

# Inspection of The Milestone School

Longford Lane, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL2 9EU

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Inspection dates:	5 and 6 November 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Stephen Dowell. The school is part of the Supporting Achievement and Nurturing Development (SAND) Academies Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Martin Hughes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Antonia Noble.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils attend well. All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). A range of curriculum pathways support pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities well, including in 'The Space'. There are bespoke learning environments to suit each learning pathway.

Strong routines start in early years and continue throughout the school. As a result, pupils understand the high expectations of behaviour and learning set for them. Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum. They achieve well from their individual starting points.

The ethos of 'be brave, be kind, be safe' shines through all aspects of the school day. Knowledgeable staff provide tailored support. This ensures that pupils grow as individuals. Staff celebrate pupils' achievements and value everyone's contributions.

There are a lot of positive experiences to broaden pupils' horizons, such as musical performances at a theatre, residential visits and enterprise projects to raise money for charity. A wide range of sporting and outdoor adventurous activities, including sailing and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, enable pupils to learn about teamwork and taking risks. When appropriate, pupils learn important life skills such as cooking, budgeting for shopping and how to access public transport.

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

The school is well led and managed. School leaders ensure staff have the right resources to deliver the school's curriculums across all pathways. The local advisory board provides appropriate support and challenge. A notable feature is the strong pastoral support the school provides to families and pupils. Staff value the improved communication they receive and are proud to work at the school.

There has been a substantial review of the curriculum. It is well structured to meet pupils' learning and development needs, including for pupils in 'The Space' and in the early years departments. The various curriculum pathways combine both academic curriculums and life-skills curriculums successfully.

Staff typically have strong subject knowledge in the subjects and curriculum pathways they teach. They use a variety of strategies, such as visual schedules, communication aids, sensory resources and structured routines, to support pupils' self-regulation, emotional management and readiness to learn. All staff ensure pupils' EHC plan outcomes are integrated into pupils' bespoke curriculums. This ensures pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education, training and adulthood.

The school sets clear expectations of how and when staff check what pupils know and can do. For example, staff use their checks precisely to teach bespoke teaching sequences for pupils through the complex needs and profound multiple learning disabilities pathways. However, there are occasions when subject-based teaching does not build on a

precise understanding of what pupils already know and what they need to learn next. When this happens, teaching does not address pupils' misconceptions as soon as they appear, or a minority of pupils are not moved on in their learning when they are ready.

Developing pupils' communication and reading is a high priority across all pathways. Pupils gain a love of stories. When they are ready, pupils learn the sounds that letters make. Phonics teaching continues until pupils read fluently and can apply their phonics knowledge to spell accurately.

Staff implement the behaviour policy well. Staff model and help pupils to learn to manage their own emotions. When they find it difficult, there are consistent processes in place to support pupils to self-regulate. As a result, incidences of poor behaviour have reduced.

There is an extensive careers education and work experience programme. Pupils study for and are successful in a range of academic and vocational qualifications, for example functional skills in English and mathematics and the BTEC National Diploma in hospitality and tourism. The educational programmes support pupils to become resilient and ready to cope with life outside school.

The curriculum to develop pupils' character is well structured and appropriately adapted to meet the diverse needs of pupils. Pupils learn how to be tolerant and accept others. Rightly, the curriculum has a strong focus on learning about healthy relationships, personal safety and emotional well-being. It teaches pupils about risks in the community, for example gangs and child exploitation.

The trust has successfully extended the leadership structure. This has increased the school's capacity to continually improve. Leaders at all levels have strong subject knowledge. They carry out their roles to good effect. However, where curriculum pathways are still becoming firmly established, including in the early years, or there have been changes to school policies, some checks on the impact of the school's work that the trust expects to be in place are still developing.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- A minority of subject-based teaching does not build on a precise understanding of what pupils already know and what they need to learn next. This slows pupils' learning down. The trust should ensure that teaching routinely builds on what pupils know and understand, and pupils make strong progress across all curriculum pathways and subjects.
- The many changes to leadership at different levels mean the school's actions to

monitor the successful implementation of school policies and curriculum pathways, including in the early years, are still being refined. Some information the trust expects to be in place is not firmly established. The trust should ensure it holds the school to account stringently for providing them with the detailed information they need to inform future decisions and evaluate the impact of the school's work in its fullness.

## **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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147116
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10344821
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	327
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Antonia Noble
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Martin Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Dowell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://milestone.sandmat.uk">milestone.sandmat.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	27 and 28 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- In 2019, The Milestone School became an academy and joined SAND multi-academy trust.
- The school caters for pupils with complex needs including autism, physical difficulties, and profound and multiple learning disabilities. All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school includes a specialised unit called The Space. This is for a small number of pupils who require extra support to manage their behaviour.
- There are no children attending the Nursery provision for two-, three- and four-year-olds.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading and communication, mathematics, science, geography and personal, social, emotional and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- In addition, an inspector reviewed the impact of the physical education, physical development and art and design curriculums.
- The lead inspector met with trust leaders, including the chief executive officer and director of education. She also met with two trustees.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and other staff.
- Inspectors met with pupils to talk about their experience of school life. They visited tutor time and observed breaktimes, the start of the school day and transition times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

### Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paula Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Smith

Ofsted Inspector

Sean McKeown

Ofsted Inspector

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