

SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

Independent professional inspection of schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust

INSPECTION REPORT

**INSPECTION CARRIED OUT ACCORDING TO SECTION 162A
OF THE EDUCATION ACT 2002**

Name of school:	Milford Park School
DfE number: FOCUS number:	865/6331 616
Inspection team:	Reporting Inspector: Dr Martin Bradley Supporting Inspector: Mrs Eileen McAndrew Lay Inspector: Mr Philip Hutchinson
Dates of inspection:	18 th to 20 th October 2011

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SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school: Milford Park School

Address of school: The Hollows
Wilton
Salisbury
SP2 0JE

Telephone number: 01722 741929

Email address: milford.park@focus-school.com

Proprietor: Wessex Schools Trust

Name of Chief Executive Officer: Mr Richard Beesley

Name of Senior Teacher: Mrs Melanie Beardsley

DfE number: 865/6331

FOCUS number: 616

Type of school: Independent school affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust

Age range of pupils and students: 7 to 11

Gender of pupils: Male and female

Total number on roll: (Full-time) Boys: 25 Girls: 26

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs: Boys: 1 Girls: 0

Type of inspection: Section 162A of the Education Act 2002

Inspection Team:

Reporting Inspector: Dr Martin Bradley

Supporting Inspector: Mrs Eileen McAndrew

Lay Inspector: Mr Philip Hutchinson

Dates of inspection: 18th to 20th October 2011

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service in accordance with Section 162(A) (1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, and it follows the inspection framework laid down by the Service and the Focus Learning Trust (FLT) and agreed with the Department for Education (DfE). It was conducted by independent professional inspectors who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as required by the current regulations. The professional inspectors were accompanied by a trained lay inspector who looked at agreed aspects of the regulations. The lay inspector also evaluated both the Trustees' stewardship of resources and the ethos of the school and reported on these to the FLT. His findings are summarised in Section C of this document, but this section is not a statutory part of the inspection process.

Information about the school:

Milford Park School opened in September 2008 in Pitton, near Salisbury. In September 2011 it moved to a new site in Wilton. The school is part of the Wessex Schools Trust, which brings together three primary schools and one secondary school. The senior teachers of all four schools regularly meet to support one another. Milford Park serves pupils between the ages of seven and eleven belonging to the Christian Brethren. Since the last inspection in October 2009 it has grown from 38 pupils in two classes to 51 pupils in four single-age group classes, although Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 combine for some lessons. There is one pupil with a statement of special educational needs and fifteen pupils have been identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school aims to provide consistent excellence in education in a stable, stimulating and protected environment where its Christian ethos is respected and upheld. The last inspection report, in 2009, related to the former Milford Park School which was on a different site. Following the amalgamation of two primary schools, two of the four teachers joined the school at the start of the present term and nearly half of the pupils have come from another Christian Brethren school which has closed. Direct comparisons between this report and the earlier one are therefore not appropriate.

Summary of main findings:

Overall, the quality of education is satisfactory and has some good features. Pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress as the curriculum and the quality of teaching are satisfactory overall, and in around half of the lessons seen teaching was good and outstanding. There are significant variations between pupils' attainment in reading and that in mathematics in Years 5 and 6; at present the school does not make sufficient use of the information from test data when planning future work. Pupils' work is regularly marked, although written feedback on how to improve it is inconsistent, as is the presentation of pupils' work and handwriting. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their spiritual, moral and social development is good, as is the provision for their welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding. The pupils and staff greatly appreciate the new premises, which are extremely well maintained and of high quality, and the amalgamation of two primary schools onto a new site with new staff has been particularly well managed and the newly created school shows potential for developing further.

What the school does well:

- it ensures that pupils' behaviour is outstanding;
- it provides good spiritual, moral and social education and effective arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety, including their safeguarding; and
- it has supported the smooth amalgamation of the two schools by the creation of a high quality environment for learning.

What the school must do to comply with the regulations:

The school meets all regulatory requirements.

What the school must do to comply with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

Next Steps

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that lesson planning is closely related to each age group and to the needs of individual pupils in each class;
- make greater use of information from test data when planning work and identifying subjects for development;
- improve the quality of handwriting and the presentation of work to a consistently high level for all pupils throughout the school; and
- provide the pupils with regular written feedback on ways of improving their work.

