

Milburn School

Milburn, Penrith, Cumbria, CA10 1TN

Inspection dates

28 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate. Pupils do not make the progress they should, particularly in mathematics, spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting.
- Pupils' key numeracy and literacy skills are underdeveloped. They do not use and apply them well enough in other subjects.
- Teaching over time is inadequate. The most able pupils are not challenged enough. Pupils' work and progress is not properly checked. Expectations are too low.
- Pupils' achievement is held back in a range of subjects because teachers' lesson planning does not build successfully on what pupils already know and can do.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate because measures to keep pupils safe are insufficient.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. Essential improvements to teaching and achievement have not been tackled.
- Leaders have failed to ensure adequate methods for checking and improving the performance of teachers. Methods for tracking pupils' progress are weak. Consequently, both teaching and achievement have, over time, fallen to inadequate levels.
- Many parents have lost confidence in the school and have removed their children.
- The school has been beset by staff absences and relationship difficulties. Ineffective governance and leadership at all levels has resulted in the school's loss of direction.
- Much needed improvements are too heavily dependent on external support and temporary arrangements for teaching and leadership. There have been no senior or middle leaders in permanent posts for some time. Both the current teachers are temporary. This situation reduces the school's ability to improve.

The school has the following strengths

- A local headteacher provides good support.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is good.
- Pupils enjoy opportunities to learn outdoors and visits to a nearby school to learn with other pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed significant parts of four lessons. One lesson was observed jointly with the visiting headteacher, currently supporting the school part time. Teaching was seen in all classes. Inspectors looked at pupils' books, including those containing work over the past year, to gain evidence about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress over time.
- Inspectors listened to all pupils read.
- Meetings were held with two governors, the headteacher who is providing support, a representative of the local authority and with all teachers. Informal meetings were held with all pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentary evidence including records of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and records of governing body meetings. Inspectors also considered a number of policies including those for child protection and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at 11 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire for parents (Parent View). They read a number of letters from parents and spoke to others as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

David Law, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Debra De Muschamp

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The number of pupils at Milburn is well below that of an average-sized primary school. Each of the two classes has a mix of year groups; one class normally has Key Stage 2 pupils and the other, Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils. Currently, the school has no pupils in either the Year 6 or the Reception age range and was not able to provide data for the progress of children previously in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The proportion of pupils leaving the school before the end of Year 6 in the last year is much higher than is typically seen. The number on roll has fallen sharply within the last year.
- There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups and none whose first language is not English.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action, because they are disabled or have special educational needs, is average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families or those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Since the start of the autumn term 2013, the school has been supported by a headteacher from a local school for approximately two days each week, because the permanent headteacher post is vacant. Both teachers at the school during the inspection were recent, temporary appointments covering the long-term absence of both permanent teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As quickly as possible, improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better, and so all pupils can make at least good progress in their learning, by:
 - making sure all teachers have high expectations about what pupils can achieve
 - ensuring teaching challenges the most able pupils so they learn at a faster rate and reach the higher levels of which they are capable
 - checking pupils' work and their progress regularly, marking their books carefully and using the information from this to plan and teach lessons that meet pupils' varying ages and abilities.
- Raise pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by:
 - improving pupils' ability to use and apply key literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects
 - making sure pupils make secure and brisk progress in spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting
 - accelerating pupils' progress in mathematics, particularly by broadening their experience of problem solving.
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, so that it has the capacity to make rapid improvements in teaching, achievement and in keeping pupils safe by:

