

Malmesbury Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132169
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	360383
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2011
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	459
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Wong
Headteacher	Stevan Allcock
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 23 lessons taught by 16 teachers and held meetings with parents and carers, staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at its documents, policies, records and assessments of pupils' progress and the responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils and 74 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether teaching is sufficiently challenging for all groups of pupils.
- The effect of leadership and management, particularly monitoring, on improving pupils' learning experiences.
- How well links with parents and carers and other partnerships lead to improved outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

Malmesbury Primary School is much larger than average. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. An above-average proportion of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Nearly half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest groups being of Asian or Asian British heritages. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, with the most significant needs related to speech, language and communication needs. The on-site Children's Centre was inspected separately.

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

This is a good school. Effective leadership and teamwork provide a happy, secure environment for learning and promote good achievement. Pupils enjoy their education. One group reported that the best thing about the school is 'the teachers'. Pupils' mature, considerate behaviour also makes a significant contribution to the calm and caring ethos of the school. Parents and carers are very complimentary, one typically commenting, 'The school has a lovely atmosphere and all the teachers I have met have been brilliant in the way they interact with children.' Staff are very aware of pupils' needs and provide strong care and support. This, in turn, promotes pupils' good personal development and they have a clear understanding of how to stay safe and healthy.

Pupils' rate of progress is accelerating but their attainment remains broadly average. This is because in the past pupils were not always sufficiently well prepared for formal education and entered Year 1 with below-average skills in literacy and numeracy. Substantial improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now improving children's skills, but there remains a legacy of low attainment that the school is striving to overcome. Pupils make good progress because teaching is good and they are very enthusiastic learners. Lessons are brisk and usually very enjoyable. Most pupils meet their learning objectives, but the more able are not always fully challenged so their progress, although good, is a little slower than might be expected. The curriculum has strengths but is not yet fully developed to take advantage of the pupils' enjoyment of learning through practical activities or of the pleasure they take when encountering different environments and cultures.

The headteacher sets high expectations for pupils and staff. Leaders and managers share drive and ambition. However, the impact of members of the governing body remains variable in holding the school to account. Concerted action to improve teaching and learning, improve attendance and develop the Early Years Foundation Stage has been effective and has led to faster progress. The school development plan, although rather unwieldy, identifies the right priorities and empowers individual leaders and managers to rigorously address specific areas for improvement. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment by:
 - ensuring that more-able pupils are fully challenged in all parts of lessons
 - adapting the curriculum more closely to pupils' needs and preferences by providing more engaging and practical learning experiences both within and beyond the school environment.

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- Ensure that members of the governing body undertake more rigorous checks on the school, to promote their broader understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The attainment of pupils is broadly average. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with lower than expected skills. Historically, children entered Year 1 with below average attainment; these pupils are now in Years 2 to 6. The school has worked effectively to improve pupils' literacy, numeracy and other skills so that attainment is slowly rising, but it is not yet above average. Improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that children are now much better prepared to join Year 1.

Pupils make good progress because the school has improved the effectiveness of teaching. More consistent teaching, pupils' enjoyment of lessons and an increased emphasis on learning ensure pupils quickly grasp new concepts. For example, Year 5 pupils were happy to explore their understanding of perimeters by measuring various items in the classroom, such as the door. This activity effectively extended and consolidated their learning. The teacher's careful planning ensured that everyone knew what to do, because the session built well on earlier learning. A later lesson was planned to test and develop pupils' skills further as they made various measurements in the school grounds. Well-trained teaching assistants support the learning of those who struggle and their interventions and assistance ensure that virtually all groups, including those with speech, language and communication needs, make similar progress. However, more-able pupils are sometimes not given challenging enough tasks. Increasingly effective teaching means that the achievement of all pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, is good.

Pupils report little misbehaviour and the school has a positive, cheerful ethos. Behaviour is good, especially in classrooms where pupils are keen to learn and work very constructively in pairs and groups. Pupils confirm there is almost no bullying and racism is unknown. They have a good grasp of right and wrong and their aptitude for working together harmoniously is a fine testament to their good social development. The school council provides pupils with suitable opportunities for them to contribute to the school and local community, although as yet they do not have a significant influence on school development. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of a variety of overseas cultures but less good knowledge of the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom.

Pupils are active and many take part in extra-curricular sport. They are aware of what is required for healthy development and show a good understanding of what they should eat and what should be consumed in moderation.

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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	3
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
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?

The school is in the process of changing the satisfactory curriculum to make it more relevant to pupils' needs and preferences. As a result, pupils are beginning to experience a range of opportunities to learn through practical experiences, but this is not yet consistently developed. Current plans provide satisfactory breadth and balance to the pupils learning experiences. The curriculum has a strong focus on developing phonic skills and this has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Specialist teaching in music and physical education is of high quality and leads to exciting experiences. For example, shortly after the inspection, all Year 6 pupils were to perform as a choir at the Royal Albert Hall. There is a range of relevant enrichment experiences, including interesting visitors and a good variety of popular lunch-time and after-school clubs.

