

Meldreth Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110615
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	356781
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Joy Richardson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Doctor Debbie House
Headteacher	Mrs Judith Dickson
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 12 lessons taught by seven teachers. They had meetings with groups of pupils, and with governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised pupils' books and records of pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed responses to 90 parental questionnaires, and questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

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

- The steps being taken to raise standards further in mathematics.
- The pace of pupils' progress each year in reading, writing and mathematics, and how the school makes sure this is fast enough.
- How well the school supports children with individual needs, and contributes to the well-being of the wider community.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average sized primary school. Most pupils are White British and a few are of other ethnic heritages. A small number speak English as an additional language. Mobility in the school population is higher than average. Around nine per cent of pupils are from Traveller heritage. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school gives pupils a good all-round education. Pupils achieve well over their time in school and their attainment is above average by the time they leave. The school provides outstanding care for pupils as individuals. Pupils thrive in an atmosphere where they feel extremely safe, secure and valued. They know that their views are heard, that their contribution matters, and that they will be helped to succeed.

Pupils make good progress from the start. They do particularly well in reading and many reach a high standard for their age. Pupils write fluently and well, though not always striving sufficiently for accuracy. They make good progress in mathematics, but the school recognises that lessons do not always set a sufficient pace in building on pupils' prior learning and engaging them practically. The school sets challenging targets and tracks the progress of pupils with great care. It identifies pupils' individual needs and teaching programmes are adapted accordingly. This flexibility helps to overcome barriers to learning so that pupils consistently make good progress, often from very different starting points.

The school provides good quality teaching that engages pupils' interest and fosters their eagerness to learn. Imaginative approaches bring learning to life. Pupils are confident to ask questions, to share ideas and to seek help if they find work difficult. The school gives pupils a wealth of opportunities, in and out of lessons, including a wide range of clubs that foster diverse interests, whether in nature or knitting, chess or drama, music or sport. Special events such as the recent celebration of the school's centenary draw the whole community together.

The relationship between staff and pupils is marked by mutual trust and respect. Pupils behave well. They readily take responsibility for the well-being of others, for example as play leaders or as members of the school council or the anti-bullying council.

The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection. Its leaders, with strong support from the governing body, constantly evaluate what the school does well and how it could do even better. The headteacher provides clear direction and fosters effective teamwork so that a strong commitment to doing the best for each pupil runs through the life of the school. As a result, the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend pupils' progress in mathematics by ensuring that lessons engage pupils practically and build on their prior learning at a good pace.

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- Ensure that pupils consistently apply their knowledge of punctuation, spelling and handwriting in all their work and that more attention is given to resolving persistent errors.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Children enter Reception with skills that are broadly at the levels expected for their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who face barriers to learning or are newcomers to the school, make consistently good progress whatever their starting point. There is some variation in National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 because of small numbers and high mobility, but standards are generally above average in all subjects.

Pupils are successful learners. They talk and listen well, contribute readily and confidently explain their ideas. Good behaviour and cooperation with others underpin their learning. Pupils are well grounded in basic skills of literacy and numeracy. They read fluently, often reaching a high standard for their age, and enjoy a wide range of books. They write with verve and enthusiasm, relishing imaginative challenges such as reporting on what would happen if aliens landed on the school playing field. Skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting are learned well, though not applied consistently enough in pupils' independent writing. Pupils gain mathematical skills and extend their understanding, for example by looking for patterns in the way numbers work. The school carefully analyses where pupils' skills are weak, and this is reflected in a current focus on subtraction.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, including, for example, awareness of the dangers of cyber bullying. They are alert to issues of healthy eating and appreciate the healthy meals and fruit snacks provided by the school. They take regular exercise. Pupils contribute actively to making the school a good place for everyone. They are interested in the wider world and in other ways of life, and accepting of differences. Pupils enjoy school greatly. Attendance is average and improving.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ 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?

Pupils benefit from good quality teaching throughout the school. Classes are well managed so that pupils know what is expected of them. Teaching is often lively and imaginative and resources are used well to aid learning. Teachers ask probing questions, drawing out pupils' thinking and helping them to evaluate their own learning. They use techniques such as role play and talk with partners to keep pupils actively involved. On occasions, for example in mathematics, pupils listen for too long without engaging practically in work that gives challenge at their own level. Assessment is thorough and marking is detailed and encouraging, though persistent errors in writing are not routinely identified.

