



# Milton-on-Stour Church of England Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 113801  
**LEA** Dorset  
**Inspection number** 279253  
**Inspection dates** 11 July 2006 to 11 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ian Hancock AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Milton on Stour
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Gillingham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Dorset SP8 5QD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01747 822588
<b>Number on roll</b>	103	<b>Fax number</b>	01747 826648
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Melvyn Stroud
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr James Stanford

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

In this small village school, almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds, with two pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and those with learning difficulties or disabilities are well below average.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Milton-on-Stour CE VA Primary School is a good school because the headteacher, staff and governors are dedicated to continuous school improvement. The school's self-evaluation is thorough and it is accurate in judging its effectiveness to be good. It offers good value for money. During the last four years, the governors have appointed all new teaching staff, including the headteacher. The staff quickly gelled as a team. Although leadership and management are already good, some key appointments are very recent and consequently their roles, and those of subject leaders, in evaluating the work of the school are at this stage underdeveloped. Governors have played a prominent role in the significant improvements in accommodation and school grounds for the benefit of all pupils and staff. The progress of children in Reception has been held back this year due to staff changes. Provision is satisfactory but has recently improved and is now more focused on the needs of younger children, helping them to prepare better for Year 1. As pupils move up through the school, they make good progress. By the age of 11, many reach standards, which are above the national average, having started at the school with average standards. Good teaching and a well-planned curriculum ensure pupils behave well, work hard and enjoy their education. Teachers have correctly identified the need for more opportunities to develop pupils' independent learning and thinking skills to further raise standards and achievement. Pupils value being involved in their own learning and know their targets for improvement. The school is a central part of the community it serves and is highly valued by parents. The school has created a caring, safe environment where everyone feels valued. Pupils' personal development is good and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Improvement since the previous inspection is good and all issues identified have been fully addressed. The school is well placed to build on its many successes and move forward positively.

### What the school should do to improve further

- build on current improvements in the Foundation Stage to ensure activities are well matched to the needs of individual children
- take action to ensure new members of the management team and subject leaders contribute effectively to the school's self-evaluation and school improvement
- improve pupils' confidence and independence by providing more opportunities for developing thinking skills to use and apply knowledge to their learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and good progress overall by the time they leave the school. Attainment on entry is broadly average but this year, many children started school with above average skills. Due to staff changes, many children have not reached their full potential in the early years at school. However, provision has improved recently so that the majority of children should achieve their