Teaching is consistent and most lessons are good or better. Teachers are knowledgeable and are confident practitioners. They make lessons enjoyable and manage pupils with assurance, so that their natural ebullience is harnessed into an enthusiasm to learn. The atmosphere is invariably positive and pupils and staff work together happily. Pupils' courteous, considerate behaviour, cooperation and independence promote good learning, as in an outstanding lesson on accurate measurement involving pupils in a treasure hunt around the classroom. Pupils learned very well because of the determination to solve problems and the rapid feedback to and from the teacher. Staff's high expectations and

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the very mature responses from pupils ensured that all groups of pupils were fully challenged throughout to make excellent progress.

Teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding. Work is thoroughly marked and pupils are regularly encouraged to assess their own efforts. However, not all pupils have targets for improvement, so some are unsure of the next steps in their learning. Pupils, who find learning difficult, including those with communication difficulties, benefit from strong support from committed and skilful teaching assistants. However, more-able pupils are not always fully stretched when they work independently, because activities and questions are insufficiently challenging.

The school is a welcoming, attractive environment and pupils, parents and carers are confident in the care it provides. Well-considered transfer arrangements considerably reduce the stresses of joining and leaving the school. Committed, effective support for vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities includes close involvement with families and outside professionals. There are good examples where the school has helped individuals overcome significant barriers to learning. Rigorous work to promote better attendance has had a positive impact. There are a few persistent absentees, whose numbers are falling; the school has a clear strategy to continue to address this issue and has improved attendance to broadly average.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's ambition and high expectations are widely shared amongst leaders and managers and have galvanised the enthusiasm of staff. Careful analysis of pupils' performance data provides leaders with useful information. This is particularly well used to hold teachers to account and to initiate interventions to boost the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. The analysis of assessment data leads to comprehensive improvement planning and the setting of appropriately challenging targets. Staff share a determination to ensure equality of opportunity, and are actively seeking to close any gaps in performance as they occur. Staff work effectively to ensure there is no discrimination.

The governing body provides committed support for the school. However, it does not have systematic procedures to evaluate the school to provide an in-depth understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The governing body is aware of what it needs to do to improve its practice and is actively undertaking relevant training so that it is in a better position to challenge the school. The school's safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. Policies and procedures are up to date, although procedures for their regular monitoring are not sharp

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enough. The school site is secure and staff foster in pupils a good understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils, parents and carers agree that the school provides a safe environment.

The school website, regular newsletters, text messaging and termly parents' evenings ensure a good flow of information from school to home. Parents are welcomed into school and have numerous opportunities for informal contacts with staff. This is having a beneficial impact on learning. Local partnerships, such as that with the Children's Centre, benefit pupils and their families, as do strong links with outside agencies.

The school displays a good understanding of its local context and uses stakeholder surveys to keep up to date with ethnic and other changes in the locality. It broadens pupils' horizons through links with schools in distant places such as France, Romania, Austria, Ghana and Uganda. However, there are few links with other parts of the United Kingdom, limiting pupils' understanding of its variety and richness.

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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress. They demonstrate improving listening, speaking and reasoning skills. Their preparation for continuing education is good because they develop strong social skills, begin to learn independently and work and play sensibly. Children are kind and understanding towards other children who are disadvantaged, such as those who are disabled.

All teachers are knowledgeable about how children develop so that, under the guidance of the coordinator, planning is well focused on the next steps of development. Leaders have improved the accuracy of assessment and this has enabled teaching to be more effective in addressing previous areas of weakness. Teaching is good, with an appropriate balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities as well as between learning indoors and

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out. Indoor accommodation is attractive and stimulating but that outside, while extensive, is unattractive and lacks sufficient stimuli to promote children's literacy and numeracy development. Adult support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is most effective because their needs are thoroughly understood and planned for.

The coordinator has tackled weakness rigorously since her appointment, developing a cohesive and effective staff team and focusing more strongly on learning. Parents are welcomed into the setting, and staggered arrival times in the Nursery provide good opportunities for informal contacts with staff.

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

The percentage of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires was below average. The views of those who responded were almost wholly favourable. All parents and carers who replied report that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. Almost all are happy with their child's experience of the school. A few parents and carers have concerns about how the school takes account of their views and how it deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection evidence indicates that occasional inappropriate behaviour is effectively dealt with and that the school listens to and acts on parents' and carers' concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Malmesbury 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 459 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	73	19	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	69	22	29	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	48	35	47	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	53	31	41	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	55	32	43	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	41	39	52	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	55	29	39	4	5	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)	32	43	36	48	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	43	40	53	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	31	43	57	6	8	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	32	38	51	9	12	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	29	39	39	52	6	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	44	40	53	1	1	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



24 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Malmesbury School, Morden SM4 6HG

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave to the inspectors when we recently visited your school. It was a pleasure to meet and talk with such enthusiastic and courteous young people and we would like to congratulate you on your good behaviour.

Malmesbury is a good school. Teaching is good and this helps you to make good progress and achieve well. The school is a safe place and you are well cared for so that your personal development is mainly good. The mixture of subjects you study (known as the curriculum) is satisfactory and is being developed to improve your learning opportunities.

The headteacher and staff run the school well and are always trying to make improvements. To continue getting better, I have asked the school to:

- raise your attainment by making sure the most-able pupils always have challenging tasks to do in lessons and changing the curriculum so it offers even more possibilities for active learning
- involve the governing body more in checking up on the quality of teaching and learning and other areas so they are better informed about the school.

You can help by continuing to have such a positive attitude to your education.

Once again, thank you for all your help. It was a pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector

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