



# The Milestone School

Inspection Report - Amended

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**Unique Reference Number** 131557  
**Local Authority** Gloucestershire  
**Inspection number** 293781  
**Inspection dates** 19–20 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Sarah Mascall

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Longford Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Gloucester
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–16		GL2 9EU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01452 500499
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	278	<b>Fax number</b>	01452 500602
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Kate Hawkins
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Lyn Dance
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 September 2001		

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<b>Age group</b> 2–16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 19–20 September 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 293781
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Milestone has changed considerably since its last inspection and now educates children and pupils with a far wider range of learning difficulties and disabilities. The majority of pupils have severe learning difficulties. Nearly a quarter of the school's population have profound and multiple learning difficulties whilst there are a small number of pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. An increasing number of pupils are on the autistic spectrum disorder continuum with a minority displaying challenging behaviours. All pupils have statements of special educational need or are in the process of being assessed; because of the nature of pupils' special educational needs, academic standards, compared to mainstream schools, are exceptionally low. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are a small number of pupils who are looked after by the local authority.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Milestone is a good school with a number of outstanding features. There are many reasons for its success. A considerable strength is the way staff work very effectively with the many specialist agencies and show total commitment to the needs of each individual pupil. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Several wrote in support of the school and their comments can be summed up by one parent who wrote to say "how privileged we are to have such a caring, compassionate learning environment" for their child. There is a real sense of team work within the school because the senior management team enables staff to take on responsibilities and develop their skills. The leadership team provides very clear direction for the way in which the school should develop. As a result staff have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and are constantly looking for ways to improve what is provided for pupils.

Staff place considerable importance on ensuring that pupils, regardless of their ability and background, make good progress. From when they enter school the youngest children are expected to do well and they get off to a good start in the Early Years classes. Good teaching, together with an effective curriculum, ensures that the needs of each pupil are met and in many classes this is done well. Learning support workers are used very well and there is very effective team work in all lessons. As a result, all pupils make good progress and achieve well from their starting points. A number of pupils make outstanding progress. By the time pupils leave school all have gained passes in accredited courses. Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) are limited and at times this reduces the effectiveness of lessons. It also means that pupils are not making the progress they should in developing their ICT skills and pupils commented that they do not have enough access to computers. The school has recognised this but it does not have sufficient funding to carry out its plans for improvement. This is because the school's running cost exceeds the resources available to it. Consequently resources are not adequate in all areas and, in order to meet the needs of its diverse population, the school has regularly overspent its budget. Governors have considered a number of ways of reducing spending but have not been able to effectively reduce the overspend.

Pupils make exceptional gains in their personal development because of the excellent care, support and guidance that is given to them. All pupils benefit from the extremely good partnerships the school has established with multi-agency groups including physiotherapy and speech and language therapy. The superb work related curriculum prepares them extremely well to be independent and develops their understanding of how to look after themselves when they leave school. The excellent opportunities to experience education in a range of settings, such as mainstream schools, support pupils' learning well. Pupils really enjoy school and are positive about many aspects of what they do. They show a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and the importance, for example, of eating healthily. They feel included in decision making and the school council has played an important role in ensuring their views are heard.

Work with the local authority to resolve the ongoing difficulties associated with the funding of the school so that governors and senior staff can begin to operate within the budget.

Improve resources in ICT to enable staff to make better use of computers and pupils to develop their skills more effectively.

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

- Work with the local authority to resolve the ongoing difficulties associated with the funding of the school so that governors and senior staff can begin to operate within the budget.
- Improve resources in ICT to enable staff to make better use of computers and pupils to develop their skills more effectively.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils benefit from good teaching and a good curriculum that are well matched to their needs. As a result, the achievement of all pupils is good. All pupils make good progress from when they start in the Early Years classes to when they leave school. Pupils achieve well and sometimes extremely well in literacy and numeracy throughout the school because great importance is placed on these areas. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use ICT and as a result they are not making the progress they should in using computers. They make excellent progress in their personal, social and health education. More able pupils pass GCSE courses whilst others gain good accreditation in Award Scheme Development and Network (ASDAN), Entry Level qualification and transition courses. Pupils' success is very evident from the good progress they make in meeting their individual targets which are often challenging and reflect the high expectations of staff for pupils to achieve. For example, pupils with profound and multiple difficulties make very good progress because their targets are effective in recognising the very small steps they make.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Throughout their time at school pupils make excellent progress in their personal development including their development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Their enjoyment of school is obvious and they greet each other and staff with smiles and waves. This is reflected in their good attendance. As pupils grow older they clearly gain in confidence and are keen to show their independence by taking on responsibilities in and around the school. Pupils recognise that they can make their views heard through the school council, although school lunches are a bone of contention. Pupils comment that they are 'not as good as before because they are healthier and have lots of vegetables!' Pupils, though, are aware of how to maintain healthy lifestyles and the importance of staying fit. Behaviour is extremely good and