- making sure that all safeguarding requirements are met and that staff training is kept up to date at the level required
 - implementing comprehensive arrangements for checking on and managing the performance of teachers, including setting clear targets for pupils' achievement so teachers are held to account for the progress pupils make and inadequate teaching is eradicated
 - ensuring that methods for checking on and evaluating pupils' progress are firmly in place and that the resulting information is used carefully to determine clear and relevant objectives in the teaching and achievement priorities of the school development plan
 - making sure that all subjects of the curriculum meet pupils' needs and are planned in a way that builds securely on their progress and prior learning
 - developing clear policies and providing further training to guide teachers when they mark pupils' work and assess their progress, so that future teaching plans are based securely on reliable information
 - building leadership at all levels, including at headship level, and providing the opportunity for teachers to contribute to the leadership of subjects and aspects of the school's work
- Undertake an external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Ofsted will make recommendations for actions on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils are significantly underachieving and, given their individual starting points, make too little progress. In 2013, pupils left the school at the end of Key Stage 2 with below average standards of attainment despite having started the key stage with average standards.
- Work in pupils' books shows inadequate progress not only over time but currently. Data from the school's albeit weak tracking of pupils' progress also confirms this underachievement. Pupils are not learning enough now and have not learnt quickly enough in the past. Although there is some quickening of learning due to the efforts of temporary teachers, particularly at Key Stage 1, many pupils have gaps in their learning because teaching over time has been inadequate.
- As a result of a succession of different teachers and weak teaching over time, pupils' learning has been inconsistent and they have not acquired the skills of which they are capable. For example, key skills in handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation have not been learnt quickly enough and this slows pupils' progress, particularly in writing. Pupils find it difficult to apply key literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects because they have too little opportunity to do this.
- Achievement has declined since the last inspection. Cohorts are small and this presents fluctuations in levels of overall attainment from year to year but, even when this is taken into account, there is clear underachievement. It is most pronounced in mathematics and for girls and for the most able. Pupils' progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2, for example, worsened over a three year period from 2011 to reach a significantly low point at the end of Year 6 in 2013.
- Pupils make too little progress in mathematics because too much work is about repeating calculations that pupils can do well enough. Consequently, pupils' learning is held back and their ability to solve problems and investigate different areas of mathematics is restricted.
- Underachievement is also evident in reading. For example, by the end of Year 6 in 2013 the proportion making expected progress was below that typically seen. The temporary teachers have worked hard to encourage pupils to read and, at Key Stage 1, some effective teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is helping pupils to learn better. This is beginning to pay dividends because pupils are keen to read.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also underachieve because support is not targeted well to meet their needs. However, the most able pupils show the most pronounced underachievement both in lessons and in their books because they have not been challenged enough.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium make inadequate progress. However, there is too little data to make meaningful comparisons between their performance and that of similar pupils nationally.
- Because the different groups of pupils do not achieve as well as they ought, and overall pupils make inadequate progress compared to their peers nationally, the promotion of equal opportunities to learn is inadequate.
- Scrutiny of pupils' books reveals that pupils make insufficient progress across different subjects of the curriculum. For example, little geography or design and technology was seen. Pupils enjoy 'forest school' (visiting the woods to learn outdoors) and talked enthusiastically about recently established visits to their partner school for physical education lessons. However, overall pupils are not prepared well enough to be successful at the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because over time pupils have made too little progress in their learning.
- Pupils' books show too little learning, particularly since January 2013. This is because teaching has provided isolated activities that have not been planned carefully enough to meet pupils'

needs. The poor presentation of work by pupils has not been challenged by leaders. Pupils have repeated exercises they already knew how to do rather than gain new skills. As one pupil said, 'once you've got it you don't need to keep going over it.'

- Since the last inspection, the overall quality of teaching has declined and too much has been inadequate. Long-term staff absences have meant that pupils have had various teachers on a temporary basis. This has further exacerbated inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and has limited pupils' progress. However, the current temporary teachers are working hard to recover lost ground. For example, some good teaching was seen at Key Stage 1, when pupils were excited to be learning about 'castles'.
- The most pronounced shortcomings have been in the teaching of mathematics at Key Stage 2 and this is revealed in pupils' books. Successive teachers have repeatedly set pupils an unbalanced diet of mundane and unchallenging tasks so their ability to apply mathematical skills, for example in solving problems, develops slowly. Literacy and numeracy skills have not been taught systematically enough so pupils have too many gaps in their learning, particularly in handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Teachers have expected too little of pupils. Work in pupils' books over the last 12 months shows that pupils do too little work and are not challenged to reach a higher standard, for example, in presenting their work or in being persistent if they encounter a problem. The most able pupils have not been challenged enough and consequently have made too little progress.
- Pupils' work has not been adequately checked, marked and assessed for some time. The current temporary teachers have started to address this and some of their marking is good but they have had to plan work for pupils without any information about their prior learning or reliable data on how well pupils were achieving. The result is that pupils are still unsure what to improve upon and that future teaching is not adequately planned to provide pupils with what they most need to do to progress well.
- Relationships in classrooms between pupils and their new teachers are positive and this is encouraging pupils' personal and social development. These teachers are injecting some enjoyment into learning and they manage pupils' behaviour well. They are beginning to make up for lost learning and past weak teaching, but their presence in the school is not permanent.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. School policies and procedures to keep pupils safe are not effective enough and need to be brought up to date. Staff training in keeping pupils safe has not been undertaken. On the day of the inspection, there was a need to address some safeguarding requirements. Although this was quickly done, further vigilance is required to ensure this continues. Although pupils say they feel safe, and have an adequate understanding of how to keep safe, some parents said that their children did not feel safe or happy in school.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in lessons, follow instructions and get on well with their teachers and each other. This is a positive development given disruptions to their learning and weak teaching over time. This is happening because teaching is now making lessons more interesting.
- Around school, pupils conduct themselves sensibly and are responsible and helpful. They keep the classrooms tidy and look after equipment they use. The atmosphere is calm and orderly in the playground and at lunchtimes. One pupil described the school as 'one big family'. There have been no exclusions of pupils from the school.
- Attendance fell to below average in the last school year although it has recovered to reach average levels since last September. Checks are made when pupils are absent but systems for monitoring absence and its impact on learning are not effective enough. Pupils are punctual getting to school and into lessons.
- Pupils say they experience no bullying and that any minor disagreements are soon sorted out. One parent said their child had experienced bullying in the past. Pupils have a sound enough

