

Milstead and Frinsted Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118648
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291199
Inspection date	26 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	57
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Lumsden
Headteacher	Alison Goodman
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2003
School address	School Lane Milstead Sittingbourne ME9 0SJ
Telephone number	01795 830241
Fax number	01795 830241

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Milstead and Frinsted Church of England Primary School is much smaller than average. The pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. Few receive free school meals. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average, but there are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. A significant number of pupils have joined the school later than the Reception year. Children's attainment on entry to the school is average. The headteacher will be leaving the school at the end of the summer term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. It has a good capacity to improve, with a strong impetus to raise standards and achievement. After a period of change the school has now achieved some stability and is gaining greater momentum in improving its provision and the outcomes for pupils. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and they make good progress. Standards in the older year groups have varied over time because of the very small number of pupils but are improving as a result of careful checks on pupils' progress and better teaching.

Teaching is good overall and enables pupils to achieve well. The teaching is lively and makes good provision in the mixed age classes but in a small minority of lessons teaching is only satisfactory. Assessment information is used well to plan lessons which match pupils' learning needs but marking does not always provide the pupils with sufficient guidance about what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants usually provide good support in lessons but are not always deployed flexibly enough to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The curriculum is broad and satisfactory. Pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support they receive are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, have positive attitudes and feel safe and valued.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The new leadership team has taken decisive action to bring about improvements. Parents hold the school in high regard. The school usually deploys its staff and resources well and has successfully addressed the areas for improvement in the last inspection report.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching.
- Improve the quality of marking so it gives pupils a clear indication about what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure teaching assistants are used more flexibly and effectively to meet the learning needs of different groups of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, achievement is good. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and are on track to reach or exceed the expected standards at the end of the Reception year. The standards achieved in national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have varied considerably from year to year depending on the number of pupils in each year and ability of the pupils taking the tests. The standards achieved in national tests at the end of Year 2 have declined in the last two years and in 2006 were well below average. However, results in this year's tests show an improvement and are much closer to the national average. Standards at the end of Year 6 improved in 2006 but were still slightly below average.

The leadership of the school recognises that the pupils have previously been making only satisfactory progress and that standards and achievement need to be raised across the school. Successful action to bring about improvements have had an impact this year. The school's own information, which tracks the gains each pupil is making, indicates that, across the year groups, the rates of progress have recently improved and that standards are now higher, especially in

English and mathematics. The pupils are now making good progress across the school and this is partially confirmed by this year's improved test results for pupils in Year 2. The school leaders, with good reason, expect the results in this year's national tests for Year 6 to show a further improvement on the previous year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school because, 'it is a friendly school where people help you learn' and 'teachers make lessons fun.' The pupils feel safe because the teachers know them well. The strong focus on improving behaviour has been successful. Most pupils now behave well in class and around the school. They are generally polite and well mannered but also confident in expressing their opinions and talking about their feelings and personal experience. Pupils feel able to discuss any issues with an adult and know that any problems arising from the inconsiderate behaviour of other pupils will be swiftly dealt with by the staff.

Pupils understand how and why they should adopt healthy lifestyles. They make healthy food choices and enjoy keeping fit. Pupils also enjoy taking responsibility and talk confidently about their roles on the school council. They have satisfactory opportunities to contribute to the wider community. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although there are more limited opportunities for developing pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. Good provision is being made for moral, social and emotional development through the use of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme. Attendance is average and improving because the school has good procedures for following up absence. Authorised absences, especially for pupils to take their holiday during the school term, are higher than the national average. The pupils develop good skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall, enabling pupils to make good progress. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils and lessons are purposeful and lively. Teachers know their pupils very well. The pupils are responsive to instructions and eager to answer questions. The teachers make good provision in the mixed-age classes to meet the different learning needs of pupils with work that is matched to their ability. Lessons move at a brisk pace and teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards. In a small minority of lessons where the teaching is less strong, the pupils are sometimes given too much time to complete tasks and the expected outcomes are unclear, with the result that a few pupils are unable to sustain their concentration. The teaching assistants usually give good support but in a small minority of lessons are not employed flexibly enough to meet the learning needs of all groups of pupils, as well as those of the less able.

