

Milford Junior School

Glenthorne Avenue, Yeovil, Somerset, BA21 4PG

Inspection dates

9–10 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not a good school because:

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good enough across all year groups.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is not good enough. The gap between their achievement and other pupils, in English and mathematics, is not being closed quickly enough.
- Not all teachers' expectations are high enough regarding the quality and quantity of pupils' work.
- Teachers do not always use information on pupils' progress well enough to ensure activities are set at the right level.
- Subject and year group leaders are relatively new to their roles and have had limited impact on improving teaching and pupils' progress.
- Not all marking shows pupils how to improve their work. Teachers do not always check that pupils have acted on their comments.
- Senior leaders and governors have not fully addressed all of the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection.

The school has the following strengths:

- Most pupils are starting to make better progress than in previous years. This is leading to rising standards.
- The achievement of Year 6 pupils, shown by the 2014 national tests, has improved steadily over the past two years.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are respectful and, as a result, their attendance is above average. They say they feel safe and valued in school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through activities both in and out of the classroom.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 25 lessons, eight of which were with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made short visits to other lessons, looked at pupils' work, observed two assemblies and listened to individual Year 6 pupils read.
- Meetings were held with staff, parents and pupils. The lead inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other members, as well as a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and recent school questionnaires. Inspectors also considered the 32 staff questionnaires that were returned.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation which included national test results, the school's own information about pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. The team also scrutinised safeguarding policies and information relating to staff performance, behaviour and attendance.
- During the inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement for children looked after, on free school meals and the most able pupils. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of support services.

Inspection team

Mark Anderson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Hazel Callaghan	Additional Inspector
Bruce Waelend	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Milford is larger than the average-sized junior school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The number of pupils on roll has remained constant in recent years.
- Pupils are taught in four classes in Years 3, 5 and 6. In Year 4, pupils are taught in three classes, apart from in English and mathematics when they are divided into four groups.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is average. This is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school is a member of the Yeovil Federation of 33 local schools.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- No pupils are educated off site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by improving the quality of teaching so that it is good or better, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - provide stimulating work that both engages and challenges all pupils
 - provide marking and feedback in all subjects that clearly sets out 'next steps' to show pupils how to improve their work
 - identify and correct all mistakes and misconceptions
 - use information about pupils' progress to plan work that is set at the correct level.
- Close the gap in achievement between disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs with that of their peers.
- Improve the leadership and management by ensuring:
 - senior leaders judge the school's performance rigorously and accurately
 - the skills, expertise and impact of the subject and year group leaders are developed further
 - governors challenge the senior leaders more robustly in order to speed up pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement over time are not consistently good.
- The headteacher and governors have a clear understanding of the issues relating to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. However, their judgement of the school's performance, particularly in comparison to other schools nationally, is sometimes too generous and not always rigorous enough.
- Staffing changes made over the last two years have begun to strengthen the overall quality of teaching, and indicate potential for ongoing improvement. Many of the subject and year group leaders are relatively new to their responsibilities. However, their contribution is beginning to have a positive impact on improving teaching and pupils' progress.
- Leaders and governors have addressed most areas of concern identified in the previous inspection. They have secured an improvement in the quality of teaching. This is leading to slowly improving achievement in reading, writing and mathematics for most groups of pupils. Pupils' attendance has risen and is above average. These positive steps demonstrate capacity for further improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have begun to establish effective systems for tracking pupils' progress. As a result, teachers are becoming more accountable for the progress of their pupils. There are now clear links between teachers' performance and pupils' progress on the pay scale.
- Leaders share a determination to avoid discrimination and ensure equality of opportunity for all. Nevertheless, there remains more to do on this, by ensuring that any gaps in achievement between some groups of pupils are eliminated.
- The staff are a united team and are supportive of each other, as demonstrated by the highly positive staff questionnaires.
- Milford prides itself on being a caring school with a genuine caring family atmosphere. All pupils feel valued and consider that Milford is 'their' school.
- The local authority has provided light touch support to Milford over the last year, due to the improving trend in pupil outcomes.
- The school provides regular opportunities for parents to involve themselves in their child's education and all staff and school leaders make themselves accessible to all parents. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are always present at the start and end of the school day. Almost all parents who spoke to the inspectors, and those who responded to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View), were pleased with the school and would recommend Milford.
- The additional sport funding is used well to increase and expand existing opportunities for pupils. It has also been used to develop staff expertise in the delivery of sports and physical education activities. There has been a positive impact on increasing staff confidence and on pupils' enjoyment and physical well-being. The school's leaders and governors monitor the allocation and evaluate the impact of the sport funding effectively.
- The wide range of subjects, together with visits and after-school clubs, enriches pupils' learning experience. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through regular assemblies and numerous visits from outside speakers. Pupils celebrate their achievements in assemblies, that also give time for reflection, and school values of right and wrong are frequently addressed.
- Safeguarding procedures to ensure pupils are kept safe and secure meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has significantly reduced in size. As a result, meetings are more regular and focused. Governors are supportive and committed to driving the school forward, fulfil their statutory duties, and have undertaken the required training. They know the school's main strengths and areas for improvement, including a reasonable knowledge of the quality of teaching. They have a growing understanding of the school's performance information and

