

hMilton Mount Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125916
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	359964
Inspection dates	15–16 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Sheila Browning

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley King
Headteacher	Anne Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors who saw 22 lessons taught by 16 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation about pupils' progress, policies, particularly those in respect of safeguarding, school development planning and evidence of self-evaluation. They considered 95 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 31 from staff and 94 from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The profile of pupils' achievements, especially the girls in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How well teachers plan for the wide range of pupils' abilities and ensure oral and written feedback engages and motivates them to improve their work.
- Whether changes in staffing, and systems are providing a strong and sustainable capacity for the school to develop well into the future and ensure all groups of pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British. Though below the national average, the proportion of other minority ethnic heritages has increased; this includes pupils from Asian or Asian British Pakistani, Black or Black British African heritages. Many of these pupils speak more than one language; few are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. There have been significant staff changes over the past two years including at senior level. A new headteacher was appointed two years ago. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there are two Reception classes. The school is subject to reorganisation proposals and plans to expand from a two- to a three-form entry school. The school has several awards including a travel plan and Healthy School's Status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Under the effective leadership of the headteacher, significant improvements are evident since the previous inspection. Effective self-evaluation has ensured a robust drive to provide the best for all pupils. Teaching, learning, care guidance, support and most aspects of leadership and management are now good rather than satisfactory, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. As one member of staff commented, 'Our school is unrecognizable; it is fun, exciting, yet a challenging place to be.' Most parents and carers agree. One comment typified many: 'We have seen many changes for the better over the last two years.'

Parental engagement is outstanding. There are especially impressive links with parents and carers at the start of each day in 'planning and study time'. At these times, the school 'buzzes' with parents, carers and children learning together. During the inspection, over 40 parents and carers attended the reading workshop.

The curriculum, as children say, 'is far, far more interesting'. They enjoy the special themes because they say 'learning is fun' with a strong emphasis on making links between subjects that add relevance for pupils and give them good opportunities to practise key skills. It is further enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities from cooking and orchestra to numerous sports. These, and pupils' good understanding of the importance of exercise and a healthy diet, reflect the school's commitment, and subsequent awards, to promoting healthy lifestyles.

Outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, rather than satisfactory as it was in the previous inspection, means that children get off to an excellent start. They build on this in Years 1 and 2 so that their attainment is now above average. This places the school in a strong position to build on this improving trend as pupils move through Years 3 to 6 in the future. Current attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average but is rising fast in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' good progress is accelerating more quickly than before in all year groups because teachers have and use accurate assessment information effectively to pinpoint the next steps in pupils' learning. Good quality planning ensures learning tasks are usually well matched to their abilities and sustain pupils' interest although more-able pupils when working independently are sometimes left for too long before being checked that they are on task and sufficiently challenged. Those who speak English as an additional language, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress due to skilful teaching. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are key factors in their good achievement.

Pupils make a good contribution to the community, both within school and in the wider community, as members of the eco squad, school council or as sports ambassadors. Although community cohesion is satisfactory overall, pupils are only just beginning to have

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more direct contact with children in other parts of the United Kingdom and further afield and as such, this remains an area for development.

Given the many improvements, and especially pupils' accelerated progress, good systems and commitment of the headteacher, staff and governing body to raise attainment further, the school has good capacity for future improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of progress for more-able pupils through the school by:
 - providing consistent challenge and regular checks on their progress especially when working independently
 - sharing and embedding good teaching practices to extend their learning.
- Implement the plans to strengthen pupils' direct links with children in other parts of the United Kingdom and further afield and evaluate the impact on pupils' cultural development.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In the past pupils' attainment has been erratic. Historically girls underperformed in mathematics and pupils attained better in English than in mathematics and science. These variations are quickly reducing. A very large majority of pupils make good progress and some make outstanding progress. It starts in Reception classes where the work is very well planned to enable children to build on skills and knowledge quickly. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have not benefitted from the recent improvements in Reception and some are making up for lost ground. The greatest progress is evident in Years 5 and 6. The school did not take part in national tests last year but school data indicate that attainment was securely average overall and close to being higher than this. The school's checks on pupils' progress and their current work show they are progressing more quickly than their predecessors and are well on track to exceed challenging targets. Boys have made exceptional progress in writing because topics are exciting. For example, a visiting Roman soldier in Year 3 and a trip to Lewes Castle by Year 2, stimulated lots of good quality writing. In mathematics, pupils in Year 2 enjoyed learning about probability, dropping buttered bread and tallying how many times it landed butter side up compared to down. Year 4, through their Chocolate theme, explored Fair Trade, made small scale Charlie and the Chocolate Factory film sets and used computers to explore graphic design and advertising.

Pupils really enjoy school and are keen to contribute their ideas. They have produced a lunchtime charter in line with a Rights Respecting Schools programme. They collaborate very well, and different groups of pupils get on well together. Pupils say they feel safe, and that play buddies help resolve any playtime issues. As a result, bullying incidents are low and if they do occur, they are quickly resolved. Inspectors saw occasional restlessness in a few lessons where teaching did not fully meet pupils' needs, but found behaviour to be good overall. The considerable strengths in pupils' personal development are a reflection of their good and sometimes very good spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils' cultural development is often good in terms of exploring the arts and history. The multicultural element is not quite as strong and remains an area for development in the school's drive to lift the overall development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

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development from being good to becoming outstanding in the future. They are very proud of their 'shields of success', growing vegetables, and school council. The Year 6 apprentice project provided excellent opportunities for pupils to show their enterprise skills, planning and fund raising with a school from a contrasting setting by sharing an ongoing project of developing their own pond areas.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The school quickly identified relative weaknesses, such as the progress of some girls in mathematics, weaknesses in boys' writing and limited practical learning opportunities in science. Tailored learning, regrouping of pupils, and tracking of pupils' progress so that any underachievement is picked up early on, have all led to significant improvements in pupils' achievement and have ensured they are well prepared for the next stage of education. The pupils think they are well taught, which is also the view of their parents and carers. Lesson observations, pupils' books and displays confirm lessons are well taught. Planning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is detailed and linked well to their targets. The effective additional support of skilled teaching assistants in the classroom enables these pupils to make good progress. Extra language support helps those at early stages of learning English as an additional language to access the curriculum. The marking of pupils' books, and oral and written feedback are regular, usually informative and point to the next steps in learning, but it is not always clear if

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pupils act upon these. Pupils are motivated because of good teaching. Where teaching is less effective, pace and challenge for the more able, especially when working independently, and behaviour management are not as secure. Teachers have very good relationships with their classes. They ensure that pupils are clear about the purpose of lessons, which sets a purposeful framework for learning. Development of guided reading and parental workshops, along with the planned focus on speaking and listening, have contributed to higher expectations of pupils.

All classes have 'planning or study time', giving pupils opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. The greater focus on creativity, use of the outside environment, including the Anderson shelter and wood, and practical activities, especially in mathematics and science, ensure pupils and particularly girls participate more effectively in their learning. Promoting pupils' personal, social, emotional development is especially strong. The locality group of schools effectively meets the different needs of pupils and their families, for example, through joint projects, ranging from working with learning mentors to workshops for gifted and talented pupils in art and music, and specialist teaching support for all pupils in mathematics, science, history and religious education. Excellent engagement with pupils and families with challenging circumstances, Go4it (government funded) an Early birds nurture group and strong links with local organisations and external services underpin tailor-made provision. Transition is smooth within school and between primary and secondary schools. To extend the excellent practice and aid transition, last year's reception class teacher moved into Year 1 to ensure continuity. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been reviewed, is more robust and continues to be strengthened. Staff are vigilant and respond quickly to pupils' worries, problems or difficulties. Pupils respect and like their teachers and are confident that they are supported and advised well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been pivotal in raising expectations and leads the school effectively. The recently formed leadership team successfully shares the ambition and drive for improvement seen in the positive impact on most aspects of the school's work. A strong feature is in the increasingly shared accountability of staff and improved learning environment. Robust monitoring of teaching quality and distributive leadership has led, as one middle leader said, to 'higher expectations and teamwork'. Tailored staff training means that as strategies have been implemented, whether they be the teaching of letters and sounds, assessment or interventions, the quality of teaching, learning and the

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curriculum has improved. The appointment of key staff has been particularly beneficial in improving provision for children and in accelerating progress especially in Years 1 and 2.

Effective training of senior leaders, including the governing body, has helped them develop a good and improving awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They monitor the school's effectiveness well and the views of all stakeholders are actively sought. Good use is made of links with local organisations and schools to support pupils and their families, enrich the curriculum and to provide staff development. Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted so any discrimination is not tolerated. The very detailed analysis of progress data and resulting actions are improving all pupils' outcomes. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are met. A very small number of safeguarding documents do not identify responsibilities clearly enough, although all procedures and systems are effective in practice and pupils are kept safe in school. Relationships within the school and local community are good. Leaders are focused on developing global citizenship and pupils' wider multicultural development. The work which is linked to the 'Rights, Respecting Schools' programme helps pupils to understand about their rights and responsibilities as well as those of others. For example, Year 4 are developing a link with a Greek Orthodox school in Croydon, but in general, links such as this are still developing.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

From broadly average age-related starting points, children make good and often outstanding progress, especially in their communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. As a result of very good leadership and highly effective teaching, the vast majority now attain well-above expected standards in most areas of learning by the start of Year 1. This is because leaders have an excellent

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knowledge of how young children learn, teaching is secure and the vibrant learning environment offers a range of rich learning opportunities. Parental involvement in their child's learning is having a huge impact; attendance at reading, Letters and Sounds and mathematics workshops is high. Opportunities to investigate, practise and enjoy mark making in a purposeful graphics area are all helping the children to develop early writing skills. They particularly enjoyed the visit from 'Mrs Book' the librarian and helped her to sort the information books from the story books. They confidently used microphones and video to present their researched 'polar bear facts' to the class using different sentence starters. When a lost polar bear cub was heard roaring (one of the children dressed in role as a bear) because it had lost its mummy they all wanted to help him by building an igloo, sharing toys and writing a letter to Santa to help find his mummy. Outside children take turns to ride their trikes, dig, climb and crawl through a tunnel to find letter sounds written on cards. The environment is organised into six areas of learning so that children can choose learning independently. Learning is active and many topics appeal to boys. Children's development is carefully tracked through observations and learning journals; these, alongside parent consultations, guide planning. Skilled staff focus well on children's learning development and welfare. Early identification of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities takes place and additional external support as necessary is provided, as it is for those at the early stages of learning English.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

There was a higher-than-average return rate for the parents' and carers' questionnaire. Most were unanimous in their praise for the school, citing good relationships, strong leadership and teaching and how they felt more involved in the school. There were very few negative comments. A few felt they were not informed about their child's progress, that children were not helped to have a healthy lifestyle and that they were not well prepared for the future. Although most feel the school deals well with unacceptable behaviour, there are a few who disagree. Contrary to the views expressed by a few parents and carers, the inspection found that these aspects are good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Milton Mount Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 95 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 416 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	62	34	36	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	68	27	28	2	2	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	37	49	52	10	11	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	45	42	44	5	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	52	55	33	35	7	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	58	32	34	5	5	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	54	42	44	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	42	44	36	38	9	9	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	52	36	38	4	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	34	53	56	8	8	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	44	42	44	7	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	56	59	36	38	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	55	38	40	4	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Milton Mount Primary School, Crawley RH10 3AG

Thank you for giving us a warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We discovered that your behaviour is good and that you try hard to do well. We also found that you have good ideas about how to keep healthy and safe. I am delighted to tell you that you go to a good school and one that is much better than at the time of its last inspection. The following are the key strengths of your school.

- Children in Reception classes get off to a fantastic start.
- You get on very well with one another.
- Teaching is good and teachers help you to make at least good progress because they provide lots of activities that you enjoy and which make learning interesting and fun.
- You make a good contribution to your school and the wider community through the responsibilities you hold such as school councillors, sports ambassadors and the eco squad.
- Links made by the school with your parents or carers are excellent.
- You told us how much your school has improved and your headteacher and staff are making sure that your school gets even better and are helped to do this by the governors and your parents and carers.

Although you go to a good school, there are two things which we think would make your school even better. So we have asked your headteacher, teachers and governing body to:

- make sure that those of you who find learning easy are challenged to always do your best and for teachers to check that you are, particularly when you work independently that those of you who find learning easy are challenged to always do your best and for teachers to check that you are, particularly when you work independently
- You could have stronger links with children in other parts of this country and abroad.

You can help too by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning
Lead inspector

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