

St Mildred's Primary Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118405
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312925
Inspection dates	16–17 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Barron

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 on roll	
School	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Lawson
Headteacher	Sue O'Keefe
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2003
School address	St Mildred's Avenue Broadstairs CT10 2BX
Telephone number	01843 862035
Fax number	01843 866637

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Mildred's is a larger than average infant school. Pupils come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Nearly all are from White British heritage and very few pupils are at the early stages of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about the national average. The school provides a breakfast club for its pupils before the start of each school day.

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 school which provides a good education for its pupils. It is led by an enthusiastic headteacher who has ensured that both staff and governors share her vision of raising standards through improving achievement and providing pupils with a stimulating and creative curriculum. The school has increased its effectiveness since the last inspection by developing systems to regularly check and measure its performance and to implement strategies aimed at bringing about improvements where needed. This has been a key factor in raising pupils' achievement and attainment.

Pupils enter the school's Foundation Stage with skills which are often lower than those expected for their age, especially in relation to their language development. They make good progress and achieve well in all year groups because of consistently good teaching so that, by Year 2, the standards they attain are above the national average. However, standards in writing, especially boys' writing, are lower than in mathematics or science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the small number for whom English is not their first language, make good progress because of the good level of support they receive.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are keen and eager to learn and describe their school as a happy and friendly place where adults make them feel wanted. As one pupil put it, 'Teachers are nice and help us to learn'. Behaviour is excellent and pupils try hard to do well. Their enjoyment of school is outstanding even though their attendance is average. They make sensible and healthy choices and take responsibilities such as serving on the elected school council very seriously. Pupils display a good level of respect for others. They have a good community spirit and say that they feel safe and secure. Their social, moral and spiritual awareness is good, as is their appreciation of their own culture. However, their awareness of the cultural diversity of modern British society is not as well developed.

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and has been designed to make learning fun for pupils. It is enriched by a range of visits and visitors to the school that further develop pupils' skills and their enjoyment of learning. The range of after-school activities offered to pupils is currently limited to sports. The level of care, guidance and support for pupils is good and contributes well to their sense of well-being and academic achievement.

Leadership and management are good. The school's senior leadership team provides the headteacher with good support. The school analyses its performance thoroughly and clearly demonstrates a good capacity to make any necessary improvements. The governing body fulfils its duties well. Governors have a realistic idea of the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement and provide a good level of support and challenge to the school's leaders.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of good teaching, which effectively blends independent learning with teacher-directed tasks. Teachers ensure that children quickly develop positive attitudes to learning and settle happily into new routines. The broad and balanced curriculum ensures that children are provided with a wide range of stimulating and practical activities which cover all areas of learning and provide them with regular opportunities to develop their early numeracy and literacy skills. As a result, children enter Year 1 with skills that are close to those expected nationally, although their writing skills

are not as well developed as their other communication skills. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that children are provided with a good level of care, guidance and support. However, there are rare occasions in lessons when more able children do not make the progress they are capable of because most support is targeted towards children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement strategies designed to improve pupils' achievement in writing, particularly boys' writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils in all year groups are making good progress. The school's regular in-depth analysis of pupils' progress quickly identifies those who need extra help or who are performing less well than they should be. This has ensured, for example, that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and, more recently, the more able pupils have received the level of support they have needed in order to make the same good progress as other pupils.

Whilst attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly typical, pupils' achievement is good in both Year 1 and Year 2 because teaching is consistently good and pupils have developed good attitudes to learning. However, the school's results in the most recent national assessments showed that standards had dropped in Year 2 from the previous year. Even so, this represented good achievement for this particular group of pupils.

Standards in Year 2 are currently above average in nearly all areas, with the exception of writing, especially boys' writing. Recent initiatives to improve achievement in this subject, for example the introduction of drama into literacy lessons in an attempt to motivate reluctant writers, have met with partial success. However, the school is aware that standards in writing still lag behind the standards pupils attain in other subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are polite and their behaviour is outstanding. They enjoy school a lot and have developed good attitudes to learning. However, this is not reflected in their average attendance rates. Pupils of all ages act safely and responsibly at all times. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and display a high level of consideration for others. They feel safe and secure and know that any rare instances of unkind behaviour will be dealt with quickly and effectively. The school council gives them an active role in decision-making and pupils are involved in the local community and in charitable fund raising. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of keeping fit and making healthy choices, especially about what they eat. Their good progress in developing key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology ensures they are well prepared for future life. However, whilst their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, their understanding of life in a culturally diverse society is limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and pupils are keen to learn. Lessons are well organised and teachers use a variety of methods to make learning interesting. Several pupils said that they enjoyed learning and that 'lessons are fun'. However, there are rare occasions when the pace of lessons slackens and pupils lose a little interest in what is going on for a short time. Teachers work well with teaching assistants to ensure that pupils are provided with the level of support they need in order to make good progress, particularly those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has developed a creative curriculum which meets the needs and interests of pupils well and makes learning interesting. It features, for example, handwriting lessons that include drama and singing. Initiatives like this help pupils to enjoy school and develop good attitudes to learning. Good planning and provision for personal, social and health education ensure that pupils are well aware of the importance of keeping fit and healthy. A range of interesting visitors to the school and visits to places of interest, such as the Natural History Museum, further enhance pupils' experiences of the world around them. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also for the small number at the early stages of English language acquisition, is good and helps these pupils to make good progress. The school provides a number of out of school clubs to support and develop pupils' interest in sporting activities, but there are fewer opportunities for pupils to follow other interests and talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good. There is a pleasant family atmosphere about the school and this contributes well to pupils' sense of well-being. Parents value the way in which the school cares for their children and comment that they are 'delighted' with the school and that 'the staff really care'. Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after. They know there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem.

Induction and transfer arrangements are good and help pupils to settle quickly into new routines. Health and safety arrangements are good and risk assessments meet current government guidelines. Robust child protection procedures are understood and followed by all staff. The school works well to ensure that pupils who have particular needs are well supported. The school has recognised the need to improve support for gifted and talented pupils and is developing its provision, although this is in the early stages.

Procedures to track pupils' progress are thorough and used well by teachers when planning further work. The quality of teachers' marking is good and consistently provides pupils with effective guidance about how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has worked well with governors and staff to make sure that the school has been thorough in analysing its performance and in implementing changes where needed. They have ensured that the school's targets have been challenging and that improvement planning has focused on the key areas in need of development in order to raise standards. Several initiatives have led to recent improvements, for example raising pupils' attainment in science, although raising pupils' achievement in writing, especially boys' writing, remains an area in need of development.

Governors play an active role in school life and are involved in all major decisions. They have a firm understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of development. The school works closely with parents. However, some parents do not always feel that the school takes account of their views. Resources are good and are used well. Links with external agencies are good and support pupils' learning effectively.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 October 2007

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for making us feel very welcome during our visit to your school. We really enjoyed our two days and especially enjoyed talking to some of you about what you like the most about your school and seeing you work in lessons.

Here are some of the things we particularly like about your school:

- St Mildred's Primary Infant School is a good school which gives you a good start to your education and makes sure you make good progress in learning.
- Your personal development is good and you really enjoy being at school.
- Your behaviour is outstanding.
- The quality of care and support you receive from the school is good.
- Your headteacher, her staff and your school governors are working well to make sure that your school continues to improve in the future. We believe your headteacher and teachers can do something to make your school better. We have asked them to:
 - Help you to improve your writing skills, especially boys' writing. You can help your school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Michael Barron Lead inspector



17 October 2007

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Lead inspector