modern foreign languages. The curriculum is under review. Leaders are working with all staff to develop a comprehensive overview of what is currently taught.
- The school is extremely successful in developing pupils' artistic, creative and sporting talents and skills. For example, there are opportunities to represent the school in a variety

of sporting events and to participate in local competitions such as the Nuneaton Festival of Arts, in which pupils are highly successful. The curriculum is also complemented by other enriching learning experiences, such as residential visits to France.

- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and sits at the heart of the school's ethos. Opportunities to reflect in awe and wonder at a discovery made or the chance to be still while listening to music enable even the very youngest children to become thoughtful and reflective members of the community.
- Pupils are now able to demonstrate a secure understanding of British values and relate them to events in school and in the wider community. Pupils of all ages show empathy for those less fortunate than themselves and develop a strong sense of right and wrong.
- The majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. They say that their child is happy at school, extremely well looked after and safe. Parents comment on the family atmosphere that pervades the school and the way in which each child is valued as a unique individual. Parents express confidence in the new leadership. Although parents value the focus on their child's personal and social well-being, some parents express a desire for more attention to be given to academic excellence.

Governance

- There are no formal governance arrangements at the school and nor is there a proprietorial body. The headteacher and senior leaders make almost all the decisions about school policies and procedures.
- Since the last inspection, weekly visits to the school and meetings with the headteacher by the proprietor's partner ensure that the proprietor has a clearer overview of the school. An educational adviser, commissioned to provide an external view on the effectiveness of the school, is beginning to moderate the headteacher's judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. However, as only one visit has taken place so far, it is too early to measure the impact of this work.
- The early years setting (which is also owned by the proprietor) and the school are beginning to support one another and discuss their work so that expertise is shared.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders rapidly addressed the safeguarding concerns raised at the last inspection and the new headteacher has continued to strengthen these. Comprehensive procedures and systems are now in place. Safeguarding policies are suitable and take note of the most up-to-date guidance. The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website. Staff are well trained and display a secure understanding of their responsibility to keep children safe. They are vigilant and know what to do if they have the slightest concern about a child. A strong safeguarding culture now exists in the school.
- Designated safeguarding leaders work together effectively. They are knowledgeable and well trained. They ensure that appropriate risk assessments are carried out. They support staff to be vigilant. Checks are carried out on volunteers and visitors to the school. Pre-employment checks are appropriately recorded in the single central register, which is

checked regularly by the headteacher.

- Pupils are confident that the school is a safe place. They know whom to talk to if they are worried or anxious about anything. The curriculum is used effectively to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. They demonstrate a secure knowledge of fire, road and water safety. Older pupils are particularly confident when talking about how to stay safe when using the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is much that is good, but there remain inconsistencies across the school.
- Since the last inspection, several new staff have joined the school. This is contributing to improvements and better progress by pupils. Training opportunities for staff and sharing the good practice that exists in the school have also improved the quality of teaching. However, the full impact is yet to be seen and leaders know there is more to be done to secure consistently good teaching for all pupils.
- Improvements in assessment practice are still in the early stages. Assessment in the past has not always been accurate. Teachers do not routinely take account of what pupils know and can do already. Leaders are beginning to work with staff to moderate pupils' work across year groups and with other schools on a more regular basis. A whole-school assessment system for recording pupils' achievements in English and mathematics has been introduced. Teachers feel confident using this now, and say that it is helping to ensure greater consistency and higher expectations across the school.
- Where teaching is stronger, there is an effective match of work to pupils' abilities. This is not the case across the whole school, however. Some pupils are not routinely challenged or encouraged to work independently. Occasionally, pupils repeat work or complete tasks they can already do. Consequently, pupils' learning slows and they do not make the progress of which they are capable. There is still work to be done to ensure that planned learning, especially for the most able, takes account of pupils' starting points.
- Progress also slows when pupils are unclear about what they are learning. Where teaching is weaker, adults do not model or explain clearly. Pupils misunderstand the task but try to complete the work to the best of their ability. Improvements in knowledge and understanding are not secured or skills developed. Pupils are left confused.
- The teaching of writing has been further improved since the last inspection. This is the result of training for staff and ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to write at length. Many pupils are beginning to write with flair and style. However, expectations remain low, particularly of basic skills such as handwriting, spelling and grammar.
- In mathematics, the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to reasoning and problem solving are not consistently provided to all pupils. Pupils are not regularly asked to explain or prove what they know. This limits their ability to explain in detail the methods they use and so reach the higher standards of attainment by the end of Year 6.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and pupils are confident in using their skills to tackle unknown words when reading. Teachers model sounds clearly and ensure that children do the same. Younger pupils, in particular, get off to a good start in learning to read.

