

Inspection of Millom Infant School

Lapstone Road, Millom Infant School, Millom, Cumbria LA18 4LP

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and relaxed at Millom Infant School. They enjoy coming to school. Pupils feel safe. If bullying happens, leaders take appropriate action. Parents and carers who shared their views with inspectors said that they appreciate the care that their children receive.

All staff want the best for pupils. However, this aim is not realised. Leaders' efforts to improve the curriculum have been too slow. Pupils do not achieve well. This includes children in the early years, who are not well prepared for their next steps. Leaders, including governors, have not spotted, or addressed, the shortcomings in the school.

Pupils generally behave well. They are kind to one another, and most play cooperatively together. However, some staff are not consistent in what they expect in terms of pupils' behaviour. They do not support pupils to behave as well as they should. This means that, at times, some pupils lose interest and distract one another in lessons.

Pupils enjoy a range of experiences that enrich their time at school. They take part in outdoor activities that help them to learn more about the natural world. For example, pupils grow potatoes to eat at lunchtime and visit the local woodland to make campfires and broomsticks.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders, including governors, have not taken the action needed to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. As a result, pupils, including children in the early years, do not have the chance to flourish academically. Leaders at all levels lack the capacity to bring about much needed change.

Many of the curriculums for subjects other than phonics and mathematics are poorly designed. This includes the curriculum for the early years. Subject leaders lack the expertise or knowledge to improve these curriculums.

Leaders are unclear about the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which this should be taught. Consequently, teachers do not understand how to shape their teaching so that pupils build their knowledge well over time. Pupils receive a jumbled learning experience. Many pupils remember little of what they have been taught. Their achievement in many subjects is limited. Added to this, many pupils are persistently absent from school. They miss out on learning. This limits their achievement even further.

Teachers do not use assessment strategies effectively to check what pupils know and can do. This means that some pupils develop misconceptions, which are not

addressed. Some pupils have gaps in their learning. This makes it difficult for them to remember new information.

Leaders ensure that staff are trained to deliver the reading curriculum. Despite this, some children in the early years get off to a slow start with learning to read. Staff do not deliver the phonics programme consistently well. This continues to be a problem in key stage 1. Teachers do not make sure that pupils read books that match their reading knowledge. This means that some pupils are held back in their reading, while others read books that are too difficult for them.

Leaders have introduced a programme to promote pupils' personal development. However, this is not followed closely enough by staff. As a result, some pupils do not know what makes a healthy and happy life. Pupils are taught about the different faiths, cultures and families that make up modern Britain. However, many pupils struggle to remember what they have learned.

Leaders and teachers accurately identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, the support for these pupils is variable. While pupils with SEND are well cared for, many do not get the help and support they need to achieve as well as they should. Some staff are not trained sufficiently well to use the information they receive about pupils with SEND to inform how they adapt the delivery of lessons.

Most pupils behave well in lessons. However, weaknesses in the curriculum mean that pupils lose interest in their learning. They distract themselves or others. This interrupts learning. Some staff do not address low-level behaviour consistently well.

The governing body has experienced considerable instability. Governors are either new to post or are still developing in their roles. As a result, the level of challenge that governors currently offer does not hold school leaders fully to account. While governors understand their role in overseeing safeguarding, some of their checks lack rigour. For example, they do not seek reassurance on how well leaders record and analyse patterns relating to attendance and behaviour incidents.

Most of the staff who spoke to inspectors said that they are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the steps that leaders take to reduce their workload and to support their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders place a high priority on safeguarding. They ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to keep pupils safe. Staff are well trained. They are vigilant. Staff know how to report any concerns they may have about a pupil's welfare. Leaders work with a variety of external partners to support vulnerable pupils and their families. They make sure that timely support is available for those who need it.

Pupils learn about different ways they can keep themselves safe. This includes when they are online or crossing the road.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in several subjects does not set out clearly what pupils need to learn. As a result, pupils receive a disconnected series of lessons that do not build their knowledge and understanding. They do not achieve well. Leaders must rapidly clarify their curriculum thinking so that teachers know what should be taught and when this should happen.
- Teachers lack the expertise to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Consequently, these pupils do not achieve well. Leaders must ensure that teachers are suitably trained to provide the right support for pupils with SEND so that they learn all that they should.
- Leaders and teachers do not check on pupils' learning well enough. Mistakes and misconceptions sometimes go unchecked. This causes gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils struggle to recall what they have learned. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment information more effectively so that pupils know and remember more of the curriculum over time.
- Leaders' capacity to improve the school is weak. Their efforts to bring about much needed improvement have been slow. Subject leaders do not have the curriculum expertise to design well-ordered curriculums. Consequently, pupils do not learn well across the curriculum. Governors must ensure that they strengthen the leadership capacity within the school to bring about rapid and sustained improvement.
- Too many pupils are persistently absent from school. Their learning is frequently disrupted as a result. Leaders should work with parents and other agencies to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly so that they achieve as well as they can.
- The governing body does not have the expertise or knowledge of its roles to challenge leaders on their actions to improve the school. This contributes to the lack of leadership capacity. Governors must ensure that they are well equipped to hold leaders to account for pupils' achievement, behaviour and personal development.
- Some staff do not follow the programme that leaders have put in place to promote pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils do not learn all that they should in readiness for their life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that staff deliver the content of the agreed programme so that pupils remember important information for the next stage of their lives.

Leaders and those responsible for governance may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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	112159
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10240153
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Teresa Tyson
Headteacher	Deborah Wilson
Website	www.millom-inf.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed to the governing body.
- Leaders operate a breakfast club.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils from key stage 1 read to a trusted adult.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at playtimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to safeguarding. They spoke with staff about their safeguarding knowledge and checked on how well they understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation, which included leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including their free-text comments. Inspectors also spoke with some parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Victoria Burnside, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Perkins

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023