

# Inspection of Milstead and Frinsted Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Milstead, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 0SJ

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Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

This small village school, surrounded by apple orchards, is a place where pupils say that they feel known and cared about. There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere. This contributes to a tangible sense of belonging that is felt throughout the school.

Christian values are at the heart of life here, and these underpin the school motto of 'work hard, be kind, trust God'. The 'buddy' scheme gives older pupils the opportunity to act as a mentor for younger children. This helps establish friendships and contributes to the family feeling that pupils and parents and carers say describes their school.

While leaders are ambitious for every pupil to flourish at school and beyond, they have not yet ensured that learning in every subject is carefully planned. Consequently, pupils can find it difficult to remember what they have previously been taught and then to apply this to new learning.

There have been some incidents of bullying or unkind behaviour. Pupils say that these are dealt with quickly and sensitively by staff. Over time, these have reduced and are now rare. Leaders are focused on making sure that all pupils behave in line with their high expectations.

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

Following an unsettled period for the whole school community, the arrival of the permanent headteacher has been well received. This has heartened pupils, staff and parents. Pupils will benefit from leaders' ambitious plans to deliver improvements that have been delayed by the lack of stability over recent years.

Historical gaps in the school's curriculum mean that not all pupils have learned all that they need in order to ensure success in the next stage of their education. Leaders recognise this and are working with subject leaders to make the necessary improvements to the curriculum quickly. This can be seen in the use of 'big questions' that run through from Reception to Year 6. This is designed to spark pupils' curiosity. However, as yet, the careful sequencing of the important knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn is still in development for some subjects.

Leaders have identified the need to improve provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are dedicated to embedding an inclusive approach and providing a curriculum that supports all pupils to learn alongside their peers. Although there has been some consideration given to adapting learning to meet the needs of all pupils, staff have not had the much-needed training to deliver this skilfully in classrooms.

Leaders have now introduced a consistent approach to teaching reading. They have identified that many pupils have gaps in their phonic knowledge. To address this,

leaders are taking a rigorous approach to assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. Leaders are unyielding in their commitment to identifying those who fall behind and targeting support. While they intend to ensure that every pupil learns to read fluently, there is still a lot to do to ensure that staff have the knowledge and expertise they need in order to implement the phonics programme.

In Reception, children are read to several times a day. Stories underpin a well-organised early years curriculum. However, adults have not had the training to deliver this effectively. Where children demonstrate a keen interest, this is not always harnessed to facilitate learning. Too many opportunities to promote curiosity or embed vocabulary are missed. This means that children are not fully prepared for learning in Year 1.

Pupils can sometimes become bubbly and excitable when moving from one activity to another. This leads to lost learning time. Furthermore, routines to support learning are not yet reliably in place. This means that some pupils lose interest and become disengaged and distract others. In some instances, teachers' expectations of behaviour are not always high enough, and the activities provided are not always well matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, behaviour during lessons does not always ensure that everyone can learn as well as they could.

Staff are skilled at identifying and providing for the pastoral and wider needs of pupils. This creates a kind, nurturing environment. Leaders are committed to providing opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility. The introduction of a school council has been welcomed, and many pupils have already written letters of application for the roles that this will create. Although there are some trips and visits planned, pupils still do not benefit from a broad range of wider opportunities linked to the school's curriculum. This means that pupils do not have enough meaningful opportunities to further develop their understanding of life in modern Britain.

The trust's central team is providing valuable support for the school. Trustees are well informed about the improvements that the school needs to make. They are committed to providing the necessary support and expertise to achieve the identified and agreed priorities, so that pupils receive a high-quality education and achieve well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Everyone takes a vigilant approach to safeguarding. High-quality training for all staff means that everyone is able to play their part in keeping pupils safe. Leaders are swift to follow up on concerns. They work well with social workers and other agencies to make sure that families get the help they need.

Pupils say that they feel safe everywhere in school. They know they can talk to an adult if they need to. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They

understand the dangers associated with the internet and know how to protect themselves when online.

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

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

- Too many pupils have gaps in their phonic knowledge. Leaders have taken swift action to address this and have implemented a phonics programme. Leaders need to monitor how staff deliver the programme, ensuring that consistent approaches are in place across all classes, so that all pupils make rapid progress and learn to read fluently.
- The essential knowledge that pupils need to learn in some subjects is not clear. This means that pupils are not able to build their knowledge systematically. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders have the training and knowledge they need to implement, monitor and develop the curriculum more effectively.
- While there has been some staff training to make sure that all staff can meet the needs of pupils with SEND, this is not yet precise enough. Consequently, pupils with SEND do not all achieve as well as they could. Leaders should continue to ensure that the needs of all pupils with SEND are accurately identified, and that teaching staff have the necessary expertise to meet these needs.
- Staff expectations of behaviour are not always high enough, and in lessons, the work set is not always well matched to pupils' needs. This means that some pupils disengage from learning, and behaviour in lessons is not always good. Leaders know that they now need to ensure that all staff have consistently high expectations for behaviour, and that activities support pupils to engage proactively with learning.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137483
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227148
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	85
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Helen Stewart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amanda Love
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.milstead.kent.sch.uk">www.milstead.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Milstead and Frinsted Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school became part of the Our Community Multi Academy Trust in July 2021.
- The school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Canterbury. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in 2018 and was graded as good.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has breakfast and after-school clubs. These are managed by school leaders.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher (who is also the designated safeguarding lead), other senior leaders from the trust, subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of those responsible for governance, including the chair of the local monitoring council and the chair of trustees. Inspectors also spoke with the chief executive officer from the trust and a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and outside during social times.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records, speaking to staff and governors and discussing this with pupils.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including school improvement documentation and minutes of governing body meetings.

### **Inspection team**

Jo Petch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gillian Lovatt-Young

Ofsted Inspector

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