

Melbury Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	122426
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	380468
Inspection dates	1–2 March 2012
Lead inspector	Ruth McFarlane

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ronald Carter
Headteacher	Caroline Richardson
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2009
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	1–2 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane

Additional inspector

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This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Twenty-eight lessons or part lessons were observed and 12 teachers, or teaching assistants leading lessons, were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, listened to pupils read and evaluated the quality of safeguarding arrangements, development planning and records of pupils' progress and achievement. They analysed questionnaires from 77 parents and carers, 129 pupils and 24 staff.

Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. A higher proportion of pupils than average are White British; the remainder come from a variety of other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is below average. The numbers of pupils who enter or leave the school, other than at the start of their school careers, is well above average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is approximately double the national average. There is an above average proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, but fewer than average have a statement of special educational needs. The school meets the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It has Healthy School Gold Status and several awards for provision, including Activemark and Eco Schools Silver Award. A breakfast club is provided and run by the governing body on each school day. A new headteacher took up post in September 2010.

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

- Melbury Primary is a good school. Energising leadership has enabled the school to build successfully on key strengths. Strong partnerships have developed, including the much closer involvement of parents and carers in helping their child to do well. The school is not outstanding because teaching is not yet promoting outstanding achievement.
- Pupils' achievement is good. From mostly low starting points, attainment in Year 6 is broadly average. Standards in reading have improved significantly in Key Stage 1, and are now average. Standards in reading are also average by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. Pupils thrive in the caring atmosphere. Consequently, they enjoy school and feel safe there. Pupils show considerable respect for each other, and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' good progress reflects the good teaching. Exciting activities in the outside woodland (Forest School) promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Minor weaknesses in teaching limit pupils' progress. While opportunities to develop thinking skills are a feature of most lessons, sometimes, pupils are not guided to apply subject-specific skills to solve problems, or to use dictionaries and computers to help them learn for themselves. Sometimes, the teacher spends too long explaining the lesson, slowing pace and reducing the time left for pupils to work on individually challenging tasks. Teachers mark pupils writing tasks very well, but marking is too superficial in other subjects.
- Leaders and managers at all levels drive improvement and lead teaching well, overseeing the successful expansion of the variety of teaching styles. However, checks on the impact of lessons on pupils' progress lack robustness. Staff receive high-quality training identified through frequent performance reviews, but not all have been able to observe outstanding teaching, to further develop

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their own practice.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eradicate remaining inconsistencies in teaching by December 2012, so that a greater proportion of lessons are outstanding and pupils' attainment rises further, by:
 - Maintaining a brisk pace in all lessons, with the majority of time spent by pupils on challenging activities that match their abilities
 - improving the impact of the frequent 'thinking' tasks included in lessons, by guiding pupils more clearly to the key subject skills that they need to consider when solving the problems posed
 - increasing the opportunities for independent learning, for instance through embedding the use of books for research and including more challenging internet research as an intrinsic part of appropriate lessons
 - ensuring that all written marking is as useful to pupils as the best
- Refine the effectiveness of teaching and learning by:
 - providing more opportunities for staff to share best practice
 - ensuring that checks on teaching and learning focus robustly on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils achieve well. Most parents and carers agree that their children make good progress. Pupils make good progress given their original starting points. This includes those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. This is because individual needs are identified quickly and gaps in learning are quickly eliminated. Well trained, caring staff set challenging targets and plot individual progress for different groups, often against sharply-focused, individual plans that support learning effectively.

Improvements in provision give children in the Early Years Foundation Stage a good beginning, from low starting points. Attainment has risen so that they now enter Year 1 with broadly average attainment. Attainment in Year 6 is average as are standards in reading. Standards in reading have improved significantly in Key Stage 1, and are now average. Pupils are keen to read, and discuss their reading books, effectively predicting what might happen next, using the text to help them, showing empathy for the characters.

The good progress observed in lessons and evidence from pupils' books show that pupils enjoy the planned activities, which are usually matched carefully to their needs and capabilities. Typically, pupils demonstrate well-developed thinking and social skills because they have regular opportunities to discuss problems in small groups or

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with a partner. This fosters their good relationships and the inclusive ethos. For instance, in daily oral mathematics sessions, and in science discussions, pupils discuss problems confidently, putting forward imaginative ideas. However, the sessions have limited impact on the development of pupils' subject skills and understanding because, often, pupils are not guided to use subject-specific concepts in their thinking. Progress accelerates in the regular 'Forest School' sessions. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 use a wooded area in the school grounds in activities that add an extra, extremely practical dimension to their learning in a range of subjects.

Pupils are patient when, occasionally, the lesson is overly-long on the teacher's explanations. This slows pace and leaves limited time for individual tasks. In most lessons, pupils are fully engaged with their learning and take pride in their work. They are active participants in partner work, and willing to respond to teachers' questions, and pose their own, and this contributes to their good progress.

Quality of teaching

Good teaching has led to pupils' good progress. Parents and carers agree that teaching is good. Creative curricular planning promotes full use of the outside areas. This is illustrated well by a Key Stage 2 group who much enjoyed an excellent session in the Forest School, making musical instruments from wood, in front of a woodland campfire. Excellent input from adults ensured that pupils gained lasting practical skills and knowledge. Younger pupils made rapid progress in a well-planned space and measures activity. They imagined Robin Hood was coming to camp in the playground, and wanted to know how many tents would fit in. Well-directed pupils formed small groups. Armed with clipboards and measures, they charted their results before sharing their findings together in the classroom. This imaginative use of indoor and outdoor space is an intrinsic part of many lessons and strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships are warm. Everyone is included. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and concepts are taught securely. In the best lessons, pace is brisk and teachers' questioning is skilled so that they can pick up difficulties and modify the teaching to meet the needs of the pupils.

