

Milverton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123703
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314678
Inspection date	15 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	206
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Price
Headteacher	Richard Stead
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Milverton Taunton TA4 1JP
Telephone number	01823 400439

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	15 October 2008
Inspection number	314678

Fax number

01823 401412

Age group 4-11

Inspection date 15 October 2008

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following:

provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

the underperformance of boys in writing

personal development and well-being

the academic support and guidance provided for the pupils.

Evidence was gained from visiting classrooms, looking at children's work and scrutinising documentation and information on pupil progress. The inspectors also analysed the parent questionnaires and met with senior leaders, children, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average size school serves a socio-economically diverse area that is largely rural but includes pupils from the nearby town of Wellington. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties, which are mostly speech and communication problems, is below the national average. This 'Eco-School' has achieved an Activemark and the Healthy School award. At the time of the inspection, two out of the three senior leaders, including the headteacher, were new to the school. There was also a new chair of governors. The pre-school on site is not managed by the school and was not part of this inspection. Most children transfer to the Reception class for the remainder of their EYFS provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Overall, this school provides a satisfactory education. Most of its features are good and some aspects are outstanding. However, children do not make adequate progress in the Reception class because the EYFS provision is inadequate. The vast majority of parents are very pleased with the school and are delighted with the 'friendly and inclusive ethos' where their children can be 'happy and thrive in the caring environment'. As one parent explained, 'I am pleased and proud that my children attend this school.'

Strong relationships amongst the whole-school community help pupils to become happy and confident young people. They are exceptionally well looked after and this is reflected in the success of after-school 'Toasties' club. Good provision for spiritual, moral and social development has resulted in reflective and caring pupils. They learn and play well together and this contributes to the happy atmosphere. Behaviour in the Reception class is satisfactory overall but occasionally these young children react negatively to poor organisation and weak teaching. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' behaviour is never less than good and is often exceptional. Attitudes towards school are positive and they enjoy coming to school. Attendance rates are average. Pupils know how to stay safe and have an excellent knowledge of eating sensibly and exercising regularly. They make a good contribution to their school and wider local community. They take their role as school councillors seriously. The pupils understand the contributions they are making globally with the school's 'Eco' status and a good many parents pointed out how proud they are of this achievement. Effective strategies, such as engaging with war veterans from the local community when studying World War Two, and visiting the church and nearby farm, help pupils to increase their understanding about the community to which they belong. Opportunities to raise funds for charities and close links with the local sawmill prepare the pupils effectively for their future economic well-being.

From starting points in Reception that are above expectations for this age group, pupils leave school with standards that are above the national average. In relation to their prior attainment, their overall achievement is satisfactory. However, unsatisfactory progress in Reception means they start Year 1 with behaviour and work habits that are below expected levels for this age group.

During their first year of the National Curriculum, a halt is made to their underachievement but pupils take time to learn how to listen and respond to their teachers. They start to develop independent learning and social skills in role-play areas and revise handwriting skills. They receive purposeful and interesting teaching, linked carefully to a well-planned curriculum. Pupils start to make satisfactory progress in this year group. From Years 2 to 6, good teaching and learning ensure that pupils progress well. They respond well to the stimulating environments created by their teachers and are proud of the attractive displays that celebrate their work. Pupils are interested in the well-planned activities that have very good links across the subjects. Year 4 study 'The Tudors'. This promotes historical research and writing skills but also develops sketching and drawing techniques. Learning is made fun in Years 1 to 6 and lessons move along at a good pace. Teachers make it clear to the pupils what they are going to learn and effective questioning ensures that they are all engaged in the lessons. Expectations are high and teachers work hard to rectify poor handwriting habits and presentation skills.

The last inspection report highlighted the need for teachers to improve feedback to pupils on their progress. Written reports have improved and pupils in Year 6 receive high quality academic

guidance and support. This enables the oldest pupils to understand how to improve their work. Clear targets ensure that they know what the next step in their learning will be. However, whilst academic guidance is never less than satisfactory in Years 1 to 5, a lack of consistency in approach limits its effectiveness in improving progress.

The recently appointed headteacher and his new senior leadership team have quickly grasped an accurate picture of the school and have started to reflect this in the school's own self-assessment and development planning. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve, because senior leaders have developed a good understanding of the strengths of the school, and have a clear analysis of the necessary priority for areas that need developing. For example, writing standards have improved since the last inspection. While boys have not achieved as well as they could in their writing skills, working on topics, such as 'Superheroes', and access to a wider range of reading materials, including comics, have proved popular and interesting to them. Their achievement is rising. The very recent introduction of a consistent focus on improving handwriting throughout the school has also resulted in improvements, particularly at the top end of the school. The senior leadership team fully understand that, in contrast, provision in the EYFS has been inadequate for much too long and, together with the local authority, are providing well-focused support. However, the outcomes of this have not improved the quality of education for the youngest children fast enough.

The chair of governors is new to the role and there has been recent reorganisation of responsibilities. Governors provide a good level of support, show a keen interest in the school and have been working closely with the local authority to rectify weaknesses in the EYFS. Governors and senior leaders recognise the excellent relationships they share with parents and appreciate the support parents give to their own children's learning. They fully appreciate the good links they share with the nearby secondary school and wider community.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 4

Most year groups of children enter the Reception class with the knowledge and skills above the levels expected for their age. However, this good starting point is lost because of weaknesses in assessment, teaching and the curriculum in this class. Children are not making enough progress and the overall effectiveness of the EYFS is inadequate. Provision for welfare is satisfactory. Children are safe and relationships between adults and children are warm and caring. They make sound progress in their personal and social development because they interact with staff and pupils around the school. Leadership and management of the EYFS are unsatisfactory and are having insufficient impact on the quality of provision and on the outcomes for children. Assessment procedures are not sufficiently established and so not used effectively to plan children's learning. Too many learning activities lack challenge and a clear purpose. The areas of learning for these young children are not sufficiently well planned and consequently children do not understand what they are learning. The classroom is cluttered and untidy. Learning activities and resources are poorly organised and are not stimulating enough to inspire the children and promote good learning. Opportunities for role play are limited and this adversely affects children's progress in creative development and language skills. The spacious outdoor areas are not fully utilised. Outdoor activities are extremely limited in scope and are not linked to any relevant theme.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of provision for learning in the EYFS.

- Adopt consistent ways to help pupils understand what they can do to improve their work and make the next step in their learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	4
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	4
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	4
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Milverton Community Primary School, Milverton TA4 1JP

Thank you very much for making my colleague and me so welcome at your school and helping me to find out all about life at Milverton Primary. We enjoyed spending the day with you all.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education and has a number of good features. By the time you are ready to move onto secondary school you have reached above average standards in your work and have made satisfactory progress. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good and interesting programmes of work are planned for you.

You develop into sensible and well-mannered young people who behave well and show respect for each other. You really enjoy playing a full part in school life and I know that you are confident that adults in school value your views and opinions. I was impressed to hear all about the role of the school councillors and the 'Eco' committee. I enjoyed hearing all about your trips out to the local community and your fund-raising activities. You feel safe because the school looks after you well and the quality of care you receive is very good. You have an excellent knowledge of keeping fit and healthy.

Your new headteacher is determined to try to give you the very best education possible and is working well with all the adults who are in charge of the school to ensure that this happens.

I have asked your teachers to improve the quality of education for the youngest children. I have also asked them to make sure that you always get the best possible guidance on how you can improve your work and reach the next step in your learning.

Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults to make sure that Milverton Primary gets better and better.

With best wishes

Lorna Brackstone Her Majesty's Inspector