Parents provide support in hearing their children read regularly at home.

- Teachers build effectively on these early reading skills. Regular opportunities to share high-quality texts enable pupils to develop their comprehension skills. For example, in Year 6, pupils read 'Goodnight Mister Tom' together, taking time to discuss unfamiliar words and the themes in the book. By the end of key stage 2, pupils read fluently and confidently. They use expression to bring their reading alive. Pupils can say which books they like and why. Pupils say that they enjoy reading.
- High-quality outcomes and strong progress are evident in specialist subjects such as art, music and modern foreign languages. Specialist teachers are skilled and knowledgeable, and engage pupils in their learning through the provision of interesting activities. Sequences of work are carefully planned to build up pupils' skills over time. Pupils attain good levels of competence in these areas of the curriculum.
- The teaching and support for pupils with SEND are good, resulting in strong progress. Interventions are carefully planned to meet pupils' specific needs. Additional adults give these pupils appropriate support and encouragement.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and productive. Teachers know their pupils well and work hard to engage pupils in their learning. Pupils follow instructions quickly and have a strong work ethic.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The importance placed on pupils' personal development and welfare is very visible in school. Leaders and staff are conscientious in their responsibility to ensure that the school provides a nurturing environment in which pupils can thrive and flourish. Staff know the pupils extremely well and they are encouraged to shine personally and individually.
- Staff treat pupils with consideration and ensure that everyone feels welcome and valued. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils are highly positive and based on mutual respect. Pupils listen carefully to adults and to one another. They display great sensitivity to the needs of others around school. Pupils have very good social skills and strong moral values.
- Leaders have implemented an effective programme of learning to support the personal, social and emotional development of pupils. Assemblies, for example, are used to challenge pupils' thinking and encourage them to be responsible citizens. Circle time provides valuable opportunities for pupils to discuss sensitive issues such as family relationships. Consequently, pupils display an excellent understanding of different social situations and know how to respond appropriately.
- Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of the different forms of bullying. They are confident that it does not happen in school, but if it did, they trust adults to help sort it out. Through their work on protective behaviours, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe.

- Pupils are articulate and confident. They are keen to talk about their work. They are highly inquisitive and curious. They show a fascination for soaking up knowledge, and love to inform others about what they have learned.
- Pupils are proud of their school and respond positively to opportunities to take on responsibilities and help others. Some run the tuck shop, helping younger children with their money, while others act as playground pals in supporting pupils at breaktimes. Prefects act as excellent role models for other pupils in the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and show good manners. They stand up when adults enter a classroom and hold doors open for visitors and each other. Pupils take turns, share equipment without argument and work cooperatively. The school is a calm, orderly environment with a warm, positive atmosphere.
- In classrooms, pupils respond positively to instructions from adults. They know what is expected from them and wait politely to be told what to do. On the occasions when teachers are telling them things they already know and can do, or when the work is too challenging, pupils remain well behaved.
- Pupils understand the newly revised behaviour policy and clearly explain the 'three Cs' or consequences. They talk confidently about the good behaviour of pupils across the school and like the 'golden egg' rewards.
- At break- and lunchtime, pupils play happily together. They utilise the space safely, showing a good awareness of those around them. In the dining room, they display good table manners and engage in appropriate conversation with those on their table.
- Pupils value their education and very few are absent unless through illness. Attendance is carefully tracked for individual pupils and for each class. Attendance rates have improved and are now similar to the rates found nationally for primary-aged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes are improving, but they are still not good across the whole school. Rates of progress from individual pupils' starting points continue to vary. Work in pupils' books shows that there is not yet consistently strong progress across the curriculum.
- Many pupils still do not reach their full academic potential. Expectations, while improving, are still not high enough. Teaching still lacks some challenge, which limits what pupils can achieve given their positive starting points.
- Standards in writing are improving as a result of more focused teaching. Improved subject knowledge through staff training is translating into improvements in the quality of pupils' work. More pupils are writing at length using an extensive appropriate vocabulary, particularly in key stage 2. Some pupils edit their work to further improve it, but this is not yet consistent practice across the school.