SECTION B: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

PART 1 - The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It follows the National Curriculum and is supplemented by basic French and swimming as well as baking, model making and sewing, where parents and other family members provide good support. In a lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils, felt making provided challenging tasks for all and there were particularly good links made with science as the wool gradually changed texture when it was soaked and manipulated with soap and water. Pupils are able to acquire at least satisfactory skills in speaking and listening, as well as in aspects of literacy and numeracy.

Following the amalgamation of two primary schools, the creation of single-age classes at the start of the present term has enabled teachers to move from a two-yearly cycle of curriculum planning for all subjects to planning for single-age groups, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The core subjects are now taught separately to each year group, whilst some subjects, particularly history, geography, art, personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship, physical education (PE) and music continue to be taught in mixed-age classes to Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. This is appropriate provision, although the specific needs of each age group are not always clearly identified in either curriculum or teachers' planning. As a result, expectations of pupils' achievement are not sufficiently differentiated between the two age groups in the class to always ensure the best progress in learning. In some subjects, such as science, work is planned for the two age groups but taught to single-age classes. This is a result of the school completing the former two-year cycle during the present year. The different needs of each age group are not sufficiently met when both classes have identical tasks and outcomes. This was also reflected in the tests taken by Years 3 and 4 in the summer of 2011 where the two year groups' results were relatively similar as they had been taught in one class, following the same curriculum.

For all subjects the school follows the Focus Learning Trust guidelines and the generally well-designed curriculum enables pupils to make satisfactory and sometimes good progress, as well as providing a sound basis for future life. There is, however, no timetabled provision for the development of good handwriting and this is reflected in the variable quality of the presentation of pupils' work in all classes. Handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work are not sufficiently considered across the curriculum

The curriculum is enhanced by a range of well-chosen visits. These include Salisbury museum, Rockbourne Roman villa, Waitrose supermarket to observe bread making, a recycling plant, Nadder Hall and Langford Lakes. Overall, resourcing is good and of high quality. This supports the pupils' learning effectively.

Sixteen pupils have identified special educational needs (SEN), mainly relating to literacy. Their individual education plans are mostly up to date, although a minority do not have review dates. The actions they propose are broadly appropriate, although some lack sufficiently detailed practical proposals and targets to ensure maximum progress. In a number of cases, pupils have remained on the SEN

register when their support could be provided by class teachers in lessons. The school is aware of this and intends to review the register later this term.

There is a transition programme which links Milford Park with the secondary school and students from that school have given presentations to the older primary pupils, reinforcing the good links between the two schools.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall. It was good and occasionally outstanding in just over half of the lessons seen. In the remainder it was satisfactory. The best teaching is well-paced with clear objectives and builds on pupils' different prior attainment. Pupils are given clear guidelines and set times to complete the work. The teaching often encourages them to think for themselves. Most lessons follow the Focus planning documents, and in the most effective lessons, these are carefully adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. In a Year 6 literacy lesson the pupils carefully planned a newspaper article, being guided by the teacher's clear questioning, which took account of their different needs and enabled them to provide comprehensive and informative individual reports based on group discussions. This individual work enabled the pupils to work at different levels of achievement. Elsewhere the programme is followed without such modification and whilst teachers know the varying levels of ability and attainment in their class, the work does not always sufficiently address individual pupils' capabilities so as to extend them fully. In most lessons, time is used effectively and pupils are encouraged to develop good concentration skills in engaging with their tasks. Teachers show at least satisfactory subject knowledge, but at times their planning does not clearly specify how the pupils will carry out the set tasks or the expected levels at which they will achieve, so restricting individual pupils' learning and progress.

The school uses a wide range of tests and assessments to record the pupils' progress; as yet the test data are not used sufficiently to inform subsequent teaching. Besides Qualifications and Curriculum Authority annual tests and teacher assessments for reading, speaking and listening, writing, mathematics and science, 24 additional tests and work samples for reading, writing, mathematics, and for science are taken during the year. Children are tested on entry using Progress in English and Maths at the age of seven and on departure at the age of eleven. These provide a potentially rich source of material for future planning based on the pupils' progress and offer pupils targets for their work. This information is not sufficiently analysed to identify aspects of subjects where pupils' progress is uneven, and as yet does not inform the planning of future work.

The pupils' acquisition of new knowledge, understanding and skills is satisfactory overall, but in some subjects insufficiently finely targeted teaching means that it is uneven. In English, there are significant variations in attainment in writing and in speaking and listening which do not show the high levels of attainment achieved in reading. These variations are also evident between the scores achieved on standardised reading and mathematics tests in Years 4 and 5 in 2011. Good intensive support was given to pupils' reading and their results showed that many were achieving significantly above national expectations. Their mathematics results were much less successful, and this was confirmed in lessons where aspects such as mental arithmetic were often weak.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their work, particularly where their individual education plans provide clear and practical targets. In some cases the pupils have been on the register for some while and the school intends to review this, so that support can be provided by class teachers.