The recently introduced tracking system has had a positive impact and teachers are more effective in using the information gained to plan the next stage of learning and to set individual targets. Although books are marked regularly, the marking is of variable quality. Pupils are aware of their targets and of the school's mark scheme but the marking rarely gives clear indications about what the pupils need to do to improve the quality of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school offers pupils a satisfactory and balanced curriculum. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills and the use of information and communication technology. There have been recent improvements in the provision for physical education and exercise through more active lunchtimes and the introduction of two hours of physical activity during the week. The play-based curriculum of the Foundation Stage offers a range of interesting activities which successfully develop children's confidence and independence alongside their literacy and numeracy skills. The thematic approach in Years 1 and 2 provides pupils with a broad range of interesting activities to support their learning. The curriculum for Years 3 to 6 maintains an appropriately sharp focus on English and mathematics. Some cross-curricular links are made but a more creative curriculum is less well developed. The curriculum is enriched by residential visits and visitors to the school. The school has some after-school clubs such as the art club and football club which operate on a regular or seasonal basis. The lunchtime gardening club, which is run by the children themselves, continues to be popular. The pupils and some parents would like to see more after-school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The school looks after its pupils well. Effective procedures for safeguarding children are in place, along with good systems for health and safety. Pupils needing additional guidance receive good support, which is enhanced by the effective communication with external agencies and with parents. The children in the Foundation Stage make a good start to their school life because of the good liaison with a local playgroup and the caring induction programme. The induction of children into the Reception class is thoughtfully planned so that children feel confident and secure when they enter it. Equally good support is given to the significant number of pupils who arrive at the school at a later stage in their education. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress enable teachers to give clear academic guidance to pupils. Consequently, pupils are clearer about how they can improve, although too little of this guidance is recorded in their books. Pupils who present challenging behaviour are learning to cope better through the greater consistency in staff expectations, better management in class and a stronger adherence to the school's behaviour policy.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. After a time of some upheaval and change, the headteacher is providing good leadership. The school leaders have a clear view about strengths of the school and of those areas in need of development but do not always make sufficient links between the school's provision and its impact on pupils' progress. The school leaders have put in place effective procedures to track each pupil's progress so that there can be timely intervention when any appears to be falling behind. The school has good procedures for assessing the learning needs of the children who join the school from other schools. Appropriate action has been taken to improve the rate of pupils' progress by increasing the number of support staff, developing staff expertise and improving behaviour. The school's monitoring of teaching is generally accurate and shows that teaching has improved but that it is not always consistently

good. Subject and other responsibilities are appropriately shared out amongst staff. Governance is satisfactory rather than good as many governors are new to their responsibilities. They have received training but have yet to become fully involved in supporting and evaluating the work of the school. The school's leadership team and the governors have demonstrated that they have the resolve and capacity to drive forward further improvements. The vast majority of parents are happy with the school and with what it provides for their children.

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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 the 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

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A**Leadership and management**

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

27 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milstead and Frinsted Church of England Primary School, School Lane, Milstead, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 0SJ

I am writing to you following the inspectors' recent visit to your school to let you know what we think about the school. Thank you for your help in talking to us about your work and for giving us your views about the school.

We think your school is a good school which is getting better all the time. It provides you with a good education. We saw, and your parents told us, that everyone in your school takes very good care of you and you get on well with each other. We know you enjoy coming to school, because you told us, and that the teachers make the lessons interesting so that you can learn more easily. You told us that you feel safe and that there is always someone to talk to if you have a problem. The school prepares you well for the next stage of your education.

You work hard in lessons and as a result make good progress. You behave well in lessons and around the school. Your parents are happy with the school and what it provides for you. The school's leaders and all the teachers work hard to make the school a place where you can all learn and achieve. The school's leaders are working hard to make the school even better. They know that they need to:

- make sure that teaching always enables you to make good progress
- improve the marking of your books so that you know clearly what you must do to improve your work
- use the teaching assistants to help more of you to concentrate and do well in your lessons.

You can help by making sure you concentrate on your work throughout lessons, by always asking the teachers if you need help and by telling them when you have finished your work.

Good wishes.

Ian Hartland Her Majesty's Inspector