The teaching encourages pupils to develop their communication skills effectively throughout the curriculum. Good strategies to blend and sound letters are taught through the school and this has a positive impact on developing pupils' reading skills. Lessons often include sessions for pupils to discuss their thinking with partners or small groups, promoting social skills as well as logical thinking. The best examples were evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where children were building a train track. Children discussed their ideas, spurred on by skilled questioning from adults, developing confidence as the track developed.

There remain a few inconsistencies resulting in slower progress. Pupils' opportunities to respond to teachers' feedback in marking are fewer in mathematics and science than in writing because written marking in these subjects is sometimes cursory. By contrast, assessed work in writing shows high-quality feedback that helps pupils understand how to get to the next level in their learning. In lessons, pupils

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sometimes sit with their hand up, patiently waiting for attention, without ready access to the school's dictionaries or computers, to find things out for themselves. Sometimes, the activities planned for research using computers lack challenge.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most parents and carers confirm that behaviour is good and that their child feels safe and secure in school. Pupils agree. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is typically good. It is managed well and ensures pupils develop a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and are eager to contribute. They participate fully in paired work and whole-class talk. Pupils regularly collaborate and relationships are strong. Incidents of poor behaviour are minimal, as reflected in the very few reported incidents of poor behaviour in recent years. Pupils appreciate the 'Calming Room,' a sanctuary to use when they wish. They are made aware of how bullying would be dealt with through the personal social and health education programme and regular special events such as anti-bullying week. Pupils understand that bullying can take many forms and are clear how the school deals with name-calling, physical and cyber-bullying. They say that they are free from bullying and harassment. In the playground pupils say they feel safe and secure because of 'the presence of grown-ups' and they are confident in adults' ability to respond promptly to any problems they might have.

Strong care and attention given to individuals contribute to their good personal development. The breakfast club provides a supportive start to the day for those who attend, where pupils can develop socially, enjoying games such as table tennis after their meal. Pupils are polite and courteous with each other and towards visitors. They take on a number of different responsibilities across the school, for instance as school councillors. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school, and have responded positively to the school's many strategies to improve their attendance, so that each has equal access to learn. Most recent attendance records are above average.

Leadership and management

New strengths in leadership since the previous inspection have led to good progress, responding positively to the points raised at the previous inspection. The improvement to teaching and its impact, particularly in Key Stage 1, has come about largely as a result of carefully targeted professional development for all staff and analysis of pupils' specific needs. This has led to more effective teaching and a curriculum better suited to pupils' capabilities. A successful and extensive 'interventions' programme provides additional help and guidance for individuals and groups of pupils and includes letters and sounds (phonics) work, musical interaction, social skills, and creative learning inside and outside. The improvement in links with parents and carers has not only improved pupils' attendance, which had been below average, but has also galvanised parents' and carers' involvement in their children's learning. These successful strategies, leading to rising standards and better progress, demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

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The governing body provides good challenge and support and checks progress on the school development plan effectively. The plan is based on a school-wide, shared and perceptive analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors ensure safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and that breakfast club arrangements run effectively and efficiently. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and challenging targets for future progress are set, and leaders' checks are frequent. However, thus far, leaders have focused too much on successfully improving the range of teaching skills and not enough on evaluating how lessons impact on pupils' learning and progress. Teaching has therefore remained good, rather than helping it to improve further. There have been few opportunities for staff to see what outstanding teaching looks like.

The broad and balanced curriculum stimulates pupils' interests well and includes a wide range of worthwhile experiences, thoroughly promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Partnership with a local university provides aspirational encouragement through an 'into university' programme. Many other partnerships enhance provision: with the church and with park rangers, for example. Carefully targeted individual and group intervention sessions ensure that no pupil is left behind in their learning, providing equal opportunity for pupils to succeed. This assures good progress for all. As one pupil said, 'No one is left out,' demonstrating that discrimination is not tolerated and good relationships are fostered.

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.



6 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Melbury Primary School, Nottingham NG8 4AU

Thank you so much for making inspectors feel welcome when we visited your school recently. Thank you, too, to those of you who completed the questionnaires. We enjoyed being shown around the school by a small group of you, who pointed out all the work you do and talked to us about why you all get on so well together. You told us many of the good things about your school. We would like to tell you about what we found.

You go to a good school where you achieve well. There are some real strengths. For example, the school does a lot to help you develop your ability to think, to work together and mix with others, and to understand the difference between right and wrong. You told us that you feel safe in school because teachers and other adults look after you and help you understand how to keep safe. You behave well. You clearly enjoy taking part in lessons, especially in 'Forest School', and always try to do your best.

The governors, and your headteacher and the staff are all keen to make the school even better. We have asked your teachers to make sure that they give you enough time in lessons to complete different tasks that really make you think, by yourself or in small groups. We have asked that teachers include reference books and internet research more frequently in your lessons, so that you can think and learn for yourself and work more independently. Some of the marking teachers do is a great help to you, particularly in writing. We have asked for all the marking to be that good.

We have also asked that teachers and the school's leaders and managers make sure that they rate the success of each lesson, when they are doing their checks, by how much progress you have made. We also want staff to observe outstanding teaching and to see best practice. You can all help by continuing to work hard and being interested in all the school has to offer.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ruth McFarlane
Lead inspector

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