

Milburn School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112183
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	337862
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Dower

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 of pupils on the school roll	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alex Jakob-Whitworth
Headteacher	Mrs Nancy Lees
Date of previous school inspection	6 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. He visited four lessons, observed four teachers and spent approximately 70% of inspection time looking at learning. Meetings were held with the Chair of Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, staff and groups of pupils. He observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including pupils' books and files, the minutes of governors' meetings, the school improvement plan, and curriculum and lesson plans. He also assessed the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements. Fifteen questionnaire returns from parents and carers were analysed, together with seventeen from pupils and seven from staff.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the evidence the school holds on individual pupils to show their academic and personal development
- the extent to which provision is adapted effectively to meet individual pupils' needs in this very small school
- the ambition and drive to raise standards further and ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their lives.

Information about the school

This is a very small school where pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. They are White British and none are eligible for free school meals. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school has various awards, including the Activemark and Cumbria's information and communication technology (ICT) achievement award; it was also the winner of the Annual National Unilever International Schools Art Project in 2008. The newly appointed headteacher took up her post at the start of term.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a good school. It gives good value for money.

Judged over time, attainment is above average and pupils' achievement is good, given their average starting points.

Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and daily routines and the excellent level of adult supervision show that they are. Attendance rates are high. Behaviour is excellent and pupils say there is never any bullying. The range of extra-curricular provision for such a small school is wide and pupils participate eagerly in cultural activities and local community events. The older pupils undertake responsibilities in school and encourage and support younger pupils in the mixed-age classes. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and well. They eat healthily, take plenty of exercise and participate in a wide range of sports and physical activities outside of school. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education because of their good basic skills and their keenness to learn. Their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good.

The curriculum is good because it is structured to meet the needs of all pupils and there are effective links with other schools to broaden provision. Care, guidance and support are good, evident from the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Teaching is good and at times outstanding. This, together with the pupils' admirable personal qualities, accounts for the good progress they make and the overall effectiveness of the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The monitoring of pupils' progress across Years 1 to 6 is done informally and lacks rigour. Pupils are not given individual performance targets and the guidance pupils receive on how to improve is variable in quality. This was an issue at the previous inspection. The school's capacity for improvement is satisfactory, however, because the newly appointed headteacher has identified these shortcomings and has begun to put in place procedures to address them. It is too soon to measure their impact.

Self-evaluation is accurate and leaders, managers and governors are justifiably proud of pupils' achievements. There is now an urgency about the drive to do even better.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use challenging performance targets for every pupil in order to raise attainment.
- Establish a rigorous tracking system to monitor pupils' progress against the performance targets.

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- Ensure marking and assessment information guide pupils on how to reach their performance targets.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Overall, pupils' achievement is good. This is because they enjoy school immensely, attend regularly, are highly motivated, are curious about the world around them and are capable of working independently to find out things for themselves.

In such a very small school, pupils' attainment on entry and their subsequent performance in national assessments and tests can vary considerably from year to year. Apart from the Early Years Foundation Stage profiles for the Reception children, the school has no monitoring and tracking system and no reliable progress records. However, lesson observations, conversations with staff and pupils, and scrutiny of pupils' books and files show that learning and progress are good. This is so for all groups, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils have good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and use them well across all subjects. Their social skills are highly developed and their speaking and listening skills are excellent. They have a good understanding of their own cultural heritage but are less aware of the cultural diversity of British society. They know right from wrong and are alert to the consequences of their actions. The quality of their art work is impressive and music plays a big part in the cultural life of the school, with all pupils playing the recorder and singing. They participate enthusiastically in sporting and cultural activities outside of lessons. Spiritual development is good, with pupils reflecting on their relationship with others and the world around them, including the intangible.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils also achieve well because of the consistently good and at times outstanding teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use ICT effectively as a teaching and learning aid. Pupils' understanding and progress is monitored closely in lessons and teachers give timely help when pupils encounter problems. Although good practice was seen in the use of assessment to support learning, it is not being used consistently and well across the school. Marking is variable in quality, with infrequent written guidance for pupils on how to improve their work. Good use is made of learning activities which interest pupils and are relevant to their everyday experiences. They are structured in difficulty to meet the needs of the different age groups. Teaching is outstanding when teachers convey their own enthusiasm for learning, capturing pupils' imagination and inspiring them to want to know more.

