

Milstead and Frinsted CofE Primary School

School Lane, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 0SJ

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The head of school, ably supported by the executive headteacher and the governing body, has created a happy school where all pupils can flourish.
- All pupils make at least good progress and most leave Year 6 with standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above the national average, and rising.
- The quality of teaching is good because careful checks are made by senior leaders and opportunities are available for teachers to learn from each other within the Academy Trust.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and want to learn. They get along with each other well and have good relationships with the adults who support them
- The Board of Directors have a clear vision for the development of all schools in the trust. This vision is shared and put into action by members of the local governing body, who are committed to improving their school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and feel their children are safe and well looked after.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Not all teachers check quickly enough to see if pupils, especially the more able, could move onto more difficult work on their own and increase the progress they make.
- Teachers do not always tell pupils exactly what they need to do next when marking their books and time given for pupils to respond to the marking is not long enough. This slows progress for some.
- Untidy presentation and poor handwriting skills, especially of younger pupils, do not always match the quality of work and they detract from the quality of learning for these pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons across all three classes. All observations were held jointly with the head of school. The inspector also observed an assembly taken by the local vicar.
- The inspector talked informally with pupils around the school and formally with members of the school council. She listened to some pupils read and examined a selection of pupils' books.
- The inspector spoke with the executive headteacher, head of school, special educational needs coordinator and members of the governing body and Board of Directors.
- The inspector took account of the 33 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and the eight responses to the staff questionnaire.
- She observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's development plans and self-evaluation statement, and records of monitoring of the quality of teaching and of behaviour and bullying incidents. She also analysed the school's information on the standards and progress of pupils currently at school and over time.

Inspection team

Penny Spencer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average sized primary school, although it is expanding. All pupils are taught in three mixed age classes.
- The school converted to an academy in 1 September 2011 as part of the Village Academy Trust. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected, it was judged to be satisfactory. It is led by a head of school. An executive headteacher oversees the work of all the schools in the Trust.
- The school is managed by a local governing body under the direction of a Board of Directors responsible for all schools within the Trust.
- There have been several changes in staff at all levels since the conversion took place.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (extra government funds for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or whose parents serve in the armed forces) is broadly average. No pupils from service families attend the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs, supported at school action, is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is below average.
- More pupils than average join or leave the school at various points of the school year.
- The school meets the current government floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that much is outstanding and so raises achievement, by making sure:
 - teachers' marking always includes the next steps pupils should make to improve their work and time given for pupils to respond to this feedback is more regular in all classes
 - teachers do not wait too long before increasing the challenge for pupils who have found the work easy and whose progress may be slowing down.
- Develop a consistent handwriting policy across the school in order to present pupils' work in a way that fully matches the quality of learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. However, the range within the small numbers of children is often wide. Along with their classmates in Year 1, they make good progress because activities are interesting and build carefully on their previous learning. Current assessments show all pupils making good progress in all subjects.
- Pupils make good progress overall as they move through the school and standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. Current pupils in Year 6 have made even faster progress than might be expected and standards have risen further this year. Reliable teacher assessments indicate that most pupils will achieve at the higher Level 5 in all subjects in 2013.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in line with their classmates and achieve highly.
- Pupils in receipt of the pupil premium achieve in line with their classmates in English and mathematics, and there were no differences in standards in 2012. Current assessment information indicates this pattern is set to continue in the future. This is because resources are used wisely to provide any extra support that might be needed and assessment information is regularly checked to make sure no one is falling behind.
- Pupils who join the school at different times in their school life are supported to settle in quickly. Quick checks on their progress and standards ensure that any support they might need to catch up is put in place swiftly. As a result, they do well and achieve as well as their classmates.
- Pupils who read to the inspector were confident and enthusiastic about reading. Younger pupils could link together the sounds letters make successfully and older pupils had a broad range of skills to help them read unfamiliar words. They are well supported at home by their parents.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because in some classes progress is not as rapid as it might be, especially for the most able pupils. This is because they occasionally spend too long listening to explanations they already understand before they can work independently.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall and teachers are always striving to do better. They plan lessons that are matched well to the different age groups in their classes.
- Teaching in the Reception and Year 1 class ensures there is a good mix of independent activities and teacher-directed learning that supports the wide range of abilities. The older pupils have increasing opportunities throughout the year to work in a more structured way that prepares them well for the move into Year 2. Pupils in Year 1 were observed, in a small group led by the class teacher, successfully writing scripts for a film clip they were producing, based on the class book. Meanwhile younger children were working independently outside on practical activities also based on the book.
- Teachers question pupils effectively to deepen their understanding and good use is made of paired talk between pupils to share ideas and strengthen their learning.
- Mathematics teaching has developed strongly in partnership with other schools in the Trust. A mathematics programme developed within the Trust is ensuring that pupils become adept in the basic skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 were observed successfully using these skills to solve a variety of problems involving fractions.
- Pupils have many opportunities to write in a variety of styles and for different reasons. Work examined in books showed pupils in all year groups writing to a high standard. However, poorly formed letters, untidy presentation and lack of a consistent style, especially amongst the younger pupils, means the quality of the work is occasionally lost.
- Teaching for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good because work is carefully matched to their individual needs and support offered by learning support