Pupils' work is marked regularly. In the best examples teachers make helpful comments on the ways in which work can be developed or improved, as with Year 6 pupils and in some work in other classes. Such comments are not provided consistently which reduces the effectiveness of the marking in improving pupils' work.

The pupils enjoy coming to school and show a strong and positive interest in their work. Good displays around the school celebrate and motivate the pupils' achievements, as do the readily accessible and high quality resources, which pupils treat with respect. This reflects their high standards of classroom behaviour as well as the many ways in which they act responsibly and with respect for one another in working together.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 2 - The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and provision for their cultural development is satisfactory and improving. The strong and explicit ethos of Christian belief interpreted through Biblical teaching and the values pupils acquire from their homes and community mean that they develop an increasing awareness of the spiritual dimension of their lives and the influence of their beliefs on their conduct.

The foundations for their moral development are a fundamental aspect of pupils' Christian beliefs. The simple class rules give pupils a clear moral code and they are able to distinguish right from wrong. The behaviour policy supports pupils' moral understanding effectively so that the consequences of individual choices are clear. When pupils make mistakes they are required to reflect and consider their conduct and how to amend it in future. Pupils develop growing self-esteem, confidence and self-reliance as they are increasingly able to take on responsibilities such as being members of the school council. This enables them to feel that they have a voice in the school and can represent the views of their peers and be respected and listened to. Work in citizenship helps them to broaden their understanding of the world around them by studying the people and institutions which support their lives.

The social, emotional and aesthetic development of pupils is fostered through PSHE, literature and art as pupils learn to reflect on their own and others' feelings. Behaviour is outstanding in class and elsewhere. Pupils are able to take turns, listen to each other, work cooperatively in groups and participate in lessons with confidence. The house system fosters teamwork and cooperation, and Year 6 school 'buddies' help and support Year 3 pupils. They are encouraged to recognise each other's progress and achievement, as for example when assessing and commenting on each others' work. Pupils study fundamental and serious social issues such as individual rights and responsibilities which relate to matters they understand, such as care for their own environment and the wider care of the earth's resources. Similarly they are conscious of the wider practical needs of others and

work to raise funds for charities which they choose. Pupils say that they love coming to school, and their good attendance record testifies to this.

Pupils' cultural development has been identified by the school as an area for improvement and the trustees and staff have worked effectively to improve provision. Pupils are very aware of their own community and its culture. Work in geography, PSHE and citizenship contributes to pupils' greater knowledge and understanding of some dimensions of life in other cultures, for example, cuisine, dress, climate and architecture, but pupils have limited knowledge of the cultural communities which form part of modern multi-cultural Britain and the school is seeking to develop more fully the pupils' awareness of other cultures.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils

The welfare, health and safety of pupils are given a high priority and provision is good. The school has comprehensive policies supported by effective practice to ensure that its pupils are well cared for and kept safe. The explicit Christian ethos and the good relationships which the school is establishing are evident strengths. As a consequence the school is a friendly, relaxed and orderly place to which the pupils want to come and where they are eager to contribute and to learn.

Arrangements for pupils' welfare and safeguarding are good and child protection policies and procedures are detailed and clear. The designated persons responsible for child protection are experienced members of the school management team who have received the appropriate level of training. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and is underpinned by policies to promote good behaviour and to combat bullying. In discussion with pupils, they reported that there is no bullying, but they are confident that should incidents occur, staff would resolve issues quickly. The school's 'Golden Rules' are well understood by pupils and help them to appreciate and adhere to simple but fundamental principles of good conduct. Staff are deployed to ensure that all pupils are properly supervised and first aid is the responsibility of staff who have received appropriate training.

A good level of fire safety equipment and resources was installed as part of the overall refurbishment of the school building, which has been fire-risk assessed. Appropriate fire-fighting equipment has been installed; it is regularly tested and secure records are kept. Detailed risk assessments are carried out to ascertain and evaluate potential hazards during educational visits.

