

# Mendlesham Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124599
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	340609
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jackie Cousins

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	71
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ray Fenning
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Claire Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Old Station Road Mendlesham, Stowmarket IP14 5RT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01449 766224
<b>Fax number</b>	01449 766224
<b>Email address</b>	ad.mendlesham.p@talk21.com

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons and observed all six teachers who were teaching during the inspection. They held meetings with the headteacher, governors, the senior teacher, special educational needs coordinator, middle leaders and staff. They talked to a group of pupils from Years 1 to 4, including some from the school council. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including policies relating to safeguarding and risk assessments. An analysis was made of school data on pupils' attainment and progress, and inspectors looked at pupils' work in books and on display. A scrutiny of 32 parental questionnaires and 15 from pupils and staff was carried out.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effectively leaders monitor the progress and attainment of all pupils but especially more able boys in mathematics and reading
- how successful the school is in using feedback to pupils to increase their rate of progress especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- how effectively the school's leadership is working to develop pupils' understanding of cultural issues in the United Kingdom.

## Information about the school

Mendlesham Community Primary is a smaller than average sized primary school. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and few are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Their main needs include speech and language and moderate learning difficulties. No pupils are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The school has national Healthy Schools status. A new headteacher started at the school in September 2009. The senior teacher has been seconded to another school for most of this year. The school has faced considerable challenges with staffing this year. For a variety of reasons, the majority of teachers have been away from school for a considerable amount of time.

**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: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has some good features and is improving. Children get a good start to their education in the Reception class. Throughout the school, pupils' attendance is above average and they enjoy the many opportunities the school provides. For example, several pupils said they really liked the music project where they learnt to play the Samba drums. Pupils of all capabilities and backgrounds are involved effectively in school life, whether they start at Reception or any other year group. This is because the school offers pupils a good level of care and guidance.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 4 is in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory. This is because pupils receive satisfactory quality teaching. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods but, occasionally, planning for lessons does not explain clearly the objectives that each group of pupils should meet. This means that one or two pupils are not always challenged successfully to work at higher levels of attainment. Teachers do not always know which pupils have fully understood the work, this in part is because teaching assistants do not always record pupils' learning effectively in whole class sessions.

The school engages with parents satisfactorily. Some parents are very happy with school. One summed this up by saying, 'All the teachers and staff are brilliant and treat our child as an individual rather than a number.... We are lucky our children attend.' A few parents expressed concerns about the school's leadership. The school's leadership does not always explain information in sufficient detail or take every opportunity to celebrate its successes and so parents do not feel well informed about what is happening in the school or with regard to their children's progress. The school has faced considerable challenges with staffing this year and for a variety of reasons, a few teachers have been away from school for a considerable amount of time. These issues with staffing have now been resolved effectively by the school's leadership.

The headteacher has astutely identified priorities and has driven improvements. This year, pupils' attainment in Year 2 has risen significantly and is above average and there are other clear signs of improvement. The headteacher's leadership motivates others to work together as a reflective team to raise achievement and improve the quality of education. Senior leaders' self-evaluation is satisfactory. The tracking system in Years 3 and 4 does not monitor pupils' attainment and progress in sufficient detail. Although progress meetings have been introduced, records do not evaluate rigorously the impact of strategies to support pupils' learning or their achievement. This means that occasionally senior and middle leaders are not totally clear about which groups of pupils are underachieving. Improvements since the last inspection include a rise in pupils' attainment in mathematics, which is now in line with expectations the school is in a satisfactory position to improve in the future.

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

- Raise attainment by Year 4 through:
  - improving the tracking system so that it allows teacher to gain more details about how well different groups of pupils are progressing
  - ensuring teachers and leaders rigorously record information in progress meetings so that those pupils who are underachieving are identified clearly and supported.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning by:
  - making sure planning for lessons outlines which pupils are expected to work at higher levels of attainment so that they are fully challenged
  - ensuring teaching assistants record pupils' learning during class sessions more fully.
- Develop a stronger relationship with parents by:
  - enhancing the information they receive about what is going well at the school
  - making sure parents receive more thorough knowledge of whether their children have made expected progress or not.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

As a result of satisfactory progress, attainment is in line with expectations by the end of Year 4 in English and mathematics. Teachers' assessments in 2010 and lesson observations show that most Year 4 pupils are working at expected levels of skill in English and mathematics. They enjoy reading and writing, and particularly drama and speaking activities. Boys' and girls' standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection because staff have higher expectations of pupils. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with speech and language or moderate learning difficulties, is monitored carefully and their achievement is satisfactory. Teachers' assessments for 2010 show that the attainment of girls and boys in Year 2 is slightly above average in reading, above average in mathematics and well above average in writing. Attainment has been average or better over the last three years in Year 2.

Pupils feel safe in school. For example, they are clear how to keep themselves safe whilst using the internet. They adopt healthy lifestyles and a considerable proportion of pupils take part in after-school activities as well as two sessions where they learn to play games or swim. They particularly enjoyed sports day. They are knowledgeable about foods which are better for them and those which should not be eaten too often. Pupils concentrate in lessons satisfactorily and their behaviour is sound. Pupils are polite to others and understand the difference between right and wrong. Their spiritual development is good. For instance, pupils thoughtfully raise money for those less fortunate than themselves and take part in local church services. They are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Sound teaching and learning ensure that pupils achieve satisfactorily. During the inspection, the most successful teaching used effective methods so that pupils developed their key skills well. In one of the good lessons seen, questioning was used very effectively and so pupils learnt to explain their thinking clearly. Paired discussion times allowed pupils to explore their ideas carefully about why a healthy eating poster was really good. This meant that when they started to produce their own posters they were clear about how to make theirs highly effective. Feedback and targets are used satisfactorily but their use is not fully established for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' previous learning appropriately when planning lessons. Occasionally, lesson planning does not always ensure different groups of pupils are effectively identified to work at higher levels of skill and use of teaching assistants in class activities is not always effectively established.