assistants is of high quality.

- All teachers mark books regularly and marking consistently follows the school policy. However pupils are not always told what they need to do next to improve their work. This slows progress for some pupils. Whilst there is evidence that pupils respond to this feedback, their comments are often superficial and there is little evidence, especially in writing books, that they have time to refine or improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in above-average attendance. They enjoy being in a small school where everyone knows each other and where they can play with friends from all classes.
- Pupils are extremely polite and friendly to the adults who work in the school and relationships are strong.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning most of the time. However, when explanations go on too long or when they have to do too much easy work before they can tackle more difficult examples, they sometimes lose concentration and learning is occasionally disrupted.
- Pupils are fully aware of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and were adamant that bullying does not happen. They were confident that if pupils did fall out with each other, an adult would quickly sort things out.
- Records kept by the school support parents' overwhelmingly positive views about the behaviour and safety of their children whilst at school and show very few instances of poor behaviour. This was endorsed by the inspector during the inspection.
- A very few pupils whose behaviour might be more challenging are supported well in school because the behaviour policy is clear and consistently applied.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to work together as a team and there is a strong sense of mutual support and encouragement within the school community. This fully supports the positive values of equality and fairness that are strongly promoted by the school and which were seen during the inspection.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and head of school are determined to make the school an outstanding place to learn. They are fully aware of the relative strengths and weakness of the school and have clear plans in place to maintain the upward trends seen in pupils' achievement.
- Membership of the academy has ensured stability for the school and removed any threat of closure because of falling pupil numbers. In fact, the school has seen a rise in numbers since the academy was formed.
- The appointment of an experienced special educational needs coordinator to work across the academy has been very successful in developing the skills of learning support assistants and in forging good partnerships with parents. As a result, many of the disabled pupils and those with special educational needs now make better progress than might be expected from their relative starting points.
- Regular and frequent opportunities for senior leaders from all the schools within the Trust to meet and discuss common policies, share experiences and develop joint training opportunities for teachers ensure the best use is made of resources and expertise.
- Staff development is based securely on the needs of the school and is supported by opportunities within the Trust to observe best practice, attend high quality training and moderate work samples across the schools.
- Teachers' salaries are closely related to their performance, which is rigorously monitored by the head of school.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils but a major review of the curriculum has just been

undertaken to ensure opportunities for pupils to learn a wide variety of subjects are even more interesting and relevant to modern-day life. Very good use is made of the school grounds to support a range of topics, through gardening, creating wildlife-friendly areas and recycling through composting.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly supported through the school's positive values that offer regular opportunities for pupils to work together, the time to reflect during daily assemblies and visits to places of interest.
- The Board of Directors of the Academy Trust offer support to this good school in line with their aspirations for continued success.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school's governance has two tiers. A local governing body oversees the day-to-day work of the school and the management of the teachers. Wider, more strategic decisions for the group of schools within the Trust are undertaken by the Board of Directors. Links between the two bodies are strong, with some governors sitting on both boards. Governors bring a wide range of expertise to the role and they benefit from training which improves their understanding of how to interpret assessment information. They are well placed to challenge the leaders and hold them to account for the school's performance. Governors understand the school's performance data and how the school compares with similar schools. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and keep a careful check on how teachers' pay and promotion are closely linked to standards. Governors ensure money is spent effectively, including the pupil premium. This reflects their determination to tackle discrimination and ensure all pupils will have equal opportunities to succeed. Safeguarding policies and procedures are strong and meet statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137483
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	402761

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James McBeath
Executive Headteacher	Ian Fidge
Headteacher	Kelly Collens
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01795 830241
Email address	headteacher@milstead.kent.sch.uk

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