

Milton C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110792
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337574
Inspection dates	21-22 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Graham Preston

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr David Lee
Headteacher	Sue Dorrington
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2006
School address	Humphries Way Milton Cambridge CB4 6DL
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors spent half of available learning time observing fifteen teachers and 18 lessons. Meetings were held with governors, staff and pupils and time was also spent looking at pupils' work and analysing the tracking of pupils' progress. Inspectors scrutinised school policies and procedures, especially those for safeguarding pupils, and analysed questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 153 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- Progress made by pupils in lessons, particularly in years 3-6
- Assessment practice and tracking of pupils' attainment and progress
- Care and support for pupils including safeguarding
- The impact of governors and school leaders on school improvement.

Information about the school

The school is considerably larger than average. Most pupils are of white British heritage but there have been an increasing proportion of pupils from other ethnic groups reflected in a greater number of pupils for whom English is their second language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has also increased steadily and is now broadly in line with the national average. The school has both the Active Mark and Healthy Schools awards.

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

2

Main findings

The great majority of parents rightly value this school with its positive and supportive ethos that enables pupils to develop well both academically and socially, firmly based on its Christian values. It benefits from strong leadership provided by the headteacher and governors, well supported by an effective mix of experienced and more recently qualified staff.

The school has done well in absorbing an increasingly mixed intake of pupils with greater learning needs while sustaining its above average attainment levels. Pupils make particularly good progress in Years 1 and 2, and recent developments in provision have ensured pupils sustain this good progress in Years 3-6. Much of this improvement is as a result of a clear focus on improving numeracy and literacy skills. The whole school has a strong emphasis on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This enables pupils to develop well in terms of their positive attitudes and maturity. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good and attendance is well above the national average.

Teachers and support staff work very hard to plan and deliver effective lessons that have a clear learning purpose and successfully engage pupils' interest. Marking is mostly good and the best practice provides pupils with clear guidance for improvement. However, some lessons are slower paced and do not fully challenge all pupils in these very wide ability groups. The curriculum has a number of key strengths that include a focus on improving literacy and numeracy, as well as providing a wide range of experiences in and out of the classroom. Milton is well regarded as a leading school for its provision of PSHE and for its work on Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). There is some good practice in the use of ICT but opportunities for greater pupil use are limited by the facilities. Care and guidance is a major strength of the school and helps explain why pupils feel particularly safe and are able to contribute confidently to the life of the school.

The school is well run by a very experienced and respected headteacher who is very well supported by very active and well informed governors. The leadership team has recently been strengthened and this has helped the school more rigorously track the progress of its pupils. Staff morale is high and they are fully engaged in the development of the school. The school is well aware of areas that can be further improved. Self-evaluation, for example, is mostly accurate, though some of the school monitoring and evaluation could be sharper in driving improvement. The very good governing body has been extremely active in the improvement of the school though acknowledges that it has yet provide a coherent strategy for greater community cohesion. Nonetheless the school leaders and governors' experience, expertise and commitment ensure that the capacity for further improvement is good.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Expand and improve ICT facilities in order to provide more access and learning opportunities to pupils
- Build on the already good teaching by providing more challenging learning opportunities for able pupils in all lessons
- Ensure that the leadership team and strong and supportive governing body work together in order to:
 - Establish more rigorous monitoring and development of teaching
 - Design and implement an effective strategy for community cohesion

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils have consistently attained above average standards and a recent fall in writing standards at the end of Y6 has been successfully addressed. The good teaching and the high levels of pupil attendance both help ensure that pupils learn well and make good progress. In recent years that progress has tended to be greater in Years 1 and 2 and slowing to some extent in Years 3 to 6. However, the considerable emphasis on improved learning and assessment in those years, together with rigorous pupil tracking and additional support have all ensured that progress of pupils considerably exceeds expectations. While parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, there are a number who believe that their more able children could be doing even better. Changes in the school intake has increased the number of pupils with particular learning and language needs and the effective provision for those pupils enable them to make similarly good progress.

Pupils’ strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very evident in their developing confidence and maturity and readiness to participate in lessons. Many of the pupils are able to demonstrate healthy lifestyles by their active involvement in sports and understanding of healthy eating. High levels of attendance reflect their enjoyment of school and many enthusiastically embrace opportunities to be actively involved in the school and wider community. Pupils talk positively about their involvement in the School Council which participates in staff appointments and is very active in charity work including, for example, sponsorship of a child in Vietnam. More generally, pupils are involved in the care of the elderly, some train as play leaders while others help run an allotment as part of the Eco Schools project.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
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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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

A significant proportion of parents and carers comment positively on staff as being caring and approachable. They say staff are hard working and importantly, effective teachers that enable their children to make good progress. Teaching is certainly good in many respects. Lessons are well planned with a clear purpose shared with the pupils. Learning is organised well so that pupils enjoy their work and make good progress. There is much very good display work that creates a positive learning context and the electronic whiteboards are sufficiently well used for whole class work. Considerable efforts have been made to improve assessment practice and identify those pupils needing additional support. All this has had a positive effect on pupil progress, particularly in Years 3 to 6 where there were some concerns. Most lessons are challenging but some lessons are slow paced while others have too much whole class teaching which does not sufficiently challenge the more able. The curriculum is good overall though the school recognises that its current ICT facilities are insufficient to provide good opportunities for pupils to fully develop their skills. There are considerable strengths in other ways. The learning programmes in mathematics, writing and reading successfully develop pupils' basic skills and the school is highly regarded for its PSHE work schemes which include a strong focus on Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL). There is a wide range of extra curricular activities. These include good quality provision in physical activity reflected in the Active School award. Some pupils benefit from strong specialist music support while modern languages provision is considerably enhanced by very talented specialist French teaching. The positive outcomes in terms of pupil attitudes, attendance and behaviour, all reflect the effective care and guidance provided by the

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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school. A few parents have commented that at times the school’s readiness to rehabilitate rather than isolate the very few challenging pupils distracts learning in lessons. In fact, the school special needs staff provide effective support and can show considerable success in this area.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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?

