

Medstead Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	116300
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	379232
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2012
Lead inspector	Ronald Hall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Crowe
Headteacher	Ian Waine
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ronald Hall

Additional inspector

Fran Ashworth

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Eighteen lessons or parts of lessons were observed, representing just over eight hours of teaching by eight staff. A number of these were undertaken jointly with the senior staff. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and individual teachers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at school data, the school development plan, teachers' planning and other documentation. They examined questionnaires completed by 112 parents and carers, 113 pupils and 17 staff.

Information about the school

Medstead is an average-sized primary school situated in a rural area of Alton. It has a smaller than average number of girls. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average, but due to the deaf unit attached to the school, the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and most pupils are of White British heritage. The school has the International School Award and Enhanced Healthy Schools status. The school meets the current floor standard.

There is a privately run breakfast club and after-school provision operating within the school which are subject to separate inspection.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school which has made good progress since its last inspection. Many improvements have come about because of the senior leadership’s relentless drive for improvement.
- Pupils’ achievement is good. Most groups of pupils have made at least good progress over time and some better. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress and achieve better than their peers nationally.
- Teaching is good but with some degree of variation across the school. English and mathematics lessons are taught well. Progress in English is slightly slower with lower attainment in writing caused by a lack of opportunities to write across the curriculum; consequently, a relatively small proportion achieves the higher levels. An outstanding feature of teaching is the small group work for pupils who need an extra boost and for higher attaining pupils. In Years 5 and 6, the pace of learning is usually impressively high. Marking is good and allows pupils to improve their work. A notable feature is the way pupils are often given a target for improvement specifically for the next lesson.
- Behaviour is good with pupils being polite to both each other and adults. They co-operate with, and support each other well. Where teaching is at its best, pupils are highly engaged and motivated in lessons. Behaviour in these lessons is exemplary but where teaching is not as strong, some inattentiveness arises.
- Leadership and management are good. The school evaluates well the quality of its teaching and the extent to which pupils make progress. However, middle managers are not yet carrying out regular monitoring of teaching for their areas of responsibility. Minor inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are not always picked up quickly enough resulting in some slowing of progress.
- The school promotes pupils’ personal development exceptionally well and their awareness of the wide range of cultures and religions that are present in the United Kingdom and further afield is excellent.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Eliminate minor inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by ensuring that middle managers regularly monitor their areas of responsibility.
- Raise the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in English by ensuring pupils have greater opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

On entry to the school children's level of skills are in line with age-expected levels. High quality teaching in an excellent learning environment results in children in the Reception class making good and, at times, outstanding progress. The early years setting provides an excellent foundation for their future learning. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average, as are standards of reading in both key stages. Writing is the weakest element of English as pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their writing skills across the whole curriculum. Current pupils are making good, and in some cases outstanding, progress but there is some small variation in rates of progress across the school. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make rapid progress due to the excellent support they receive. Deaf pupils make excellent progress from their starting points and the support they also receive is a key factor in achieving this. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 make exceptional progress and, as a result, leave the school with above average attainment. They are keen and eager to learn. Parents and carers feel that their children's progress is good and inspectors agree that this view is accurate.

Pupils typically learn well in their lessons. They enjoy what they are learning because it is often set in an interesting context. Pupils in Year 6, for example, produced some excellent vocabulary and understanding of poetry and an empathy with characters as they created their own poem to describe a character. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs played a full part because they were well prepared and supported by a teaching assistant. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils showed great enthusiasm for their work on time and digital presentation because the work was related to their lives and resources were imaginative. Where teaching is at its best, pupils respond very well to the opportunities they get to discuss work with a partner. They generally use the time maturely, assist each other and are also good at assessing each other's work, using criteria given at the start of the lesson. They can reflect with understanding, too, as shown when pupils in a Year 2 class were developing their reading skills. Pupils commented on each other's skills and the content of the book with clarity and empathy.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers have faith in the quality of teaching; with 96% affirming in the questionnaires that they believe it to be good. Overall, this is an accurate view of the quality of teaching. Pupils also think teaching is good with 92% responding

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positively. One pupil commented, 'Our teacher always teaches this way, she makes learning fun.' For example, a small group of higher attaining pupils were observed in a session of exceptional quality with high levels of pupil engagement and enjoyment, where the teacher assessed and responded to pupils' learning throughout the session and fine-tuned activities to ensure rapid progress occurred.

