

Milborne Port Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123655
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	327953
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Anna Sketchley

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)	159
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	Rick Ransom
Headteacher	Suzie Milligan
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	North Street Sherborne DT9 5EP
Telephone number	01963 250366
Fax number	01963 251307

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Milborne Port is a village school and almost all the pupils who attend live in the village. Most pupils come from a White British background. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award and the Gold Award for Somerset Waste Action Group. At the time of the inspection, the recently appointed headteacher had been in post for two weeks following a period of one term as the acting headteacher. Two privately-run facilities are situated on the site, namely an Early Years Foundation Stage pre-school and an after-school club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Milborne Port is a satisfactory school. The new headteacher is passionate about improving achievement and raising standards and has a clear vision of how this will be achieved. Recently, because of this vision and a newly prioritised plan, there has been rapid improvement in some areas of the school's work. Although the staff, governors and parents are a dedicated and willing group who wholly support the headteacher in the focus upon school improvement, the leadership team is currently a temporary arrangement. The roles and responsibilities of the team are insufficiently defined to enable the school to improve quickly enough and further drive forward improvement.

Children join the school with the skills expected for their age and, because of good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they make good progress. By Year 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. A previous dip in standards in both Key Stage 1 and 2 is being addressed. An emphasis upon developing teaching skills has been successful and the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Very regular meetings to assess pupils' individual progress and a rigorous tracking system effectively inform teachers on a half-termly basis of how well pupils are progressing towards their challenging targets. So far, improvement is particularly noticeable in literacy, where actions for improvement have been successfully implemented. However, although Year 6 pupils are on track to meet challenging targets in English, mathematics and science this year, pupils in some other year groups still do not do as well as they might in mathematics and science. This is because they do not have targets to help them improve their work and know the next steps to take in their learning. Good progress and rising standards in literacy demonstrates that the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make at least satisfactory progress.

School is an exceptionally happy place where it is fun to learn so pupils enjoy coming, and as a result, their attendance is good. They are very involved in the running of the school, especially through the active school council, play leaders scheme and the emphasis upon looking after the environment. Pupils are very aware of the importance of keeping healthy and safe. They take good care of one another and behave really well. Pupils' good personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is playing an important part in supporting the drive to improve their achievement. All of this, together with the excellent relationships that abound between adults and pupils, and the good care, guidance and support pupils receive, creates a positive climate for learning. Many parents are very supportive of the school and wrote comments such as, 'The school is proactive in striving for the best standards and is not afraid to review methods to further benefit the children.' The school makes a very special contribution to local village life, and its partnership with other agencies and links with global communities are good. There are plans to connect pupils with communities nationally in order to address differences in culture in modern Britain that they would otherwise not experience. However, this initiative is at an embryonic stage and community cohesion is currently satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision ensures that young children get off to a flying start in Reception. All are on track to reach above average standards by the end of the foundation year. The introduction of a new strategy for learning their sounds and letters has been very successful in helping

children to develop their reading and writing skills. There are very good induction procedures with an emphasis on a learning partnership with parents, especially through the weekly home learning packs. Relationships are warm and calm and the classroom is very well organised. Year 1 pupils provide a good role model for the younger children, who settle in quickly, helped by sensible routines that build their confidence and independence. Taking home the 'Golden Bag' with examples of very good work is highly prized. The Reception children learn quickly because teaching and the curriculum are imaginative, exceptionally well planned and appropriate to their needs. Feeling and guessing numbers in a bag and numbering plant pots when planting seeds all help children to enjoy and develop their skills. Very good assessment procedures lead to next steps in learning being well met in this mixed-age class. The outside area allows children to develop their curiosity for the world around them and their physical skills and is freely available to them. Opportunities for them to engage in more creative and messy play out of doors are being planned.

