

# Milecastle Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108451
<b>Local Authority</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	301737
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Tony Kemp

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	262
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr R Morgan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lynn Rae
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Hillhead Parkway Chapel House Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE5 1LH
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2674510
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2673823

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Milecastle was a large first school until it was reorganised as a new primary school in 2005. Locally there is a declining birth rate reflecting the situation across the local authority. Many pupils travel to school from further afield and an increasing number come from areas of significant disadvantage. The number of pupils entitled to a free school meal has increased and is now broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has also increased, although this is still below the national average. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities is low and the number with English as an additional language very low.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Milecastle is a good school. It has many outstanding features. For example, the leadership, vision and commitment of the headteacher has been outstanding especially during a time of significant change and uncertainty about the future. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They appreciate the outstanding care, guidance and support that the school provides to enable their children to achieve outstanding personal development and well-being and high standards of work. 'I am thrilled at how my son has settled into such a wonderful school,' said one.

Pupils are rightly proud of their school. They enjoy school and appreciate the exciting activities it provides. This is reflected in the above average attendance rates and excellent behaviour. Pupils say they feel safe and happy and that the rare instances of bullying are quickly dealt with. They know how to keep safe and are aware of the benefits of healthy eating and exercise. Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect and understanding.

Good teaching at all stages results in good and sometimes very good progress. Teachers know their pupils well and activities are usually well-matched to the needs of all learners. Throughout the school, pupils receive support from very effective teaching assistants. Younger children and pupils in Years 1 and 2 often exceed the standards expected for their age. The demanding targets set for older pupils are usually met and often exceeded. However, achievement in mathematics is not as high as in English and science because work is not always matched to the abilities of all pupils. The school has already identified this as an area for further improvement and intends to introduce the 'Big Maths' approach in the new school year to support learning in mathematics.

Being a good citizen is integral to each pupil's development. They have excellent awareness of issues in protecting the environment and are well-prepared for the future. The breadth and richness of the curriculum ensures that all pupils enjoy a wide range of interesting activities, although it is yet to have the desired impact on achievement in mathematics.

Leadership and management overall are good. The headteacher has created a strong team spirit amongst all leaders and staff which has led to high levels of achievement. The active involvement of governors ensures they are well-informed about the school's performance. The school's capacity to improve is excellent.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers give all pupils a better match of work to ability in order to raise standards in mathematics.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and academic standards are high. Children's skills when they start in the Foundation Stage are broadly typical for children of this age. They make very good progress and many exceed the standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception year. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding is extended at a good rate. The results of the teachers' assessments of the Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently well above the national average over the past five years. The quality of

speaking and listening and reading is particularly good. Assessments of Year 2 in 2007 indicate that the good results of recent years have improved.

Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 continues at a good pace. The school sets demanding targets for its Year 6 pupils which are usually met and often exceeded. In 2006, the school's first ever results of the Year 6 national tests were above average in English, very high in science and broadly average in mathematics. Results for this year, although unvalidated, indicate significant improvements in English and science, and although standards in mathematics are not as high, the progress made by pupils was better than that in 2006. The inspectors were also impressed with the quality of pupils' work in other subjects. Pupils do particularly well in applying their skills of literacy and computing to the full range of subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from effective support, which ensures that they also make good progress.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are courteous, polite and modest. An excellent work ethic is reflected in the good quality and quantity of work produced in most subjects. A very good start for these positive attitudes is laid in the Foundation Stage. As soon as children start school, they respond very well to high expectations to do things for themselves and to share and cooperate with others. This contributes to pupils across the school becoming confident to be creative and to make decisions and direct their own actions.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Spiritual awareness amongst pupils is cultivated through a diversity of cultural experiences, including music, drama, dance and art. The school vigorously promotes pupils' awareness of cultural diversity and moral values. The raising of funds for a child in Ghana and the incorporation into lessons of the Fair Trade philosophy contributes to the pupils' mature understanding of many global issues. Being a good citizen is integral to each pupil's development. They willingly take responsibility, for example, as school councillors and are very conscious of how their actions affect others. Recognition as being a Healthy School, meriting the Eco Award (Gold) and Activemark 2006 is reflected in the pupils' attitudes. They have a good awareness of the choices required to stay fit and healthy, how to avoid danger and are assiduous in protecting the environment. Given their good academic achievement and excellent levels of personal development, pupils are excellently prepared for their future education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It has some outstanding features. Very good relationships and clear expectations allow pupils to succeed in their learning. Teachers know their pupils well and activities are usually well-matched to the needs of all learners. This is not always the case in mathematics where sometimes work is not well matched to the needs and abilities of all pupils.

