

Milford Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123723
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	359497
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Anne Wright

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shaun Kitto
Headteacher	John Gordon
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors saw 21 lessons taught by 14 teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, and with pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents, including those related to safeguarding, the school development plan, pupils' work, and information about pupils' progress. They also took into account the views of pupils, staff and 134 parents and carers expressed in their responses to questionnaires.

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

- The impact of work being done to improve pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6, in particular in English.
- The effectiveness of provision for low attaining boys, the more able, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels and the governing body in helping to improve the school further.

Information about the school

This is larger than most primary schools. Most pupils come from the local area, and are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Many of these have speech, language and communication needs. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is high largely because the school has special provision for pupils with speech and language disorders. These pupils are fully integrated into the school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school is a member of the Yeovil Federation of Schools. The school has achieved Healthy Schools Plus status and the Active Mark Schools Award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Milford Junior School is a satisfactory school. The high degree of satisfaction expressed by parents and carers who commend the approachability of staff and their concern for individual pupils is summarised by, 'This is a happy, friendly and welcoming school, where the children always come first.' It also reflects the school's good engagement with parents, and its high level of pastoral care which is a key strength of this school. This, combined with an extensive programme of visits, visitors to school and extra-curricular activities, nurtures pupils and extends their learning experience. Consequently, pupils grow in confidence and develop good personal and social skills. They behave well, and say they feel very safe at Milford Junior. Pupils' well-being is further enhanced by the excellent extent to which they are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles, recognised in a national award. However, while care, guidance and support are good, there are weaknesses in other aspects of the school's work that mean that pupils' achievement is only satisfactory.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. There are differences in and between subjects, and in the performance of different groups of pupils. Low-attaining boys, the more able, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make less progress than their peers. Pupils do better in mathematics than in English. A contributory factor is that the school's system for checking on pupils' progress has not been sufficiently rigorous to fully identify underachievement and to inform personalised teaching. Senior leaders have identified weaknesses in the progress made by low attaining boys, in particular in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6. To tackle this, they introduced booster groups, 'talk for writing' and a whole-school approach to some aspects of assessment for learning, and these are starting to have an appropriate impact on progress.

The variation in pupils' progress is also linked to inconsistencies in teaching quality, and assessment through marking. While there are good lessons throughout the school, others do not fully engage pupils in their learning. Activities are not always well matched to the range of pupils' needs, in particular the needs of low-attaining boys, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the more able, so that progress slows. The quality of marking is inconsistent, where it is good, pupils are given clear, subject specific guidance in terms of next steps for improvement.

While senior leaders have accurately identified key aspects of teaching that need to be improved, the middle leaders have not been involved in a rigorous process of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. The introduction of a sharper, more accurate self-evaluation system is an improvement since the last inspection. School leaders, including members of the governing body, have a clear vision and shared ambition for the future ensuring a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in Years 3 to 6 to above average levels, and accelerate their progress in English and mathematics through:
 - ensuring learning activities are precisely matched to their individual learning needs
 - providing clear guidance to pupils through marking so that they understand what they need to do to improve
 - engaging pupils in their learning throughout every lesson.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and managers by:
 - refining the tracking of pupils' progress, in particular of low-attaining boys, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the more able, so as to identify and tackle underachievement and inform accurate intervention
 - extending the role of the middle leaders to increase their accountability through a more rigorous timetabled process of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' attainment on entry into the junior school is average. They are generally enthusiastic and interested learners. In most lessons they readily offer their ideas and work well in small groups. They particularly enjoy practical learning: for example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were keen to use the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate their understanding of decimals. In other lessons, however, pupils are less engaged because the pace is too slow and there is insufficient challenge, in particular for more-able pupils in Years 3 to 6.

A range of intervention programmes is starting to prove effective in improving the progress of low-attaining boys, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities leading to their satisfactory progress. However, the curriculum does not always match the learning needs and aptitudes of all pupils. Consequently, in lessons pupils are not always fully engaged and learning slows.