What the school should do to improve further

- Review leadership roles and responsibilities and establish an effective senior team to support the new headteacher in improving achievement and raising standards across the school.
- Use the strategies that have been successful in improving literacy skills, especially target setting with pupils, as a model of good practice for improving skills in mathematics and science.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children join the school with the skills expected for their age and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, this good progress is not always maintained and by Year 6 achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. 'Previous underachievement led to a dip in standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 last year due to some variation in teaching at earlier stages. Some pupils, especially the more able, did not do as well as they might. Currently, inspection evidence and school tracking show definite signs of improvement and more pupils are reaching the higher levels in both key stages, especially in literacy, than was previously the case. This is an improvement since the last inspection when writing standards were not high enough. This is partly due to the implementation of successful reading and writing strategies, supported by the emphasis being placed upon continuing to learn letters and sounds in Years 1 and 2. Achievement across Key Stage 2 is variable and means that some pupils fall behind, resulting in some underachievement and too much catch-up required in Years 5 and 6. Recent initiatives to track pupils' progress more rigorously, and improvements in teaching across the school, indicate that pupils' achievement and standards are now improving, although it is early days to see the full impact. High quality teaching is ensuring that Year 6 are achieving well and are on course to meet challenging targets this year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make at least satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning, are friendly and courteous and get on well together. Their moral and social development is particularly good, and they find great enjoyment in helping one another, especially through being highly trained 'play leaders' at lunchtimes. However, their awareness of living in a multicultural society is limited. They are enthusiastic about their responsibilities and take their roles on the school council seriously, being proud of their achievements, including providing more playground equipment and games. They say they enjoy school because 'teachers allow you to have a say!' Pupils make a positive contribution to the community, especially through their links with the local supermarkets and church as a part of Fairtrade week. They eagerly collect school waste for composting and sorting. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all the numerous sporting activities offered to them and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They feel safe in school and know who to go to if in any kind of difficulty. Pupils' good personal skills and satisfactory academic achievement prepare them adequately for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Excellent relationships throughout the school create a positive climate for learning for all pupils so that they are keen to participate in lessons, listen to the teacher, concentrate and behave well. They say 'Teachers help you learn and make it fun!'. Pupils are very clear about what they are to learn in lessons and are fully engaged, encouraged by the good use of interactive whiteboards at the beginning and end of sessions. They are involved in assessing their work to gauge how well they have learned. Teachers' questioning skills are particularly good, targeting specific pupils to ensure understanding and encouraging them to explain their answers in order to assess learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is accurate, especially in literacy, and lessons are thoroughly planned. Teaching assistants are skilled and highly valued by teachers and pupils and work as part of an efficient team, providing good support for less able pupils. For the most part, tasks are appropriately challenging, although occasionally expectations are not sufficiently high, causing the pace of the lesson to slow. This means that some pupils do not work quickly enough and, as a consequence, do not do as well as they might. Underachievement in the past was caused by inconsistencies in teaching across the school but this has improved since the last inspection. There has been rapid improvement recently, especially in literacy. In Reception and at the upper end of Key Stage 2, teaching is particularly strong.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A high emphasis has been placed on the teaching of literacy skills and this has had a positive effect on raising achievement and standards. The school acknowledges that more needs to be done to improve standards and achievement in mathematics and science, although science, in particular, is beginning to benefit from changes to the curriculum. However, these changes are fairly new and it is too early to gauge the amount of improvement. A revision of the mathematics scheme of work is planned for the next academic year. A recent review of the curriculum to link work across subjects to provide a more creative approach to learning is in the early stages of development but is beginning to have a positive impact in capturing pupils' interest and

imagination, especially the needs of girls and the more able. Enrichment is good and pupils really enjoy the residential trips and speak enthusiastically about visits to places of interest and various clubs. French, music lessons and numerous sporting activities broaden pupils' experiences and, together with a high emphasis on personal, social and health education, these make a significant contribution to their personal development and enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The safeguarding of pupils and child protection procedures fully meet requirements. Pupils are well cared for in this inclusive and happy school. They feel listened to and parents know that staff take good care of their children at all times. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially those with social and emotional needs, are supported very sensitively and the school works effectively with outside agencies and particularly well with parents.

Literacy targets are used very well to raise standards and all pupils have a good understanding of these and what they need to do next to improve. Their writing is marked well and is helping them to learn from their mistakes. Older pupils, in particular, have a good idea about the levels at which they are working in all core subjects. Although the school has targets in place for some aspects of number work, pupils are not fully aware of them. Academic guidance is less well developed in mathematics and science than in literacy.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has made an impressive and enthusiastic start in her new post. The temporary leadership team is doing a stalwart job but staff are carrying too many responsibilities between them and their roles are not clearly enough defined. As yet, they do not have a formal way of working together to assist the headteacher in driving forward further improvement. The new headteacher's self-evaluation of what the school needs to do to improve is good, and as a result, a reduced development plan with the correct priorities supported by clear action plans is in place. This is a good tool and is helping the school to measure its success as it tackles issues. There is a rigorous focus on the monitoring of both teaching and pupils' progress that has led to significant advancement in literacy in a short space of time. Governors make a good contribution to the work of the school, as they challenge it to do its best and offer continuous support on a regular basis. Parents' involvement and support for the school are particularly good and the school works well in partnership with others to secure the best opportunities it can for all pupils.

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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?	2
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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

1 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Milborne Port Primary School, Sherborne, DT9 5EP.

Thank you very much for the very friendly welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed spending time with you and talking with you.

These are some of the things we found.

- You work hard at school and make satisfactory progress.
- You enjoy school, attend well and appreciate all the extra activities the school provides for you.
- Those of you in Reception are making good progress in settling well into school life. All through the school, you are being helped to grow up as sensible, caring young people.
- You are good at knowing how to keep healthy and safe.
- You get on very well together and your behaviour is good.
- You and your parents told us that the school takes good care of you and we agree.
- Your headteacher, teachers and all other adults are working very hard to make your school even better.

We have suggested two things to make your learning even better.

- We have asked your headteacher and governors to strengthen the way that senior teachers share the responsibility for improving the school further.
- We have also asked your teachers to help you do as well in mathematics and science as you do in English.

Keep working hard!

Yours faithfully

Anna Sketchley Lead inspector