



Milburn School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112183
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289194
Inspection date 26 September 2006
Reporting inspector Ann Wallis

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Milburn
School category	Community		Penrith, Cumbria
Age range of pupils	4-11		CA10 1TN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01768 361514
Number on roll (school)	32	Fax number	0000
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Richard Parker
		Headteacher	Mr Brian Convey
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

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- Milburn Primary is a very small rural school where pupils are taught in mixed age classes in two classrooms. Pupils live in the village or in the local area. The size of each year group results in the attainment on entry to the Reception year varying considerably from year to year, as it is highly influenced by the attainment of individual pupils. There are no pupils whose first language is not English or who are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. The school is sited on the village green, on which the pupils play.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Milburn School is a good school with many outstanding features. It modestly evaluates all aspects of its work as good but the rich and diverse curriculum, the personal development of all pupils and the care and support they are given are outstanding. The enjoyment and well-being of every pupil is at the heart of the school's work. In this small school community, pupils are made to feel very special. They love coming to school, are confident, caring and independent and achieve well. The school provides good value for money.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their support for the school. Their comments included: 'the school has given our daughter the best possible start – teaching her the pleasure of learning'; 'our son is encouraged, nurtured and challenged'; 'the school is the vital bond in a fantastic community spirit'. Parents also praised 'the breadth of knowledge supplied by fantastic teachers'.

Individual pupils make good progress during the Foundation Stage and through Key Stages 1 and 2. Many pupils reach above and well above average standards at the end of Year 6. Overall standards are above average. They fluctuate from year to year because results depend on the attainment of a few individual pupils.

Teaching and learning are good and enable pupils to achieve well. Teachers and teaching assistants are well deployed and teach to their strengths. Consequently, they are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. This leads to pupils achieving high standards in, and getting great enjoyment from, subjects such as art and music.

The school takes excellent care of its pupils and supports them well so they have the confidence to succeed in all that they do. They receive good guidance, but not all pupils are always clear about what their targets for learning are and how to improve their work. The inclusive and caring ethos of the school is such that pupils take on responsibilities and care for each other in so natural a way that they hardly notice they are doing it. The fact that behaviour is exemplary and pupils love learning are the result of the school's outstanding provision for the pupils' personal development.

This small school provides an exceptionally rich and diverse curriculum, from which pupils gain immense benefit. Excellent use is made of the local area and of the skills and talents of those within and outside the school community to provide an impressive range of enrichment activities. The exhibition of pupils' art work at the Tate Modern gallery, visits to Buckingham Palace in recognition of achievements in art and information and communication technology (ICT) and a residential outdoor activities trip are just a few examples from a long list of exciting activities in which pupils have taken part. The school's location makes it difficult to provide a suitable area for outdoor learning for children in the Foundation Stage. The school does all it can to compensate and minimises the impact on the children's learning.

Leadership and management are good. A great strength of the school is the way in which the headteacher has been proactive in forging excellent partnerships with other

schools and seeking funding for shared resources and activities that have broadened the curriculum. Since the last inspection, pupils have continued to achieve well. Priorities for further development are clear and the school's capacity to achieve them is good. All staff at Milburn School work in complete harmony with each other and this school is truly at the heart of the community it serves.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the provision for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Set clearer targets for learning so pupils are more aware of how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of individual pupils from their starting points when they enter the Reception class to the time they leave school is good. In the Foundation Stage children make good progress, particularly in literacy and mathematical development. Results in national tests for the oldest pupils in 2005 and unvalidated test results for 2006 indicate that standards reached in English, mathematics and science are above average. However, some year groups contain as few as two pupils and average figures have limited meaning when group sizes are so small. In 2006, Year 6 pupils met or exceeded their targets in all areas except for higher level English. Boys and girls achieve equally well and pupils with learning difficulties make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy their learning immensely. They are very proud of their school and keen to show what they can do. For example, three older boys who played and sang very well in assembly had asked to do this because the inspector was visiting. Attendance is above average and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils eat healthy lunches, know how to stay safe and understand the benefit of regular exercise. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and take responsibility without question. Two older pupils supervised lunches for 15 younger pupils superbly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are both curious and knowledgeable about their own environment and about the wider world and other cultures. Collaborative activities with other schools, where they mix with larger numbers of children, enhance their social development very well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress because teaching and learning are consistently good in the Foundation Stage and across the school. Teachers know the pupils really well and match work carefully to their needs. Planning is sometimes brief but effective. Lesson aims are not always made clear enough to pupils so that they do not always know what to concentrate on. Teaching assistants and parent helpers give valuable extra help to the pupils who need it so they achieve well. Most lessons are lively and varied. Stories are often told in such a dramatic way that the attention of pupils of all ages is not lost for a second. Good use is made of ICT by both teachers and pupils. Outstanding and very knowledgeable teaching seen in music enabled all pupils to reach the highest notes as they sang 'Bridge Over Troubled Waters' beautifully. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly but they are not always set sufficiently clear targets for learning to help them improve their work further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It has an appropriate focus on developing literacy and numeracy and provision for ICT is excellent. Its real richness comes from the variety of topics studied, the trips and visits, the sporting, artistic, musical and dramatic activities, the nature walks and the outdoor activities. Many of these activities are made possible through excellent links with other schools, parents and the community and the expertise and dedication of staff.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care and support are outstanding and guidance is good. The school takes great care to ensure that pupils are kept safe and healthy. All appropriate safeguarding procedures are fully in place and understood by all staff. Children settle quickly into the Reception class and the school really does live up to its motto of 'small and friendly'. Parents are kept closely informed of their children's progress and are encouraged to be involved in their learning. Pupils achieve well but are not always sure about how to do even better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

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Good leadership and management by the headteacher of a dedicated and

knowledgeable team of part-time teachers, teaching assistants, parent helpers and support staff have led to good achievement for all pupils. Clear leadership and direction of the Foundation Stage is provided by the part-time teacher. The headteacher has led a collaborative network of small local schools and, through this, he and his staff have shared their good practice, particularly in ICT, music and art. Systems for monitoring teaching and learning, planning work and recording progress are effective but sometimes informal and lack detail. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and support its work very well.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Milburn School

Milburn

Penrith

Cumbria

CA10 1TN

27 September 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for giving me such a warm welcome to your school when I visited yesterday. I really enjoyed visiting your lessons, seeing your work and hearing all the things you enjoyed about your school. I was particularly impressed with the way you cared for each other especially when you were playing on the village green at break and lunch time.

These are some of the many good and outstanding things that I found out about your school during my visit:

- your behaviour is excellent, you enjoy school and work very hard
- you make good progress in your work and reach the standards you deserve
- your teachers and classroom helpers teach you well and give you all the help you need to do the best you can
- your school takes great care of you and helps you to become very responsible, caring and confident people
- you are given excellent opportunities to go on trips and visits and take part in lots of extra activities.

This is what I have asked your school to do now:

- provide more opportunities for younger pupils to learn outside
- set you clearer targets for learning so that you know how to improve your work.

You are very lucky to go to such a good school.

Best wishes

Ann Wallis

Lead inspector