The curriculum is broad and provides many opportunities, for example to learn a musical instrument, to try a range of sports and to be introduced to foreign languages. The school is developing its curriculum to set learning in context in ways that enthuse and motivate pupils. It recognises that planning does not consistently identify how specific skills will be developed within cross-curricular work. Provision is put in place quickly if pupils are in danger of falling behind, and these interventions are effective in ensuring the good progress of all pupils. The school also recognises pupils' particular gifts and talents and constantly seeks to offer opportunities that challenge and inspire them further.

The school goes the extra mile in providing excellent care, support and guidance for all its pupils. The school works seamlessly with other agencies to support pupils who may be vulnerable. Excellent provision is made to secure continuity for pupils in Traveller families

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while they are away, and to welcome them on their return to the school. The school works persistently with families where frequent absence is a barrier to learning, and this is resulting in better attendance and improved progress. Issues such as bullying are explored fully with pupils so that problems are resolved and pupils learn the impact of their actions. Teachers and support staff work extremely well together to support pupils' learning and to meet their individual needs. Great care is taken over settling children into school and preparing them for each new stage.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, with strong support from the governing body and the senior leadership team, has a clear vision for the school and for its continuing improvement. The governing body's effectiveness is good. It is incisive and supportive in reviewing the school's strengths and weaknesses and overseeing plans for improvement. The school's leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, the staff team is developing a shared understanding of good practice and of priorities for improvement.

The school communicates openly with parents and carers, seeking and listening to their views and dealing quickly with any concerns. The headteacher and staff are readily available and know families well. The school encourages family learning and gives helpful guidance about supporting children's learning at home. The school works well with local schools and other partners to enrich opportunities for pupils, for example in sport and in making the transition from one stage of education to the next.

The school's good arrangements for child protection, health and safety and the recruitment of suitable staff fully met government requirements at the time of the inspection. The school contributes much to the well-being of the local community, and is identifying ways to broaden its perspective by forging wider national and international links with other communities. The school uses its resources well to achieve the best for all pupils, ensuring that there is equality for all groups and no hint of discrimination. The building and grounds are well maintained to provide a good environment for learning.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start in Reception, gaining a delight in learning and confidence that they can succeed. They make good progress from their different starting points towards the early learning goals set nationally for the end of Reception.

Foundations are laid strongly in reading. Children quickly learn the sounds of letters and how they make up words. They take books home daily from the outset so that regular reading becomes woven into their daily life. The pace of progress in writing is more variable.

Children feel secure because of warm and understanding relationships with staff and clear guidance about daily routines. They settle in quickly, learning to cooperate in a group, to share and to take turns. They enjoy a wide range of activities indoors and outdoors. These activities are well planned and organised to lead learning forward while encouraging imagination and independence.

Children's progress is carefully observed and recorded in order to plan the next steps in their learning. Parents and carers and staff work closely together, as seen in regular communication through the home/school reading record. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed effectively so that children are prepared well for their school career.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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 are highly satisfied with their children's experience at the school. They strongly praise the school's leadership and management and are fully confident that the school keeps their children safe. They believe that the school provides good teaching and all but a few are satisfied with the progress made by their children. Many parents and carers commented on the school's friendly and welcoming atmosphere and the quality of care for individuals.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meldreth 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 157 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	69	25	28	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	67	29	32	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	39	49	54	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	43	43	48	7	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	53	40	44	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	47	47	52	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	51	40	44	3	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)	40	44	41	46	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	46	43	48	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	40	43	48	3	3	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	47	41	46	2	2	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	58	64	30	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	66	28	31	0	0	0	0

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



1 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meldreth Primary School, Nr Royston, SG8 6LA

We enjoyed our visit to your school this week. Thank you for telling us so much about what you do and what you especially enjoy.

You go to a good school. You are taught well and make good progress in your learning. We were pleased to find what good readers you are. You told us that the staff are kind and understanding. They care for you extremely well and give you the help you need if you find the work difficult. You do some exciting work, like finding out about skeletons, or about China or St Lucia, or about the history of your school. We were very interested to see the 'past and present' display about the showmen, too.

We heard how the whole community does things together like the 'Back to School Barbecue', or the visit to the pantomime. You make a big contribution as well, by looking after each other. We were impressed to hear how the anti-bullying council is working to make sure school life is happy for everyone, and to see the writing club being run by older children.

All the staff want you to learn as well as possible, and we have been talking about ways of helping you to do even better. In mathematics, we think you could sometimes learn more quickly in building on what you know already, and working things out for yourselves. In literacy, you know a lot about spelling and punctuation and handwriting, but you need to take more care to remember all this when you are writing by yourselves.

Everyone seems to enjoy school and the many different things you can do there. We hope that you will go on working hard and making the most of all the opportunities the school gives you.

Yours sincerely

Joy Richardson

Lead inspector

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