Teachers generally demonstrate a good use of resources. In a good Year 6 lesson, information and communication technology (ICT) was used particularly well to help pupils analyse and dissect a passage. In a mathematics lesson, deaf pupils were fully included and challenged well through the individual support of their expert communicator. The good attention given to behaviour and manners supports pupils' social development, and in many lessons this was furthered by the many opportunities for discussion and paired working. Occasionally, teachers' demonstrations gave pupils a real sense of awe, as seen during a reading session in the Reception class. Well-taught assemblies also support the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The excellent use of visitors to the school further enriches the curriculum and enhances pupils' experiences, as seen when a musical quartet visited the school and the pupils were mesmerised throughout. In the small minority of cases where teaching is less effective, there is a lack of pace and a mismatch of work to pupils' abilities. In these instances, there is occasionally some low-level disruptive behaviour and a lack of concentration.

Pupils are given individual targets, which they know well and use in their lessons. They are also provided with success criteria for lessons, and most teachers use these well to focus on what different ability groups should be learning and to help pupils assess their own and each other's work. Marking is good and allows pupils to improve their work and know what next steps to take. The curriculum and its planning give good support to teachers. The best teaching occurs when teachers match the curriculum well to pupils' abilities. There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across the curriculum.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Questionnaires from pupils and their parents and carers suggested that a small, but significant minority had concerns about behaviour. Inspectors therefore looked in detail at a range of evidence about pupils' behaviour over time, and came to the judgement that behaviour is good overall. In some classes, behaviour is exemplary. The school's records show no evidence of prejudice-based bullying or harassment of a serious nature and indicate consistent behaviour over time. Records show that pupils who have particular behavioural needs have made marked improvements due to the support they receive. Parents and carers and pupils generally believe the school deals well with any incidents that occur, and that incidents of bullying are swiftly sorted out when brought to the school's attention. Pupils feel safe in the school, and are typically courteous and respectful to staff and visitors. They understand how to keep themselves safe. Classrooms have a very positive climate for learning, attendance is above average and the school is a cohesive learning community.

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Leadership and management

Evidence from the school's own monitoring and reports from external sources detail steady and consistently good improvement since the last inspection. The governing body, whose members have a good understanding of the current position of the school, carry out their duties effectively. The exceptional headteacher and deputy headteacher have developed effective professional development with a coaching programme to improve teaching, in order to bring about greater consistency in teaching and pupils' progress. The recommendations in the last inspection report have been addressed effectively. Leaders analyse data very well and use the results to plan effective strategies for the improvement of groups, year groups and in subjects, for example mathematics. Provision for disabled pupils, including deaf pupils, and those who have special educational needs is well managed. Identification of needs is accurate and secure, and interventions are planned systematically. The impact of interventions as a whole can be seen in pupils' improving progress. Middle managers make a growing contribution to school improvement but do not yet regularly monitor the quality of teaching and/or their areas of responsibilities.

One of the major successes of school leaders is the degree to which they have achieved the commitment of the staff to the rapid improvements. All staff who returned questionnaires were extremely supportive of the achievements of senior managers. The ambition to improve is embedded at all levels in the school as a result of the energy and drive of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. There is a good level of delegation and responsibility given to staff at different levels. The school has strong capacity to improve further.

The governing body has ensured that statutory requirements, including for safeguarding arrangements, are met. Equality is promoted effectively and discrimination tackled vigorously. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and meets the needs of pupils of different abilities particularly well. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and particularly social development very well during lessons and through the wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Strengths in the arts, particularly music, contribute well to pupils' cultural development. The school has developed excellent links with schools both within the United Kingdom and abroad and this enhances pupils' cultural understanding extremely well.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



3 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Medstead Church of England School, Alton GU34 5GL

Thank you for welcoming us to your school this week, particularly the many of you who discussed the school with me or my colleague, or who showed us how well you can read.

You go to a good school. You are learning well in lessons because you are told what you are aiming for at the start and generally are given work that is right for you. Teaching is good and you achieve well. By the time you leave in Year 6, you reach standards which are generally above those achieved by most pupils. Most of you behave very well in lessons and we were pleased to see how well you concentrate. Some of you filled in questionnaires, which showed that some of you think behaviour is not always good. When we talked to you, you said a few pupils do misbehave but that the school deals with it well. You also told us behaviour is generally good or better, both in lessons and in the playground.

You the pupils, the school leaders and staff have done a huge amount to ensure the school has continued to improve. Everyone wants it to go on improving so we have asked the school to make sure that:

- teaching is improved in those few cases where it is not yet consistently good
- more of you achieve higher levels in English by practising your writing skills in different subjects.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall
Lead inspector

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