



# Milton Church of England Primary School (Abingdon)

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 123178  
**Local Authority** Oxfordshire  
**Inspection number** 292603  
**Inspection date** 25 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** John Earish

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	School Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Milton Heights
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Abingdon OX14 4DR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01235 831368
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	48	<b>Fax number</b>	01235 831368
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Miss Jane Robinson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Linda Shatford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2003		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This very small school serves the Hamlet of Milton Heights and Milton Village. The school admits pupils from a wide variety of social backgrounds. Almost all are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. When children start school, their skills and abilities are below those expected of four year olds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is just above average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Milton is a satisfactory school. The overwhelming majority of parents believe it is a very caring and friendly school where each child is made to feel special. As one parent wrote, 'My daughter loves going to school and hasn't once said she didn't want to go...not like her previous school'.

Pupils attend regularly, enjoy school and make good progress in their personal and social skills. The promotion of these qualities starts with the good provision and achievement of children in the Foundation Stage. In the rest of the school, academic achievement is satisfactory. However, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and achieve well. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education through good links with the local secondary school. They leave with average standards and skills in English, mathematics and science. Inspection evidence shows that the school has improved reading skills and is tackling weaknesses in writing. These improvements show the school's determination and good capacity to improve further.

Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons observed during the inspection were of consistently good quality. However, the school acknowledges this has not always been the case and previous shortcomings in teaching mean that learning and achievement over time is satisfactory. Traditionally, there have been too few opportunities for children to be independent in their learning and this is now beginning to be addressed by the school. There is good teaching for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. As one parent wrote, 'My son is now at an average level due to the efforts the staff...we have given our vote of confidence by sending our next child there also'.

The curriculum is of good quality. It has been revised to promote greater creativity and enjoyment, to capture the enthusiasm of the different ability groups represented within the school and to increase its relevance to their lives. Pupils' personal skills are promoted very well and they have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They particularly enjoy extra curricular activities, visits and events such as the environmental ECO project. However, teachers do not always make the most of these opportunities to develop pupils' skills in writing for different audiences and purposes.

Pupils' personal development is good because they are very well cared for at school and as a result feel secure and happy. Teaching assistants, alongside teachers, play a vital part in ensuring such good quality provision. Pupils speak confidently about the many trusted adults they can turn to for help and support. They feel happy and behave well because the school has improved the systems to track their academic and personal development and for using this information to meet their individual needs.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The most important areas for improvement have been accurately identified and appropriate actions are being taken to tackle the issues. The role of subject leaders in monitoring quality and standards is underdeveloped and has resulted in some inconsistent progress. This is recognised by the headteacher who has made it a priority for development this year. Governors are supportive and are satisfactory at holding the school to account.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Lift the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers give pupils more opportunities to work independently.
- Capitalise on the good opportunities within the curriculum to extend pupils' writing skills.
- Develop the monitoring activities of subject leaders to improve the consistency of pupils' progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Children start school with skills and abilities that are lower than those expected nationally. They settle quickly to school routines and make good progress. However, a few of the small number of children assessed each year do not reach some aspects of the learning goals in language and communication and personal and social development.

Very small cohorts, which include a wide spread of abilities, result in variations in performance in national tests. However, standards are the end of Years 2 and 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Data shows that between Years 2 and 6 pupils make steady progress. Pupils make most progress in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing, although satisfactory in developing basic skills, is hampered by insufficient opportunities to write in sufficient depth in subjects other than English. Those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive well focused support and make good progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are very well behaved and show remarkable care and courtesy. They clearly enjoy their learning. Attendance levels are very high and pupils are rightly proud of their achievements as an ECO school. This is further evidence that they are happy learners. Pupils know about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and staying safe. They speak enthusiastically about healthy eating and are very aware of the importance of drinking plenty of water.

One of many ways the pupils develop well their understanding of how to play their part in the community is through the school council. Councillors are adamant that they make a difference. They have collected pupils' views about healthy eating and used this information to write 'healthy notes' in the school's newsletter. Pupils greatly value having extra responsibility and they enjoy helping others. They willingly take on extra duties to support the smooth running of the school and are investigating ways of converting the school minibus to run on bio fuels. Pupils acquire appropriate literacy, numeracy and ICT skills that equip them satisfactorily for later life and learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The inspector saw consistently good teaching, but agrees that the impact of teaching on learning, as seen in pupils' work over time, is satisfactory. Teachers use questions effectively to assess and extend pupils' learning, and use resources well to engage and maintain children's interest. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to work independently. A good start has been made at addressing this weakness and good examples were seen of teachers and their assistants encouraging pupils to think for themselves and reflect on their learning. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is well focused with many opportunities for children to find out for themselves through imaginative or creative play and, as a result, children make good progress.

The marking of work is thorough and supportive. Pupils say it helps them to improve. The last few minutes of each lesson are set aside to assess the extent of the pupils' learning. Teachers use this well to praise what pupils do well and to indicate what they must do to improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well, including those with learning difficulties. Much time has been spent revising the curriculum to promote creativity and enjoyment, and especially awareness of environmental issues and its relevance to pupils' lives. However, teachers do not make enough of these opportunities in stimulating pupils to write for different audiences and purposes across all subjects of the curriculum.

The school ensures that all pupils have many opportunities to participate and enjoy a good range of enrichment activities and after school clubs despite its very small size. Such experiences, together with good provision for personal, social and health education, and the emphasis on staying safe and healthy, develop in pupils a good sense of personal and social responsibility.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils described 'Marvellous Milton' as a happy place, where everybody is valued and cared for well. The overwhelming majority of parents praise the school's work and feel their children are safe and well cared for. Child protection procedures are robust and widely understood. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure. Systems to ensure pupils' health and safety are effective and reviewed regularly. Their academic and personal development is carefully monitored and, as a result, their needs are met well. Pupils with learning difficulties are cared for well and additional provision is well matched to their needs.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She has a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and has taken effective action to bring about improvement. For instance, successful initiatives include raising pupils' self esteem and improving their behaviour. The school's processes for self-evaluation takes account of the views of others. This accurate analysis has been used successfully to write a school development plan that sets out the correct priorities for improvement and provides a useful framework for action and review.

The number of staff is small which means they each teacher has considerable responsibilities for leading developments in more than one subject. However, their role in monitoring how well this is making a difference to standards and achievement is underdeveloped. This is recognised by the headteacher who is enabling staff to have a clearer view of standards across the school and a greater influence over the quality of teaching and learning, by sharing data and pinpointing the next steps for improvement. Governors are keen for the school to do well and satisfactorily hold the school to account for its work.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

Following my visit to inspect your school I would like to tell you what I think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn. I enjoyed being with you, seeing you work and listening to your experiences and views.

There are lots of things that I liked about your school:

- You learn in a very friendly and caring school
- you behave very well and you get on very well with each other
- you listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and try very hard in your lessons
- the school council represents your views well and you all help the school to run smoothly
- your teachers spend a lot of time looking at what you have done in class and working out how to help you to make your work even better
- you like all the clubs, visits and after school activities the school has organised for you
- you are very enthusiastic about protecting the environment; I was impressed with your plans to plant an organic orchard and to run your minibuses on bio fuel.

I think that you are given a sound education which prepares you for the next stage of your learning. To make it even better, however, I am asking your teachers to give you more opportunities to plan your own investigations and to use your writing skills in lots of different ways. Teachers are also going to spend more time checking how much progress you are making and to help you improve even more.

I enjoyed being in your school. I hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

John Earish

Lead Inspector