

Milford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112788
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	311004
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Jim Henry

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Charles Spring
Headteacher	Mr Matthew Pendleton
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Chevin Road Milford Belper Derbyshire DE56 0QH
Telephone number	01332 841316
Fax number	

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Inspection number	311004

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Milford Primary school is situated in the village of Milford, south of Belper, in Derbyshire. The school is much smaller than average with most pupils coming from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average but, due to small numbers, the proportion varies from year to year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Milford is a satisfactory school with some good features and has a sound capacity to improve. The headteacher is relatively new and, with the support of staff, is beginning to make appropriate changes. Parents are encouraged by the developments taking place. One parent summed up the views of many by commenting: 'I have no doubt that we shall see further improvements across the board as the new head settles in to his role.'

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The new headteacher has created a good sense of teamwork with staff and improved relationships throughout the school community. The governors are also relatively new and, with the headteacher and staff, a whole school approach has been taken to identify the necessary priorities to improve the school. This has resulted in changes that are starting to impact on standards and pupil progress. While there are plans to involve all levels of leadership in monitoring and evaluating teaching in the school, these have yet to be fully implemented.

Pupils quickly settle in school due to the friendly and positive ethos. They make satisfactory progress and at the end of Year 2, standards are above average overall, although in line with the national average in mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 fluctuate due to small numbers in each cohort and were above average in 2007. In Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress by the time they leave the school.

Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good elements. Relationships are good and pupils are eager to learn. Teachers plan lessons carefully to meet the needs of mixed age classes. However, some opportunities to fully develop pupils' knowledge and understanding are missed in small group work and in extended writing. The presentation of work is generally of a high standard and the new tracking system is beginning to improve pupils' progress across the school. The curriculum is broad and balanced and a variety of visits and enrichment activities add to the pupils' enjoyment of school. More creative approaches to teaching subjects are planned for the future.

The care, guidance and support given to the pupils are good and they respond positively to staff expectations, behave well, and enjoy coming to school to learn. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They feel safe, secure in school, and have a good understanding of the need to live a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are actively involved in their local community and the older pupils readily support pre-school children with their learning. By the time they leave school, pupils are successfully prepared for their next stage in education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with skills at least appropriate for their age, although occasionally their ability is better than this, as each year group differs considerably. They make satisfactory progress and when they enter Key Stage 1 nearly all have reached the levels expected with a number exceeding them. Leadership and management in the Foundation Stage is good and the teacher and skilled teaching assistant have a very strong working partnership that benefits children's learning. The outdoor environment has improved greatly and is now an exciting, creative place to learn, especially when children go in the 'Cave' for special activities. Unfortunately, children are only able to be outside for certain times in the morning and cannot therefore experience all different areas of the curriculum in this environment. Teaching is