Pupils show an excellent awareness of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle and many are keen participants in a range of sports-related activities, resulting in the school achieving the Active Mark Award for the third consecutive year. Pupils are clear that there is little bullying and they would readily turn to an adult if they were concerned. Pupils contribute well to the running of the school by taking on a variety of responsibilities, and the Kids' Council provides an effective voice in the school. Pupils' contribution to the wider community is good: for example, the 'Milford Detectives' are taking part in a research project for the community's Milford Hall which has recently been rebuilt. Music is a particular strength of the school, and the choirs perform at community events. Pupils' satisfactory attendance combined with their satisfactory basic skills mean they are adequately prepared for secondary school and the world of work. Pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good. They have a good awareness of the needs of others and respect their needs and interests.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

A range of initiatives has been introduced to enhance key aspects of provision and to improve pupils' achievement. The quality of teaching is improving. Strengths include good teacher subject knowledge, the effective use of additional adults to facilitate learning, especially for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties, and good relationships with pupils. Enjoyment is enhanced by a curriculum that offers opportunities to bring learning to life through plenty of trips. The Year 6 residential trip to the Isle of Wight and the Year 5 residential trip to Mill on the Brue provide pupils with memorable experiences. However, the curriculum does not always match their individual needs, in particular low-attaining boys, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the more able in Years 3 to 6. There have been some improvements in assessment through the use of 'Assessing Pupil Progress', in particular in English. However, assessment is not yet used precisely enough in all subjects to ensure that activities take learning forward at a fast enough rate for all pupils. Marking across the school is inconsistent in terms of helping pupils to understand how to improve their work.

The school's care of its pupils is evident in its support for pupils who are potentially vulnerable. For example, members of staff work in close partnership with their parents and carers, and good links with an extensive range of outside agencies help to support pupils' needs. Very thorough arrangements are in place to support pupils when they are joining or leaving the junior school, so that they quickly settle.

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

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Accurate self-evaluation of various aspects of the school's performance has been used effectively to inform priorities for further improvement. These are well founded and senior leaders, but less so middle leaders, are taking appropriate action to improve provision in key areas. Much of this work is beginning to have a positive impact: for example, the new system of monitoring teaching and learning has a sharper focus on raising standards. Challenging targets are set for pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 6, but these were not all met last year. The tracking of progress through the school of different groups of pupils is not yet sufficiently robust to inform accurately where interventions are required to ensure that all pupils in Years 3 to 6 make consistently good progress.

The school is inclusive and all pupils are warmly welcomed. While the school is effective in providing good pastoral care for individuals, and communicates well with parents and carers, its work to actively promote equalities of opportunities and tackle discrimination to ensure that all achieve equally well is in the early stages.

Safeguarding arrangements are good and are constantly updated to reflect their high priority within the school. Older pupils, therefore, have a good understanding of risk, for example in relation to the use of the internet. All statutory duties are met. The school is a cohesive community, and links with a variety of agencies contribute positively to pupils' well-being. To further promote community cohesion the school has rightly identified plans to strengthen community links across the United Kingdom. The governing body is committed and is well organised to support the school. It is becoming more proactive in asking questions about the school's effectiveness. Partnership activities with other schools in Yeovil through the Federation contribute satisfactorily to pupils' achievement.

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

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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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Almost one third of parents and carers completed the inspection questionnaire, showing a positive response to all aspects of the school. They particularly appreciate how much their children enjoy school and how safe they are, with one parent commenting, 'This is a fantastic school and makes a great difference to children's lives.' Another commented, 'The school is a wonderful place to learn and to grow in.' Of the few concerns that were expressed by parents, these related to behaviour, and to the school not meeting the learning needs of their children. The inspectors found behaviour to be good. They endorsed the view of parents and carers and found learning and progress to be satisfactory. This is included in the identified areas for improvement as shown in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Milford Junior 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 134 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 404 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	58	51	38	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	89	66	45	34	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	73	54	53	40	6	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	70	52	58	43	5	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	88	66	40	30	2	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	69	51	55	41	9	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	72	54	59	44	2	1	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)	68	51	58	43	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	72	54	54	40	5	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	61	46	62	46	7	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	61	46	58	43	11	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	86	64	41	31	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	92	69	35	26	3	2	1	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



26 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milford Junior School, Yeovil, BA21 4PG

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave to the inspectors when we recently visited your school. We were pleased to see that almost all of you enjoy school. I thought you might be interested in what we are saying in our report. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education and does some things particularly well. You have lots of opportunities to participate in clubs and visits. This helps you to develop good skills in working together and appreciating others' needs. Your behaviour is good, and your headteacher and staff take good care of you. As a result, you have an excellent understanding of the importance of keeping healthy, and a good understanding of staying safe.

To help the school improve further we have asked the teachers and leaders to do the following two things:

- Help you to improve your work in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 by making sure that the work set is at the right level, with practical activities that allow you to learn well, and for teachers' marking to clearly show you how to improve your work.
- Improve the tracking systems for checking how well you are all doing so that any of you who may not be doing as well as you should, will quickly receive the correct help to improve your work. We have asked that all school leaders check that you are learning well in all lessons.

You can help by continuing to work hard and doing what teachers tell you after marking your work.

Yours sincerely

Anne Wright

Lead inspector

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