Satisfactory emphasis is given to the promotion of language, literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils also improve their knowledge and understanding of the world, for instance, by learning how to recognise insects. The curriculum is effectively enriched, for example, by the teaching of French and music. Pupils enjoy many of the stimulating projects planned for them and the special day trips. For instance, Year 3 and 4 pupils really valued the exciting day out where they learnt to climb rock faces. They learn to be independent and solve challenges successfully as a result of good quality provision for their personal, social

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and emotional development. Provision for the gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory and improving.

The school has a really welcoming and happy atmosphere. Pupils are given high levels of care from staff and relationships are good. Their personal needs are provided for well. The transition from pre-school to Reception is particularly effective. For example, every week throughout the year pre-school and Reception children meet and enjoy a shared session where they develop their music and movement skills. Those from minority ethnic groups are supported effectively and are fully involved in school life. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are identified carefully and this means that they are assisted to make sound progress in their personal and academic studies. The school works vigilantly with other agencies to increase pupils' well-being. Two members of staff have undertaken speech and language training so that they can support pupils whose skills are underdeveloped in this area.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads the school with great professionalism and is ably supported by a newly formed but highly dedicated team of staff. One parent summed up his or her thoughts by saying, 'This transition year, between headteachers, has been riddled with problems outside the new headteacher's control. She has dealt with them as well as possible and always with the children's best interests at the forefront of her mind.' Staff absences mean that the headteacher had to take over as the class teacher for Year 3 and 4 pupils. The school development planning is methodical and sets clear direction for future improvements in the quality of education. The school has a sound capacity to improve in the future. Pupils have equal opportunities to learn satisfactorily because the school works thoughtfully to remove any discrimination or obstacles to learning. The school does not always analyse as well as they could the effectiveness of teaching strategies used to enhance the progress made by different groups of pupils such as more able boys in mathematics and reading.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive to the school and work well with staff. They are now beginning to challenge the school more rigorously and are involved in development planning. They have a systematic approach to collecting the views of pupils and parents, and make sure child protection and health and safety matters are dealt with carefully. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. All staff receive regular training in child protection and thorough records are kept of the checks completed on staff. Risk assessments are carried out regularly.

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The school works satisfactorily to unite the school and wider community. For example, pupils take part in choral and harvest festival events in the local community. The school has evaluated all aspects of community cohesion rigorously and is developing further links to deepen pupils' understanding of how to compare and contrast different cultures from first-hand experiences within the United Kingdom and abroad.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The children make good progress in the Reception Year from their starting points, which are slightly below expectations. This means that standards are broadly average by the start of Year 1. The children develop their key skills effectively because staff use resources well. In a good lesson, children learnt to recognise the numerals one to nine as a result of practical activities being used successfully. This allowed children to learn which coins to use when they were paying for items in a pretend garden centre. Children learn to use their information and communication technology skills as well as their literacy skills productively when they type up facts about mini-beasts. Learning journals are used methodically to record the skills and knowledge children have achieved.

The children's personal, social and emotional development is good because all adults ensure that the welfare of each individual is supported rigorously. Children are encouraged to be independent and they behave well. An even balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning is offered and routines are thoughtfully established. The leadership of this stage of education is good, although staff do not keep an overview of progress and attainment. This means that occasionally they are not totally clear what one or two children's overall attainment on entry is and how much progress they make each term. Access to outside learning is somewhat restricted because children can not move freely between the



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classroom and outside area but the school plans to improve this situation in the near future.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers expressed a high level of satisfaction with their children's enjoyment of school, the quality of teaching and ways children are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles. They strongly agreed that their children are safe in school. Inspection findings support these positive views. A few parents felt the school does not handle inappropriate behaviour effectively. Inspectors took this into account. During the inspection, staff managed behaviour satisfactorily. A very few parents were concerned that they did not receive enough information about their child's progress and inspection findings do support this concern. The school is looking at ways to improve the quality of feedback for parents on this aspect.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mendlesham Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 70 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	47	16	50	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	25	78	6	19	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	8	25	20	63	4	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	41	15	47	2	6	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	18	56	11	34	2	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	38	16	50	3	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	47	15	47	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	47	11	34	3	9	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	47	13	41	2	6	2	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	25	15	47	5	16	3	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	34	16	50	1	3	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	15	47	9	28	4	13	2	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	53	12	38	2	6	1	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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.**



16 July 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Mendlesham Community Primary School, Stowmarket, IP14 5RT**

Thank you for helping us to find out about your school. We enjoyed watching lessons and talking to some of you. You attend a happy and friendly school that provides you with a satisfactory education. Here are some of the best things about your school:

- you make satisfactory progress in your work
- your behaviour is satisfactory in school
- your headteacher and teachers have good ideas about ways to improve the school
- teaching is sound and the staff work hard to make sessions interesting
- a good partnership is in place between the school and outside support
- staff care and support you well and listen to you thoughtfully so that you feel safe in school.

We have asked your headteacher and governors to look at how they can make things even better. The most important things are to:

- ensure staff watch over your progress in key areas of learning even more carefully
- make sure all of you understand more clearly how to work at higher levels of skill in each lesson
- ensure that the school regularly tells your parents about your progress and what is going well in school in detail.

Continue to listen carefully to your teacher's comments, come to school every day and enjoy all the super things you are learning at Mendlesham Community Primary School.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Cousins

Lead inspector

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