The curriculum is structured to meet the needs of all pupils. There is a good balance between provision for the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT, and other subjects. The collaborative learning network between six schools has improved provision for dance, drama, music and art. Links with a local sports college have improved provision and outcomes in physical education. The school rightly has improved provision for design and technology as a development priority.

The good quality care and support pupils receive accounts for the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Transition arrangements for pupils moving through the school are hampered by the lack of monitoring and progress records.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers have been successful in creating a warm and supportive learning

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

environment where pupils feel safe and well cared for. They want the best for pupils, are ambitious for their success and effectively promote equality of opportunity for every boy and girl. Good partnerships have been established with other institutions to broaden the curriculum, and with outside agencies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Child protection arrangements are well established, risk assessments are carried out for all appropriate activities and health and safety checks are undertaken regularly.

There are close links with parents and carers, enabling them to support their children in their learning. The school is a harmonious and cohesive place of learning and pupils are closely involved in the life of the local community. Their understanding and experience of the wider and international communities are less well developed. The school's development plan lacks precision and the priorities are not sufficiently focused on raising pupils' achievement and advancing their personal development. Governors are supportive of the school and give generously of their time to a range of activities. They are not monitoring the school's performance with sufficient rigour and so are not sufficiently involved in improvement planning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in Reception with skills that are broadly at expected levels for their age. They settle well because of the good induction arrangements and because they have the support of the older pupils in the class. They quickly make a contribution in lessons, learning to share ideas and participating in group activities. They make good progress

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and reach, and in some cases exceed, the early learning goals by the start of Year 1. The children's welfare is firmly at the heart of the good provision and there is excellent adult supervision on the village green where children play. Children respond positively to the care they are given and say they love their school. They learn to keep themselves safe and healthy and begin to develop an awareness of the feelings and needs of others. Parents feel welcome in the school and know that they can speak to any adult if they have concerns.

Staff plan a good range of purposeful activities. Adults take every opportunity to talk to children, whatever the activity. Children's language development is enhanced by learning alongside older pupils. Tightly supervised access to the village greens gives children opportunities for making choices about their own learning and play outside the classroom. The school has as a development priority to provide more open and easy access between indoor and outdoor provision. Leadership and management are good. There are effective systems for assessing and recording children's progress and these are used well to plan appropriately challenging work.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are supportive of the school. They expressed appreciation of the work of all staff in providing for their children's well-being and academic development. No significant concerns were raised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Milburn School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 15 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 27 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	67	5	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	80	3	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	73	3	20	1	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	80	2	13	1	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	80	2	13	1	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	60	5	33	1	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	67	4	27	1	7	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	10	67	3	20	1	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	67	4	27	1	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	60	5	33	1	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	53	6	40	1	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	73	3	20	1	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	80	2	13	1	7	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milburn School, Penrith, CA10 1TN

Thank you for the warm welcome I received when I inspected your school.

Yours is a good school and you make good progress because you are taught well and have admirable personal qualities. Your behaviour is excellent and you work hard, you respect and help each other and you like your teachers. You told me that they do all they can to make learning fun and give you the support and encouragement you need. I agree with what you say.

I was impressed by your self-discipline when playing outside on the village green. There are lots of adults there to supervise you and you follow the rules to keep safe.

Even in a good school there are always things to do to improve. I have asked that:

- you are given targets to aim for in your work so that you reach the highest possible standards
- staff watch closely the progress you make towards those targets and give you the guidance you need to reach them.

You appreciate how lucky you are to be part of a small and friendly school, set in beautiful surroundings. I was lucky to be part of your community for two days.

My best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Mr Brian Dower

Lead Inspector

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