knowledge of different types of bullying. School systems to record and monitor any instances of bullying are in place and record no incidents.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not been able to secure essential improvements since the last inspection. The school has been troubled in the past by relationship difficulties. The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has declined and measures to keep pupils safe have lapsed. As a result, the school provides an inadequate education. Over the last twelve months, a significant proportion of parents have become concerned about this and removed their children.
- The school has lacked clear senior leadership for some time. The previous headteacher left the school at the start of this school year following periods of absence. Middle leadership roles are not clearly defined and this has been the case for some time. All of this weakens the capacity for the school to improve.
- An experienced headteacher from a nearby school is providing effective support but is only available for a small part of each week, even though the school's needs are considerable. Parents said this support is improving things and inspectors agree, but there is too much to be done to establish and sustain a clear direction following an extended period of difficulty. Consequently, improvements are fragile, too dependent on outside support and temporary arrangements (for both teaching and leadership) and so the capacity to drive improvement forward rapidly enough is further limited.
- Methods for checking on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching have not been properly established and arrangements to review the school's performance are inadequate. Over time, leaders and governors have not tackled weaknesses in teaching through robust performance management, thus allowing teachers to have pay increases despite pupils' poor progress.
- The school improvement plan is not informed by clear evaluations of the quality of provision, particularly teaching, because methods to collect this information have not been carried through. Consequently, the improvement plan lacks a proper focus on teaching and pupils' progress. It is not sufficient to provide clear enough direction.
- Pupils are now gaining from links with the supporting headteacher's school. Pupils and parents say how enjoyable this is. However, over the longer term, leaders have not ensured that the planning of different subjects effectively meets pupils' needs. For example, the most able pupils are not sufficiently stretched and there is no leadership responsibility to ensure that they are. Nobody leads the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The new primary school sports funding has been used effectively. It provides additional activities and has increased participation and promoted pupils' well-being. Pupils say they enjoy sport because it keeps them healthy.
- The local authority has provided much support to improve leadership and governance and current governors are grateful for this. It has brokered the current support from a local headteacher, which is giving parents more confidence in the school, and has formally warned the governing body of the need to take action. However, despite these actions the school's decline has not been halted.
- The leadership provided by the supporting headteacher is fostering good relations among all groups of pupils and she is quick to ensure there is no discrimination; the temporary staff are assisting this well.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The membership of the governing body has undergone significant change in the last few months. Half of the governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, are new to the role and to the governing body. Governors have the will to succeed and are keen for the school to improve. They are rebuilding relationships with parents and two parents wrote to say they appreciate this. However, many governors do not have experience of the role and still need to acquire knowledge in key areas. This includes checking on the quality of teaching. Governors

do not know enough about this to hold leaders to account for teaching quality. The governing body has not yet established robust procedures to manage the performance of teachers so pay awards are not linked to pupils' progress.

- Governors have recently had some training in the use of achievement data but need more to extend their knowledge to appropriate levels.
- Governors know how pupil premium funding is spent but have not been able to evaluate the impact of this spending on those eligible pupils. Recently appointed governors have improved some health and safety issues but safeguarding requirements are not fully met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112183
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	432439

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	5
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Russell Clark
Acting Headteacher	Barbara Key
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2010
Telephone number	01768 361514
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