There is a sharp focus on developing basic skills and teachers often plan practical activities to excite and engage their pupils. For example, in literacy, one class learned how to create movie trailers using their advanced skills in technology. In a French lesson, excellent use was made

of the Smartboard and toy animals to ensure that learning was memorable and fun. Good questioning by confident teachers ensures that any misunderstandings are quickly dealt with. Pupils know that their teachers have time for them and are always willing to give them extra help. The skills of teaching assistants are used exceptionally well to support pupils who need extra help. Teachers' marking is consistently good in quality and supportive of pupils' further development.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It meets national requirements and supports the development of a wide range of skills in the subjects taught. However, it has yet to show its impact in the higher standards in mathematics towards which the school aspires. Strong action has been taken to improve achievement in mathematics by developing skills in mental calculations. Work has progressed rapidly in developing an appropriate Key Stage 2 curriculum. Good links across subjects ensure efficient use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Provision is good for pupils' personal and social development. The very well enriched curriculum includes a broad range of activities out-of-school hours. All staff offer at least one after-school activity including clubs for younger pupils as well as older ones. Good work with other organisations enriches the curriculum, including very good links with the local secondary school. Many relevant visits out of school are closely linked with the curriculum. These include a number of residential opportunities. Visitors, including the police, the fire brigade and road safety officers, enhance the richness of school provision.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. This matches the views of pupils and parents. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are very good and meet requirements well. A good range of policies and procedures are securely understood by all staff. In their warm relationships with pupils, staff are vigilant and consistent role models. Monitoring of pupils' personal and social standards is rigorous, ensuring good behaviour, positive attitudes and a level of attendance above that found nationally. The school works extremely well with others; for example, with parents, other schools and outside agencies concerned with the welfare of pupils. This helps all pupils, but particularly the potentially more vulnerable, reach high standards socially and achieve well academically. Pupils' academic progress is thoroughly monitored. The school has precise data about how well each pupil is doing. This information is used very effectively to ensure further progress and to intervene rapidly with additional support where necessary.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The leadership, vision and commitment of the headteacher are outstanding. She has been particularly successful in securing strong teamwork and high levels of commitment from all staff so that the work of leaders at all levels is developing well. This has led to positive pupil attitudes, enjoyment of learning and continuous improvement in achievements. Governance is good and governors have a detailed understanding of what it is like for pupils at the school. They use this information well to inform their decision-making.

Resources are very well used. Very effective partnerships with parents and carers, other agencies and the community have helped to enhance the curriculum in the interests of all pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school: 'I am thrilled at how my son has settled into such a wonderful school,' said one. Leaders have a clear awareness of the school's many strengths and of the priorities for further improvement. Consequently, the school has excellent capacity to improve.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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	2
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.

## Annex A

**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	1
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	1
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

15 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milecastle Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE5 1LH

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. Your behaviour and manners were excellent. You are to be congratulated for that! Thank you also for holding open doors for us and for helping us to find our way around the building.

We really enjoyed spending time with you and seeing you hard at work in your lessons. You were very confident in talking about your learning and you are certainly doing very well especially in reading, writing and science. The work we saw was of a very high standard from the youngest to the oldest. You must be very proud of your school and I know your headteacher and the staff are very proud of you. They care so much for you and work extremely hard to give you the very best opportunities and to help you learn in exciting and enjoyable ways. Don't forget to thank them for that at the end of each day.

The headteacher and staff are determined to make sure that the older ones amongst you do as well in mathematics as you do in English and science. They already have plans in place to make this happen. You can play your part by continuing to listen well and by helping each other.

Now then, after all the hard work over the past year, you and the staff really deserve a good rest. So we hope you enjoy the summer holidays. Remember to keep making those healthy choices and to stay safe. Don't forget to be as good for your families as you are for your teachers; they deserve it too.

We wish all of you all the best for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your school next year.

Yours sincerely

A Kemp, G Cooper, D Byrne

Inspectors