how it compares with similar schools nationally. However, historically, they have not challenged senior leaders rigorously enough in order to improve pupils' progress. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, supported by the governors, have managed the performance of teachers reasonably well. However, governors do not yet challenge the school's leadership robustly enough in order for the overall performance of the school to improve at a faster rate. They demonstrate a developing awareness of the school's pay and promotion processes and check the performance of staff and headteacher. The governors monitor the school's finances carefully, as well as being well informed about the allocation and impact of additional government sport funding. They make sure that statutory safeguarding procedures are in place in order to keep pupils and staff safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They show respect for each other, their teachers and other adults. There are clear school policies, including a consistent system of rewards and sanctions, which both pupils and staff follow.
- Pupils are proud of Milford. They are happy and have positive attitudes to learning, especially when tasks in the classroom are engaging and challenging.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the different varieties of bullying, including emotional, physical and cyber bullying. They feel that adults at Milford promptly resolve any incidents or problems they may have. Visits to the playground during the inspection confirmed that behaviour outside classrooms is good.
- Milford ensures that all pupils, including those who are at risk of not doing as well, are well cared for. The new Nurture Room provides an excellent resource for these pupils.
- The great majority of pupils try their best in all subjects, work cooperatively with each other and are eager to learn and develop new skills.
- In almost all classrooms, behaviour is good. However, very occasionally, there is some inappropriate behaviour. Such behaviour is rare and is identified and corrected swiftly by the teachers.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet current requirements. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. All pupils spoken to during the inspection were adamant that their school was a safe environment and they were well looked after.
- Almost all parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) were pleased with the way staff care for their children. All pupils say they feel safe and secure.
- Attendance has improved and is now above the national average.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable. There is not enough that is consistently good to ensure all pupils make good progress in all classes.
- Some teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough, particularly for those of lower ability. Teachers do not always set work at the right level.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are not making enough progress because teaching activities are not set at the right level. As a result, this limits their achievement over time and restricts their ability to catch up with their peers.
- Most groups of pupils, including the most able pupils, are beginning to make better progress because of some improvements to the quality of teaching. However, activities are not always sufficiently challenging to ensure the most able achieve as well as they should.
- Marking and feedback to pupils are not always consistent. Teachers do not always provide 'next steps' to help pupils improve their work. Also, they do not pay close enough attention to correcting errors and challenging any misconceptions.

- Many teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to ask searching questions. This was seen in Year 5 when pupils were encouraged to think of instances where six figure numbers would need to be applied. However, in some activities, learning goals are not always made clear enough to pupils. Where teaching is most effective, teachers sustain pupils' positive attitudes by providing stimulating activities that capture their interest and enthusiasm.
- Pupils develop good levels of skill and confidence in using information technology, which is taught well and integrated effectively across all subjects.
- Classrooms are attractive and tidy with stimulating displays that support learning well. There are very positive relationships between pupils and staff. The use of praise and encouragement is a strong feature of all teaching, resulting in pupils who want to learn.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for individual pupils and small groups.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because a significant number of pupils have not made consistently good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is currently not good enough in English and mathematics. This is because the quality of teaching provided for these pupils is not set at the right level.
- However, over the last eighteen months there is some evidence of an improving trend in most pupils' levels of attainment and rates of progress. Although, some pupils of average and lower ability continue to make slower progress in English and mathematics.
- The whole school focus on improving English over the last year has improved achievement for the majority of pupils. As a result, most are now making better progress in reading and writing in relation to their starting points in Year 3.
- Overall, attainment in English and mathematics is in line with the national average by the time pupils leave in Year 6. This ensures they are well prepared to move on to the next stage of their education.
- The school has raised the level of expectation for the most able pupils. This group of pupils now takes more responsibility for their learning and they set their sights higher. This has resulted in a larger proportion attaining the higher Level 5, in both English and mathematics, in 2013/14.
- Disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for additional government funding are making progress broadly in line with other pupils and achieve similar standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because the funding is allocated effectively to provide additional support and booster sessions for these pupils. This strategy is closing the gap between these pupils and others in all subject areas.
- Reading attainment has begun to improve as a result of a number of initiatives introduced, such as DEAR (Drop Everything And Read!) and guided reading schemes. The profile of reading throughout the school has been raised. Most pupils display good attitudes to reading and many were keen to talk to inspectors about their favourite authors.
- Recently, the school has begun to put in place more carefully evaluated support sessions for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils are now starting to receive more well-directed help from teaching assistants.

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	123723
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	431675
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shaun Kitto
Headteacher	Sarah Elliott
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 September 2012
Telephone number	01935 474477
Fax number	01935 410681
Email address	office@milford-jun.somerset.sch.uk

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