The headteacher provides very supportive and visible leadership of the school and is acknowledged by numerous parents in their comments. This leadership is particularly successful in creating a cohesive and hard working team of teachers and support staff who in the words of one parent “go the extra mile to create a very effective school” The leadership team has been recently strengthened by a new appointment. All are encouraged to play a part in school improvement and responsibilities are distributed throughout the staff. This approach has considerable strengths but does require more careful monitoring and coordination. For example, the inspectors agreed with the school’s evaluation that teaching is good. However, there is not sufficient rigour in school evaluations to raise teaching quality further. Many staff are currently involved in developing a more creative and thematic curriculum but to do this effectively requires clearer coordination and accountability. Many parents took the trouble to write additional positive comments about the accessibility and responsiveness of the school reflecting particularly good home-school engagement. Also significant, were the comments from some parents for whom English is not their first language. They praised the setting up of a bilingual group and the progress their children have made in learning English. The school is very aware of the progress of all of its pupils and demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity. Links with the various outside agencies are equally strong in promoting child protection and welfare. The governors are a major strength of the school. The substantial majority are actively involved in the development of the school and include very experienced educational professionals able to provide informed support. Most aspects of governance are very strong, there are two areas that governors recognise, need to be addressed. The Governing Body has yet to carry out required audit and strategy plan for community cohesion, though the school does in practice do much that promotes such cohesion. Child protection has a very high priority and day to day practice is very strong. However, some record keeping, while meeting

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requirements, is less clearly organised.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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

The school intake has become steadily more diverse in recent years and children’s skills and capabilities are now broadly average on entry. Outcomes over the last three years show that children make generally good progress. In the current foundation classes, skills in communication, language and literacy as well as mathematics, are all developing well. Personal, social and emotional development is also good. This is reflected in the way children play well together and show increasing levels of independence. Provision is good. Staff are appropriately qualified and the planning of activities is sufficiently structured to account for the different abilities and skills of all pupils. The learning environment is bright and welcoming with a strong caring ethos. The size of the room is smaller than average as it needs to accommodate two foundation classes. The inside activities are interesting and engaging but despite considerable investment, the outside activities are less varied and at the time of the inspection less well utilised. Relationships with children are good and their behaviour very well managed. Observations and assessments are done regularly and are used to plan new activities thoughtfully matched to children’s needs. Leadership and management of foundation provision is good overall, reflecting strengths in ensuring effective team work and planning contributing to

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good pupil progress. Parents comment positively on the good communication with the foundation staff who involve the parents in supporting their child’s learning goals. There are some aspects that can be further strengthened such as providing a better guidance booklet to parents, and improving the range and use of learning resources inside and outside. Even so, pupils’ experiences in foundation prepare them well for Year 1 and the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.

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

The great majority of parents and carers are very positive about the staff and the school. Many chose to write additional comments. Most of these were very positive particularly about the care and support provided by the staff and the progress their children were making. A small minority, while happy with the school, felt their able children could be challenged more and a few felt they could be better informed about their child’s progress. The inspectors agreed that in some instances, the more able could benefit from more challenging teaching though the school is doing much to strengthen this area including providing additional enhancements for the gifted and talented. There is limited evidence to support the view that communication with parents is less than good. The school uses various means to communicate with parents and a large number of parents and carers praise the accessibility and responsiveness of teachers and others to any concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Milton C of E Primary 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 inspection team received 153 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 377 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	89	58	61	40	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	92	61	59	39	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	39	86	57	6	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	69	45	78	51	4	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	85	57	64	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	72	48	74	49	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	70	46	79	52	4	3	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)	55	38	83	58	4	3	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	36	88	59	8	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	61	40	84	55	6	4	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	36	86	58	9	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	80	53	69	45	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	88	58	63	41	2	1	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 all 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 pupils' 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.



25 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milton C of E Primary School, Milton, Cambridge, CB4 6DL

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Milton is a good school where you are making good progress and attaining above average results by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. We were pleased to see how well behaved you were and how well everyone gets on together. This helps to make your school such a happy, friendly place to be. It is especially good to see how you like to take on responsibility and help others.

The children in the Reception Classes settle in quickly and your parents told us how much they appreciate the help and advice they get from your teachers.

Very many of your parents told us how much many of you like school. One parent said her daughter said she would like to spend her weekends in school! It is certainly true that most of you get on with your teachers and want to do well. We know that you appreciate the good teaching and facilities in most of your subjects but a number of you commented that you would like more opportunities to use computers. We have asked the headteacher and governors to work to improve the ICT facilities in the school.

We know that your teachers make considerable efforts to plan their lessons so that all of you can understand and make good progress. However we noted that some of you could cope with more challenging work on occasion and have asked the teachers to provide more opportunities for this.

As you are all well aware, the school is very well run and we have made a few further suggestions as to how the governors and senior staff can make the school even better.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful on our visit

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston

Lead Inspector

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