- By the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils' work and school assessment information show that more pupils are beginning to attain at greater depth, particularly in mathematics and reading than previously.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. The most able readers are fluent and read with expression. The teaching of phonics is effective in enabling pupils to tackle unknown words successfully when reading independently. Pupils display an obvious enjoyment of reading.
- Pupils with SEND receive appropriate support. This enables them to make good progress, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are well prepared for external entrance examinations. As a result, they achieve well in such tests and transfer successfully to secondary education.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because teaching is not yet consistently good and there are inconsistencies in the quality of provision.
- The majority of children enter early years with skills that are at least typical for their age. Often, many are more advanced. They are confident, articulate and independent in self-care skills.
- From these favourable starting points, too few children go on to exceed expectations by the end of early years, even though they are more than capable of doing so. This is beginning to improve as new staff get to know the children and have higher expectations of what they can do and achieve.
- The assessment of children in early years is developing. Recently appointed leaders are changing the assessment approaches to enable them to track children's progress more closely. They work with other staff and settings to moderate their judgements and ensure that these are accurate.
- The range and quality of activities that children access when working without an adult are inconsistent. While the activities may be engaging, they sometimes lack purpose. Some resources are old and tired and do not inspire children to fully engage in learning. Some activities limit what children can do and do not provide sufficient challenge to fully develop their skills.
- Adults interact with the children and know when to intervene. They ask questions to check what the child is doing or to help them complete an activity. However, not all adult interactions are effective in challenging children's thinking. Opportunities to extend children's learning are missed. As a result, children do not make connections and build on what they already know as quickly as they might.
- Children are curious and keen to engage. During the inspection, they were keen to talk to inspectors and show what they were doing. Moments of high focus and intense concentration are evident as children become deeply absorbed in the flow of learning. These are developing and becoming more frequent as adults plan more carefully to meet children's needs and interests.
- Children behave and play well together. Routines are well established and children know

what is expected. They understand taking turns, sharing and listening to adults. Children respond well to caring adults and relationships are strong.

- Adults know how to keep children safe at school. Leaders ensure that all welfare requirements are met. Appropriate risk assessments of the setting are carried out on a daily basis to ensure that the equipment and accommodation are safe to be used.
- Good links with parents are evident. They are welcomed and encouraged to play an active part in their children's learning journey. Parents are positive about their child's experiences in early years.

School details

Unique reference number	125789
DfE registration number	937/6091
Inspection number	10056214

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	122
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Simon Chamberlain
Headteacher	Susan Masters
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,830 to £7,050
Telephone number	024 7664 1722
Website	www.milvertonschool.com
Email address	reception@milvertonschool.com
Date of previous inspection	4–6 July 2017

Information about this school

- Milverton House School is an independent preparatory school that provides full-time education for boys and girls aged three to 11 years. The proprietor also owns an early years registered nursery at a different site, which is inspected separately by Ofsted.
- An individual proprietor owns the school. The proprietor's partner visits the school weekly to meet with the headteacher and feed back to the proprietor. The headteacher is solely responsible for the day-to-day running and organisation of the school.
- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are a wide range of other ethnic groups represented.

- A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The percentage of pupils with SEND is below the national average. No pupils currently have an education, health and care plan.
- The school's last standard inspection was from 4 to 6 July 2017. A monitoring inspection took place on 17 April 2018.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and middle leaders. An inspector spoke to the proprietor on the telephone and met with the proprietor's partner.
- The inspectors observed pupils learning and visited classrooms. Some of these visits were with the headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' books and looked at work across the curriculum.
- Pupils were spoken to formally and informally. An inspector heard pupils read. Inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms and at lunchtime, including outside on the playground.
- Inspectors talked to parents before school started. The 39 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 36 responses to the free-text service, were also considered.
- Inspectors took note of and analysed nine responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Various school policy documents were scrutinised, including those for keeping children safe. Records of monitoring and information about pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour were also discussed with leaders. The school's website was looked at in detail.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michael Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

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