pupils respond well to the school's excellent strategies to support them. As a result, they gradually learn to modify and improve their behaviour and make excellent progress in their moral and social skills. Pupils are very involved in the community and develop excellent relationships with the many employers who support their work experience placements. All pupils are involved in enterprise schemes and they develop a very good understanding of how to look after themselves when they leave school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Considerable attention is paid to ensuring each pupil makes the best possible progress. Staff teams work closely together to achieve this and it is rare to see a pupil who is not occupied with an activity to support their learning. Teachers and learning support workers know their pupils well, even at this early stage of the term, because they share information well with each other. Planning is detailed and usually in lessons the needs of each pupil are met very well enabling all to make good progress and some to make excellent progress in their learning. On a few occasions, though, individuals are not sufficiently challenged by the tasks they are given. The few pupils who display difficult behaviour are managed very well by all staff. Teachers use the available resources well but the lack of technology, particularly the use of computers and interactive whiteboards, means that, at times, opportunities are missed to engage all pupils fully.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school has worked hard to develop a curriculum to enable it to meet the needs of the wide range of learning difficulties of pupils. It has been effective in this and the good curriculum supports pupils' learning well. Many initiatives have been introduced that provide pupils with experiences based on their individual needs. This is particularly evident in the sensory enrichment curriculum which supports and develops pupils' skills very well. There are excellent links with other schools which provide pupils with opportunities to learn in a range of different environments and to take advantage of better facilities such as in design and technology. Although pupils have access to the arts, such as music and art, the school wants to improve this and extend pupils' experiences in these subjects further. The excellent opportunities for pupils to be involved in work related activities and enterprise schemes contribute greatly to their future economic well-being.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

The school makes every effort to safeguard pupils' health and safety. All aspects of care are treated seriously; risk assessments are carried out routinely and child protection

procedures are secure and known by all staff. Regular training sessions ensure that new staff are very well briefed about handling/transferring pupils and, if required, how to keep them safe from hurting themselves and others.

The extremely high levels of guidance and support given by staff to all pupils greatly contribute to the progress that pupils make. For instance, teachers use very good assessment procedures to help them plan pupils' future work. As a result of this the school has developed a variety of strategies and provision to support pupils who it is felt could make even more progress. Key to the success of this is the very effective partnership between teachers and the many multi-agency support teams. Portage staff, therapists, the Connexions service, counsellors and nursing staff are all highly significant in working with Milestone staff to ensure that pupils receive the best possible quality of support and care.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and her senior management team successfully ensures that all staff, governors, parents and other partners understand and support the school's aims. As a result, there is a very clear sense of common purpose throughout the school in which all pupils are valued and treated similarly. This is evident in the way that all adults are consistent in their expectations of pupils which results in all pupils making good progress.

The senior management team and staff carry out their responsibilities very well. They are very focused on wanting the best for the pupils and clearly know their school well and what needs to be done to make it even better. Senior staff have gathered a good range of data and are beginning to use this information effectively to bring about improvements and develop the school further. For example, last year it identified weaknesses in aspects of numeracy and provided booster classes for a number of pupils. The school recognises the need to train all teaching staff with positions of responsibility in supporting and monitoring colleagues to improve teaching and learning even further and ensure staff have a realistic view of the strengths and weaknesses of their work. The school has a good capacity to improve further the quality of its work; the strong senior management team provides stability and very good role models for staff, pupils and parents.

There is a history of budgeting difficulties. As a result, the school has overspent its budget over a number of years. Governors are committed to ensuring that pupils achieve to their full potential and are educated in a safe environment. Despite considering a range of options, they have been unable to reduce the overspend.

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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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<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>	1

<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>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	2
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**

Thank you for looking after us when we came to visit. It was nice to talk to you and to watch you working in lessons.

We think your school is good. All the staff work very hard to care for you and help you learn about lots of things. You all try hard and behave very well. Some of you said you did not have enough time to work on computers and this is true. It would help your teachers, too, to be able to use computers more in their classes.

The people running your school do a really good job and keep looking for ways to make it even better. They know what it is good at and what it could do even better. However, the school has spent a lot more money than it has been given and there is not a clear plan about what to do about this.

We have asked your school to do two things to become even better.

- 1.The school needs to make sure you and your teachers have more computers to help you learn.
- 2.There are problems with the amount of money the school is given and senior staff and governors need to work with the local authority to make sure the school can work within the budget that is agreed.

We wish you all the best for the future and hope the school council carries on its good work especially in making sure school dinners are nice but healthy!