School report

Inspection of Milton Abbot School

Milton Abbot, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0PS

Inspection dates:	13 and 14 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff form strong and positive relationships quickly. Pupils can name a trusted adult they would speak with in school should they have any worries. Pupils feel safe in school. They understand the difference between bullying and falling out. Pupils say that bullying does not happen. Many parents and carers say their children are happy in school.

Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They are respectful to each other and to adults. Pupils believe you should 'treat people how you want to be treated'. They are polite and kind. Pupils are well-behaved and attend school regularly.

Leaders carefully plan pupils' personal development. Pupils know how to be physically and mentally healthy. They enjoy attending a wide range of after-school clubs, such as table tennis, dance and French. Pupils value outdoor learning sessions, educational visits and residentials. They are proud to represent their school through sporting events and as house captains. Pupils are developing their understanding of how they can contribute to society positively. For example, they raise money for a cancer charity and organise a summer fair. Through these activities, pupils learn important life skills.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have created an ambitious, clearly sequenced and coherent curriculum. Their high expectations for pupils' learning are shared by all staff. Leaders have identified the knowledge they want pupils to remember from the curriculum. Teachers help pupils to practise and remember prior knowledge, skills and vocabulary across most subjects well. For example, in French, pupils use and adapt key phrases across a range of topics successfully. In mathematics, pupils use 'flashback' activities to practise and remember key mathematical facts. These activities help pupils to know more, do more and remember more over time successfully.

However, teachers' subject knowledge is not yet secure in some subject curriculums. For example, some pupils find it difficult to place important historical events and people on a timeline correctly. Although teachers check and identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, they do not adapt learning activities effectively to address these. Consequently, pupils do not have secure historical knowledge.

Leaders have rightly made learning to read a priority. Children are introduced to high-quality texts right from the start. They enjoy listening to and retelling well-known stories and rhymes. Teachers and teaching assistants have a secure knowledge of how to teach early reading. They check pupils' phonics knowledge and quickly spot those who need help. These pupils have appropriate extra practice. The letters and sounds in reading books match the phonics pupils are taught. Pupils develop a secure knowledge of phonics with increased reading speed and accuracy.

The reading books shared in class are carefully chosen by teachers to reflect events locally and from around the world. They enhance pupils' vocabulary, develop their reading comprehension and inspire their writing. Staff promote reading successfully across the school.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. Leaders of SEND carry out appropriate assessments to identify pupils' individual needs correctly. This information is used to plan additional support effectively. Staff receive appropriate training in SEND. They set ambitious and accurate targets for each pupil's learning. Pupils with SEND are supported well.

Staff have consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour. There is a calm and orderly environment in the school. This begins in the early years, where children follow clear routines. Staff skilfully show children how to share, take turns and treat each other with kindness. Across the school, pupils play and learn together well.

Pupils understand the importance of democracy, tolerance and justice. This is developed through discussion in assembly, debates and voting for house captains. Pupils talk about different cultures and religions with maturity. They passionately believe that everyone should be treated equally. Leaders are developing the curriculum to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of life in modern Britain.

There are rigorous and robust systems in place to monitor the effectiveness and quality of education. As a result, leaders have a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders are improving communication with parents to share their ongoing plans for improvement.

Leaders, including governors, support staff well-being. Staff welcome the support and increased opportunities for professional development. They feel valued and appreciated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Appropriate safeguarding checks are completed before staff begin working at the school. Leaders, including governors, regularly check recruitment records to assure themselves that they are accurate.

Staff attend safeguarding training regularly. This helps them to carry out their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. For example, staff know how to report and record concerns for pupil safety and welfare. Leaders follow up concerns swiftly.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in school and in the community. This includes online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not have secure subject knowledge in some subject curriculums. Consequently, learning activities do not always provide pupils with opportunities to secure and deepen their knowledge. Leaders need to support teachers to improve their subject knowledge in these subjects to ensure that pupils know more, can do more and remember more over time.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use Ofsted Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further guidance on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	113258
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10227489
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jayne Byrne
Executive headteacher	Lisa Paton
Website	www.miltonabbot.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Milton Abbot school formed a management partnership with the Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust (DMAT) in January 2022.
- The executive headteacher started her role in September 2022.
- The governor-run pre-school accommodates two- to four-year-old children.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the previous interim headteacher, staff, pupils, governors, including the chair of the full governing body, the local authority school improvement partner, the chief executive officer of DMAT, the chair of the trust and subject leads from across the trust.

- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a known adult.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, French and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils and subject leaders about relationships and health education, art and design and geography.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. The inspectors spoke to pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding practices.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. She also took into consideration the responses to the survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sally Hannaford	Ofsted Inspector

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