expected goals by Year 1. Children who speak English as an additional language receive good support from the teaching assistants to ensure they make good progress in the acquisition of new language skills. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, where they achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average. They are higher in reading and mathematics than in writing but the school is providing more support and opportunities to improve this position. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move up through the school, where high emphasis is placed on developing basic skills. Targeted support is given to the less confident pupils and the school has recently introduced thinking skills to encourage more independent learning, particularly for higher-attaining pupils. As a result of these initiatives, all groups and abilities of pupils achieve well although there is further scope for developing independent learning. Standards have been consistently above average in English and mathematics by the age of 11. The issue of higher attainers not achieving as well as expected in science in recent years has been successfully rectified this year by a higher focus on teaching the subject. Teachers set challenging targets; pupils work hard and meet them by the time they leave the school.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good and have been successfully maintained since the last inspection. Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons. One pupil stated, 'we are taught well, our teachers are patient and our lessons are fun!'. Consequently, attendance is good.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school has successfully improved pupils' awareness of cultural diversity by numerous events this year, such as the multicultural week which included an extensive planned programme of visits and visitors. Visibly within the school's Christian ethos, pupils know right from wrong, show respect and are regularly seen in lessons working collaboratively together. The school council is helping pupils to be more responsible for, and to make decisions about, the daily life of the school, including the improvement of their own environment. Members of the council feel valued and have organised events to raise money for the wooden play trail and are fully involved in plans for the refurbishment of the toilets. Pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles and good diets is outstanding. Pupils grow their own produce in the gardening club and are aware of the importance of recycling and water conservation. They know the importance of physical exercise and have numerous opportunities to play games and sports, including regular swimming lessons. Many cycle or walk to school and there is good attendance at the many sporting events and clubs. Pupils make positive contributions to the community, singing in the local musical festival and older pupils run stalls at the school fete and have recently held a Fair Trade coffee afternoon. This adds to their good basic skills which prepare them well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school because teachers have high expectations and plan their lessons well to challenge and include all pupils. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage has improved significantly this term due to better organisation and a more focused approach to children's individual needs. As a result, children are making better progress. Throughout the school, lessons are lively and contexts are well chosen to interest and motivate pupils. One parent commented, 'Teachers are compassionate and friendly, well organised and show a genuine interest in their pupils'. Teachers use assessment information and data well. For example, teaching has improved in science where more emphasis has been placed on using correct scientific vocabulary from an early age and providing more opportunities to develop investigative skills. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress, in particular for those with learning difficulties. Pupils are given clear learning targets. The teachers' marking helps pupils improve, as well as giving them encouragement.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. Effective adjustments have been made recently to the way the curriculum is planned in the Foundation Stage. The school gives its pupils an imaginative curriculum, including regular theme weeks when visits and visitors bring the curriculum alive. Information and communication technology (ICT) has significantly improved since the last inspection and is well used to support pupils' learning. A strong programme of personal, social and health education has a positive impact on pupils' understanding of the importance of staying safe and healthy. The curriculum is enriched by an impressive range of well-attended extra-curricular activities, including a residential trip for older pupils. Music is enjoyed by all, including those who receive instrumental tuition from specialist teachers. The excellent quality of artwork enhances the attractive school environment, and the outside area offers a superb facility for learning.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The staff and governors work very effectively to ensure pupils work in safe and secure surroundings. Care is evident in the effective routines and practices to ensure pupils' health and safety, including thorough child protection and risk assessment procedures. Links with parents are good and they are confident that children are safe and well cared for in school. One parent commented, 'Milton School presents a safe and happy environment for my child which is reflected in the children's behaviour. We are happy and feel privileged that our son is in such a school'.

Pupils' academic and personal development is tracked carefully. Pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve and are given effective opportunities to evaluate their own work. One pupil commented, 'We are encouraged always to do our best'. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are given good support so that they can take a full part in all activities.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management of the school are good. The work of the school is driven by the very good leadership of the headteacher. He has high expectations to ensure all pupils achieve their best. He continually explores ways to improve the quality of education and receives good support from the staff. Most of the teachers are relatively new to the school and have willingly taken on extra responsibility. However, the role of the new management team, including subject leaders, now needs to be strengthened so that all can contribute more effectively to school improvement. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is good. It clearly identifies area for improvement. However, the school development plan, although thorough, could benefit from having priorities more clearly defined. Parents' views are regularly sought and considered. The governing body, ably led by the experienced chair of governors, makes a strong contribution to the school's success because they have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They challenge the headteacher and staff by asking demanding questions in the quest for an even better school. They have been very proactive in the development of the new building and extensive grounds, which greatly enhance pupils' learning. The school is well placed to build on its considerable and sustained successes.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school. We really enjoyed our time with you and looking at your work. We were impressed with how polite and friendly you all were. You are right to be proud of your school, as it is a good school.

What we liked about your school :

- because you behave very well, work hard and have good teachers and a very good headteacher, you are doing well in your work
- you are looked after well and that helps to make you feel safe and happy
- you have an excellent understanding of your own and other people's customs, what is right and wrong, and how important it is to help and look after others
- you are also excellent in the ways you understand how important it is to eat healthy food and have the right amount of exercise
- there are plenty of things to do outside lessons and lots of you join clubs and other activities, which is good.

There are a few things we think your school could do to improve; they are already working on these :

- teachers should give you more opportunities to develop your thinking skills because that builds up confidence and independence as you grow up
- all teachers should be involved in checking how well the school is doing and then thinking of some good ideas to make it even better
- the school should make sure the children in Reception are continuing to improve in their work.