satisfactory overall and staff suitably blend in Foundation Stage activities with those for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Links with parents and the pre-school class on site are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed the pupil tracking procedures to identify any underachievement in order to ensure pupils make consistently good progress across the school.
- Implement rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures across all levels of leadership to raise the consistency of good teaching.
- Provide more opportunities to develop pupils' extended writing in Years 3 to 6.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards pupils achieve vary year on year reflecting the differing abilities of each cohort. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 1 and Year 2, and by the end of Key Stage 1, results show that pupils' attainment in reading and writing is above average and broadly in line with the national average in mathematics. Since 2005, there has been a slight decline in standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2. However, this has been halted as school data shows that the results in mathematics in 2008 have improved. The school has tackled underachievement in 2006 at the end of Year 6, and pupils made satisfactory progress overall in English, mathematics and science in 2007. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2007 were significantly above the national average overall, and the percentage of pupils reaching the higher National Curriculum levels in English and science was above average and significantly above in mathematics. However, school data indicates that attainment in English and mathematics will decline in 2008 to below the national average. Following the introduction of a pupil tracking system the rate of pupil progress is beginning to improve. The school is beginning to use this tracking information to set challenging targets for pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy, well-behaved individuals who enjoy coming to school. This is confirmed by their good attendance. They care for each other and flourish in the supportive school 'family' ethos. Their response to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is good. They are interested in learning about other cultures, for example during assembly, when they learnt about Guru Dev. They make a strong contribution to the community taking part in local fairs, visiting community venues and inviting members of the community to support curriculum activities. They have a good awareness of how to keep safe and healthy, for example by remembering they need sunhats in the playground. Year 6 look forward to their turn helping at the playgroup on site. They are well prepared for life at secondary school because they leave as well-rounded young people, with good basic skills and very competent computer abilities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good features. Where teaching is good it is characterised by positive relationships, clear explanations and activities that not only meets pupils' needs but also are interesting and enjoyable. Pupils effectively work together and share ideas and this develops their learning and enjoyment in lessons. The teaching of many of the basic skills is good but evidence from pupils' work shows that not enough attention is given to developing the pupils' extended writing. The school has begun to collate tracking information about the progress of individual pupils. However, this is relatively new and, while it is beginning to inform teachers' target setting, it shows that not all pupils consistently make the progress that they could. Marking has improved and is often linked to pupils' targets and includes constructive comments which help pupils understand how well they have achieved and what to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The broad and balanced curriculum makes satisfactory provision for the range of pupils' needs. The curriculum is enriched by providing pupils with opportunities for residential and local visits. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a strong element and pupils acquire a good range and depth of skills. A whole school review of the curriculum is planned in order to give a more creative approach to pupils' learning. However, this has yet to impact on the provision for pupils. The teaching plans for science are also being reviewed to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum are being met. A programme of personal, health and social education contributes to pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles as do the range of sporting activities such as hockey, 'Kwik Cricket' and after-school sporting events.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

One pupil said, 'Everyone is friends, we all get on, it's happy here' and this characterises the school. Pupils receive a good level of care from staff who know them well. Parents, too, appreciate the support and kindness their children receive. All procedures for keeping pupils safe and secure are in place. The quality of marking and academic guidance pupils receive to help them progress in their work is improving. The school recognises there is more to do in sharing targets with parents and providing better information about how their child is progressing. This is planned but has yet to impact on standards in the school. Pupils confidently mark each other's work using guidelines teachers provide and they know the targets they are currently working on. Pupils who find learning more difficult are effectively identified and the school works successfully with outside agencies to make sure they get the support they need.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Following a period of uncertainty, the new headteacher, supported by the staff, has provided good leadership to improve the school's effectiveness. He has successfully concentrated on

improving relationships with parents, developing the quality of teaching and learning, introducing a system to check on pupils' progress and developing the roles of senior leaders, including subject co-ordinators. These positive initiatives are just beginning to impact on standards in the school. Target setting is starting to improve the rates of pupil progress across the school. Underachievement is beginning to be identified and intervention programmes are providing pupils with appropriate help and support. The headteacher is encouraging greater involvement from other senior staff and governors in self-evaluation and in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. This development is still in its infancy but it is already showing signs of a more focused team approach to deliver the school's priorities. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and the school provides satisfactory value for money. The governors, many of whom are relatively new to their role, are beginning to be more challenging and questioning about the school's performance.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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

12 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milford Primary School, Milford, Belper, DE56 0QH.

I am writing to thank you for making us feel welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed sharing in your lessons and watching you work hard for your teachers. The headteacher and all the other staff and adults who look after you work hard to help you learn and enjoy school.

The school gives you a sound education and while results at the end of Year 6 go up and down each year, you usually reach average or above average standards by the time you leave. Here are some of the things that the school does well:

- You enjoy school and being with your friends.
- You behave well and are keen to do your best.
- You treat each other with respect and are always willing to help around the school.
- You enjoy taking part in the different activities that the school provides.
- All your teachers and other staff work hard to try to make sure that you do well at school.

To help make sure you do even better, we have asked teachers and other adults who look after your school to do three things:

- Measure regularly how well you are doing in school to make sure that you always make good progress in your learning.
- Look carefully at lessons to make sure that the teaching and your learning are consistently good.
- Give you more opportunities from Year 3 to Year 6 to improve your longer pieces of writing.

You can help by supporting one another and continuing to work hard for your teachers. I hope Year 4 and Year 5 enjoyed their trip to Buxton and I am sure everyone will carry on making Milford Primary School a happy place to learn.

Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jim Henry

Lead inspector