The curriculum in science and PSHE reflects the *Healthy School* policy which gives a continuing emphasis to increasing pupils' awareness of the importance of nutrition in contributing to a healthy way of life. Pupils increasingly understand the importance of eating a healthy diet and choosing food which contributes to their physical well-being. Fruit is provided daily in school. Pupils also appreciate the importance of regular exercise and have good opportunities in the curriculum for PE, including games and swimming.

The school meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 4 - Suitability of the staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has a well-maintained single central register which includes details of all appointments and checks on staff, trustees and volunteers. Safeguarding checks are carried out as required.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 5 - Suitability of the premises and accommodation

The school moved to its current premises in September 2011. These are part of a purpose-built former middle school. The primary school has four classrooms and offices in a system-built building, and has exclusive use of a hall in the nearby secondary school building. The hall is used for PE, movement and lunches as well as for concerts and productions. The school also has two demountable buildings used for special educational needs support work and the school library. The premises have been extensively refurbished to a very high standard and provide excellent accommodation to support effective learning. Care has been taken to ensure that access meets the requirements of disability legislation. There are sufficient washrooms for pupils and staff and appropriate facilities for pupils who are unwell.

The school has hard and grass surfaced play areas, as well as a tennis court marked out for both football and netball use. The playing field is large and well maintained and has good quality fixed play equipment. Car parking is safely separated from play areas. Overall, the site is very well maintained.

As the school has been formed from the amalgamation of two primary schools, the provision of resources is excellent, and the furniture and equipment are of a high quality. The school library provides valuable learning extension opportunities and enjoyment for all pupils and the support from a Community member ensures that pupils have help and advice when choosing books. Both staff and pupils commented that the high quality of the environment contributes significantly to the positive learning atmosphere of the school.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 6 - The quality of information for parents

The school provides a good range of accessible information which contributes effectively to parents' knowledge and understanding of its aims and purpose. The *Essential Handbook* sets out clearly the ethos of the school and its fundamental principles, guided in all aspects by Biblical teaching. It makes helpful mention of the range of policies which support the educational purposes of the school of which parents may have copies if they wish. Information on the curriculum and the organisation and routines of the school is useful and reassuring to parents. In

addition, the *Essential Handbook* makes clear what is expected of parents as partners in the education of their children.

Parents receive two informative written reports each year and have opportunities for meetings with teachers to help ensure that they are kept aware of their children's progress. The very high proportion of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire was wholeheartedly supportive of the school and its work for their children.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

PART 7 - The effectiveness of the school's complaints procedure

The school's policy and procedures for handling complaints meet the requirements in full. No complaints were received in the last year.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

SECTION C: ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT, AND MAINTENANCE OF THE ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

This section is not a requirement of the Education Act 2002. The business organisation and management of the school were inspected by the Lay Inspector, who has written this section of the report.

The quality of the organisation and management of the school

Milford Park School is a primary school on the same site as the larger Wilton Park School. It is one of three primary schools operated by the Wessex Schools Trust. The school is the result of a well-executed integration of the Trust's school provision in the last year. The catchment area comprises three neighbouring towns with pupils travelling by minibus to and from school. Accommodation is provided in well-equipped, modular type buildings.

Milford Park is controlled by the Wessex Schools Trust with eighteen trustees. Many of their responsibilities are delegated to the Milford Park school management team. There is a primary manager who is a trustee of the overall Trust. He works with a management team of seven members to ensure that all relevant operational requirements are conducted effectively.

The primary school management team meets weekly to respond to operational issues and uses the school development plan as a means of reviewing progress. The team comprises of trustees and the headteacher. These meetings are minuted, as are the main Trust meetings. Minutes of the Trust meetings do not adequately record how action points are responded to subsequently and are not signed off by two trustees at the subsequent meetings. The management team minutes are appropriately signed off and actions taken on matters arising are properly minuted.

The trustees and the Community have worked very successfully to establish the new primary school, ensuring that it has a high quality learning environment and is very well resourced.

The numbers of trustees is noted, which is to be reduced to a more workable number over time and results from the amalgamation of previous schools and a concern to ensure a smooth transition.

Could the organisation and management of the school be improved?

The trustees might like to take into consideration the following suggestions as to where specific improvements could be made:

- extend Trust minutes to record the resolution of matters left for action from a previous Trust meeting and ensure that minutes are signed off by two trustees at a subsequent meeting; and
- continue with the intention to reduce the number of trustees over time to improve operational efficiency and ensure that specialist input is available as required.

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust. Further copies of the report are available from the Operations Manager of the Focus Learning Trust, Siskin House, Siskin Drive, Coventry, or from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk