

St Mildred's Primary Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118405
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358338
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Lawson
Headteacher	Sue O'Keefe
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons. They also visited small out-of-class teaching groups and observed nine teachers. They met parents and carers informally on the first day of the inspection and held meetings with the headteacher, teaching staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised samples of pupils' work, the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, management and curriculum documentation, teachers' planning and safeguarding documents. Inspectors took account of questionnaire responses from 116 parents and carers, and 25 from staff.

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

- Have effective steps been taken to raise achievement for girls in numeracy and boys in literacy?
- How effectively do teachers use what they know about pupils' progress to plan consistent challenge for all groups of pupils in lessons, and set clear targets to help pupils understand what they have to learn next?
- How well does the governing body monitor the work of the school and hold senior leaders and managers to account?

Information about the school

The school is a larger than average infant school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and a few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average but the proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs is smaller than found nationally. A lower than average number of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals but this number is increasing each year. There is provision for Early Years Foundation Stage in three Reception classes. The school breakfast and after-school club are all managed by the governing body. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and holds the Eco Silver award.

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

St Mildred's provides a good quality of education. Pupils make good progress because they are well taught and enjoy learning. A good curriculum provides a broad and exciting range of learning experiences which engage and stimulate pupils. Pupils are known and valued as individuals and relationships at every level are good. The quality of care, guidance and support is excellent. All staff give a high priority to the care of pupils and this is extended to families through the effective work of the family liaison officer. Pupils' personal development is promoted well so they show concern and respect for adults and each other, and moments of delight enliven learning. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. One parent summed up the views of many, saying, 'I feel that St Mildred's works closely with parents and provides excellent care and education to meet all of my child's needs.'

Pupils make good progress in their learning and attainment at the end of Year 2 is average. Attainment is better in reading and the school has a close focus on improving achievement in writing and mathematics which is showing clear signs of success. Pupils of different abilities make good progress because lessons are well planned to provide interesting tasks that challenge them fully. Their progress is carefully tracked and any underachievement is quickly identified and addressed. Inspection evidence and the school's own tracking indicate that the recent focus on improving boys' achievement in literacy and girls' achievement in numeracy has been successful and both groups are now making good progress. The targets that are set for them are valued by pupils who are also encouraged to assess their own progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are carefully assessed and a range of flexible and well-structured support is provided for them in class and in small groups. Pupils' work is marked regularly but the quality of marking is inconsistent and not all teachers make clear how a piece of work can be improved, or what pupils need to learn next.

Good leadership and management have resulted in a strong team and a united determination to improve progress and raise attainment further for all pupils. The governing body monitors the work of the school well and provides a good balance of support and challenge to senior leaders and managers. The issues identified in the previous inspection report are continuing to be addressed and the profile of good progress made by all pupils has been sustained. The school has an accurate and reflective appreciation of its own effectiveness. Consequently, the school has a good capacity to sustain improvement. ♦

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Promote more rapid progress in literacy and numeracy across the school and raise attainment further by ensuring that all marking provides consistent guidance for pupils on how to improve their work, and what they need to learn next.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils find learning fun so they work hard and try to do their best. They enjoy discussions in class and work well in small groups and independently. In a Year 2 numeracy lesson, the theme of 'castles' was used to help reinforce pupils' ability to add and subtract in multiples of 10 and 100 as they worked on a price list for a range of items sold in the castle gift shop. Tasks were well structured and the more-able pupils were asked to consider a discount for some items. Great enjoyment was shown by all pupils. Boys and girls contributed equally in lessons and made good progress because tasks are well matched to their ability. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support in class and, as a result, they also make good progress.

Pupils enter Year 1 with skills and abilities generally below average. They make satisfactory progress and leave Year 2 with attainment that is average in writing and mathematics, and better, although still broadly average, in reading. The dip in attainment in 2008 has been systematically addressed by the school through well-chosen strategies in reading, writing and numeracy, together with carefully structured support for groups of pupils identified as falling behind in their learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school and the school works diligently to promote good attendance. However, a few families do not place importance on regular attendance, despite good support from the school, and current attendance rates are average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is reflected in pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, their respect for adults and awareness of the needs of others. They carry out important responsibilities as school councillors, energy monitors and corridor monitors with pride and efficiency. There is a strong awareness of the importance of protecting the environment, saving energy and conserving important areas of the planet such as the Arctic, which has led to the school's success in gaining the Eco Silver award. Pupils are helped to develop a good awareness of how to stay safe and what they need to do to have a healthy lifestyle. The Healthy Schools status indicates the importance placed on this aspect of pupils' development. ♦ The good progress that pupils make, their love of learning and their good personal development ensure they are well prepared for the next stage of their education at junior school.

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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	3
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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons that are interesting and fun. ♦

Lessons are well paced and teachers use questioning well to involve all pupils in discussions and to assess their understanding. Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide good support for different ability groups, ensuring that all pupils show independence and contribute confidently to class discussions. Assessment information is used well to plan lessons that offer appropriate challenge to all groups, including those who find learning more difficult. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well integrated into lessons and cross-curricular links are developing well between subjects to make learning more interesting. The 'castles' theme in Year 2, for example, effectively links history with literacy, numeracy, art, ICT and design and technology. Extra-curricular clubs and visits out of school extend learning well beyond the classroom and enrich pupils' learning experience. The gardening club, for example, is much enjoyed and pupils keep a close watch on the seed trays in the corridors.

Pupils are confident that they can share their problems and seek help from the adults who care for them. Valuable links are established with other agencies to extend the excellent care provided in school. This very high quality of care is also evident in the ♦ breakfast and after-school clubs. The clubs provide a safe, friendly and stimulating ♦ environment where careful attention is given to pupils' health and safety. In school, careful planning

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ensures the smooth transition for pupils at all stages of their education and good guidance is provided for their parents and carers. Pupils' concerns are treated seriously; for example, some said they were unhappy about having to use the swimming pool in their new school so a swimming party was organised. Pupils recognise and value the excellent care, guidance and support they receive. One said, 'My school is so special because all of our teachers are really helpful and they look after us.'

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work in a close and very effective partnership, monitoring carefully all areas of the work of the school. The recent introduction of three subject teams, led by senior staff but including all other teachers, has led to a more regular and rigorous analysis of subject development and teaching and learning. It has also enabled leaders to communicate their vision for the school's future to all staff. Leadership skills are being developed rapidly and teams are working well to meet the challenging targets that are set. Development planning is succinct and clear and new initiatives in literacy and numeracy are closely checked to ensure they are effective. The governing body works in close partnership with senior leaders and managers, knows the school well, and monitors developments carefully. Most members of the governing body provide a high level of challenge, ask searching questions of leaders and managers, and play a full part in planning the future direction of the school. Some members are still developing their skills.

There is a close and well-developed partnership with parents and carers that is underpinned by regular newsletters from each class explaining the work that pupils will be doing and what help parents and carers can give at home. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's progress through regular meetings, reports and informal exchanges with staff. The safeguarding of pupils is good. Policies and procedures are securely integrated into the school, and staff receive regular update training. All pupils are treated fairly, groups and individuals make good progress and the school is free of discrimination. Community cohesion is well managed and there is a clear plan, which is regularly evaluated, to support pupils in developing an understanding of their future role as citizens. Links are currently being made with another school and through this association pupils will be able to extend their awareness of the multicultural diversity of society in the United Kingdom. There are good links within their local community, especially through charity events and sports meetings with other schools. Links with Nepal and other parts of the world help children develop an understanding of other cultures and ways of life.

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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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly in Reception because they receive extremely good care. Independence is fostered carefully so children develop their own games and become curious about the world around them. They help decide the learning themes and during the inspection were learning about people who help them, especially police officers. In their role-play area, two children, dressed as officers, were counting coins. One said, very confidently, 'We are helping in the police station. It's fun and we're counting the money from a robbery to see if it's all here.' ♦

Children enter Reception with skills and abilities that are low compared to children of a similar age, especially in areas of communication and language, some elements of numeracy, and their emotional development. A combination of good teaching and interesting activities which cover all areas of learning ensures children make a good start to their learning. A recent careful focus on blending letter sounds and forming words is proving effective in developing children's language skills. Speaking and listening skills are developed progressively and adults model language well. However, some opportunities are missed by adults in encouraging children to explain their ideas and extend their learning when they are involved in their own games.

Leadership and management are good and staff work as a close and efficient team. Links with parents and carers are fostered well, beginning with home visits. There is also close liaison with over 20 pre-school settings from which children come to Reception. Good information is provided for parents and carers on their children's development and this has recently been improved by the introduction of well-illustrated learning journals. Monitoring of children's progress is regular and used efficiently to plan activities that meet children's individual needs effectively. Parents and carers are also given good support to

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help their children at home. At regular coffee-mornings, staff have explained how parents and carers can help with reading, letters and sounds, and writing.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A larger than average proportion of parents and carers replied to the questionnaire and most are very happy with the school. They value that their children enjoy school and that they are safe; overall, they are happy with their children's experience of the school. A very small minority of parents and carers felt that their children were not making enough progress and unacceptable behaviour was not well managed. The inspection findings did not endorse these concerns. Inspectors found during this inspection that pupils make good progress in their time at St Mildred's and behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. One parent, typical of many, said, 'A very happy school. Children behave well and make good progress.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mildred's Primary Infant 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 116 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 269 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	85	73	30	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	78	67	38	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	42	36	65	56	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	48	53	46	5	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	66	57	48	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	48	56	48	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	47	57	49	2	2	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)	51	44	48	41	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	49	54	47	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	41	52	45	5	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	37	61	53	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	59	51	51	44	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	76	66	39	34	0	0	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.



14 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mildred's Primary Infant School, Broadstairs CT10 2BX

We really enjoyed our visit to St Mildred's. Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so helpful and polite. We were very impressed with the lovely displays of your work around the school and we especially liked the big picture you have done on the African savannah. You told us how much you like your school and that you think your lessons are interesting and fun. We think all the staff at school look after you extremely well. You told us you feel safe in school and you know a lot about what you need to do to stay safe and healthy. We agree with you that you go to a good school where there are many exciting activities.

Your teachers encourage you to work hard and make good progress in lessons. You behave kindly to each other and work sensibly in lessons. Your headteacher, other staff and the governing body all work very hard to make sure your school is a happy and successful place in which to learn.

There is one important thing we think could help you all to make even better progress and improve your achievement. We have asked your teachers to make sure that when they mark your work that they make it clear to you how and where you can improve what you have done, and what you need to learn next.

All of you can help by doing your best and always working hard. It was a great pleasure to visit your school and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead inspector

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