

Inspection of a good school: Milborne Port Primary School

North Street, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 5EP

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 January 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The inspector is recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like coming to school. They are friendly and enjoy each other's company. Staff have high expectations for behaviour in class. Pupils respond to this, and most behave well. Occasionally, some disrupt others, but staff address this quickly.

In English and mathematics, pupils respond well to their learning. However, in some subjects, leaders have not made clear the important knowledge pupils need to know. Pupils do not build their knowledge well over time.

Pupils benefit from warm and respectful relationships with staff. They talk to staff if they have a problem. Pupils have access to additional pastoral care if they need more support. Pupils say that if bullying does occur, teachers deal with it quickly.

Children in the early years enjoy using the well-organised environment to explore the ideas they are learning about. They follow well-established routines. This helps children to work together. They develop their language through conversations with adults and each other.

Many pupils enjoy attending the extra-curricular activities and after-school clubs. These include sports, art, a choir and gardening.

The school's values of 'be healthy, be proud, be determined, be compassionate, be creative, be respectful, be a team player' shape the expectations and are evident in the school's work.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has been through a turbulent period due to staff absence. During this time, staff have pulled together and worked hard to keep the school running. The governing body is taking decisive action to stabilise the situation.

Leaders are strengthening the curriculum with determination. New leaders have added momentum to this. However, the redesign of the curriculum is not yet complete.

Leaders have prioritised improving early reading. Staff have strong subject knowledge. They model the sounds taught in phonics lessons accurately. Teachers check pupils' understanding to identify any gaps in their knowledge. Leaders use this information to match learning to pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils become fluent readers. Those who have fallen behind receive the help they need to catch up quickly.

Leaders have recently introduced a new curriculum for each of the foundation subjects. These curriculums start in the early years and build through to Year 6. However, leaders have not yet identified the most important knowledge pupils must know and remember in these subjects. This means that pupils are not building their knowledge securely over time. For example, the history curriculum covers a broad spectrum of knowledge. Pupils learn historical facts set out in knowledge organisers. They also learn abstract terms such as empire and historical concepts such as significance. However, as leaders have not yet agreed on the most important knowledge that all pupils must remember, pupils do not form a coherent understanding of Britain's past and of the wider world.

In English and mathematics, leaders have put in place effective systems to check what pupils know and need to learn next. This information is used to inform future learning. However, systems for checking pupils' understanding are not yet in place for the foundation subjects. As a result, leaders do not know how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum.

Learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is often adapted to enable them to learn the same content as others. For example, practice to support writing is well considered and is consistent across the school. Additional support is often provided to reinforce key teaching points within lessons and to check understanding. Some pupils receive extra help in addition to the support provided in lessons. However, the nature of this support is not always carefully considered. It does not always meet the specific needs of pupils. This slows their learning.

Teachers encourage pupils to be a 'team player' through opportunities to cooperate with one another in lessons. A range of experiences to support personal development is also provided. This includes opportunities to attend after-school clubs and to take part in competitive sport. All pupils also take part in school performances.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff understand the importance of their roles and responsibilities. Leaders work together with staff to ensure they know how to identify concerns and how to escalate them. Leaders provide early help, utilising the school's resources, to pupils who need it. Leaders seek help from external agencies appropriately. Pupils are aware of online risks and know how to seek help if needed. Pupils know that staff will listen to them if they need to share a concern.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the foundation subjects, the essential knowledge that all pupils should know and remember has not yet been identified. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge well over time. Leaders need to identify the essential knowledge that pupils must know and ensure this is sequenced effectively to build knowledge well.
- Assessment for checking pupils' understanding in the foundation subjects is not in place. As a result, leaders do not know how well pupils learn the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that assessment identifies what pupils know and can do and then use this to adapt learning.
- The support for some pupils with SEND does not always meet their specific needs. This slows pupils' learning. Leaders need to ensure that teachers understand pupils' needs and provide effective support.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2011.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	123655
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10240917
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	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Janet Walden
Headteacher	Rebecca Eyres
Website	www.milborneport.somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has undergone significant changes in staffing since the last inspection.
- The school runs before- and after-school provision on site.
- The school has a pre-school class.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the deputy headteacher, school leaders, other school staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics

and physical education.

- For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- For the early reading deep dive, the inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult and visited early reading lessons delivered by teachers and teaching assistants.
- The inspector talked to pupils, staff and leaders about how the school supports the safety of pupils.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour when arriving at school, in lessons and during lunchtime. The inspector met the deputy headteacher to discuss the school's approach to behaviour management and how staff respond to behaviour incidents.
- The inspector reviewed and sampled leaders' checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. He discussed with leaders attendance information, behaviour records, support plans for pupils with SEND and safeguarding records.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and met with parents at the school gate.
- The inspector considered the results of the staff survey.

Inspection team

Gareth Simons, lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

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