

Melling Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104889
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	377143
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael McLachlan

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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	B O'Brien
Headteacher	Chris Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	09 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fifteen lessons were observed and eight teachers seen; meetings were held with parents, groups of pupils, members of the governing body, the School Improvement Partner and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation document, policy documents, safeguarding arrangements, curriculum and lesson plans, governing body minutes and the latest School Improvement Partner report. There were 129 parental questionnaires which were scrutinised along with questionnaires completed by all pupils present in Key Stage 2.

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

- The attainment and progress of pupils, in particular for girls, was scrutinised to ascertain if they were making better progress than last year's cohort.
- Pupils' personal development outcomes and the care, guidance and support provided was examined, to ascertain if the school's evaluation that these have improved significantly since the last inspection was accurate.
- The way work is adapted to meet the needs of groups in lessons, particularly in English and mathematics was scrutinised to check if the high performance achieved in mathematics last year was being sustained and the number attaining higher levels in English was increasing.
- The curriculum was reviewed to evaluate if the good and better progress evident in English and mathematics was reflected in other subject areas.
- The work of leaders in monitoring pupils' attainment and progress was reviewed to check if this was accurately identifying where teaching was most effective and which groups of pupils needed to improve their rate of progress the most.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The ratio of girls to boys varies and is much wider than average in a number of year groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very low with none with English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average and the number with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The headteacher took up post since the last inspection. The school has achieved Healthy School status and the Eco-Silver, International School (Intermediate) and the Financial Management in Schools awards.

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

Melling is a good and rapidly improving school. Outstanding safeguarding and care, guidance and support combined with good and often outstanding teaching has led to consistently above-average and in some cases high attainment. Outcomes overall and many specific personal development outcomes are outstanding. The school has the overwhelming support of parents and carers, with whom engagement is excellent, and the community. Partnerships are outstanding. The pupils say, and demonstrate through their very active involvement, how much they feel extremely safe and enjoy working and playing in this school.

Overall, achievement is good and for some it is outstanding. The vast majority of pupils make at least good progress, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, given their starting points. Achievement is not yet securely outstanding because of the past in-year and between-year variations in attainment and the rates of progress made by pupils. For example, last year, roughly two thirds of Year 6 pupils achieved the highest level in mathematics and in reading in English, an exceptional outcome, but only one third in writing. Similarly, progress for boys, the largest group last year, was outstanding whereas girls overall attained above average standards but made only the expected rate of progress. Evidence seen during the inspection indicates that a more consistent whole-school approach to the development of literacy and numeracy has tackled these variations. Achievement for both boys and girls is now securely good or better.

Pupils' enjoyment of learning is very evident particularly when they are challenged and excited by the work set and the teaching they receive. Teachers' high expectations, a persistent focus on accurate, technical responses from pupils of all ages and abilities and emotionally-engaging activities give a real 'buzz' to these lessons. Excitement is palpable and learning is outstanding. There is a small minority of satisfactory teaching which limits the pace of learning for some when work is not always fully matched to the needs of the different ability groups in the class. While the curriculum has many strengths, it is good rather than outstanding, because the well-planned and regularly assessed progressive steps in learning now seen in English and mathematics are not fully-established in all subjects. A curriculum review is under way and good plans are already in hand to tackle this issue.

Very strong senior leadership, fully supported by a good and improving governing body have accurately evaluated the strengths of the school. This thorough self-

evaluation has identified the school's many strengths and the key areas for development. They have robust plans in place to make this good school even better. The capacity to improve is good as issues raised in the last inspection have been tackled well and a number of aspects of the school have moved from good to outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure rates of progress become good or better and levels of attainment are consistently above-average or high for all year groups in English and mathematics by:
 - spreading the most effective teaching and learning seen more widely across the school
 - ensuring that work is consistently matched to the needs of different ability groups
- Raise the good curriculum to outstanding by ensuring that the planned review is completed quickly in order to identify a progressive, assessable sequence of core skills in each of the foundation subjects
- Ensure that teachers and subject leaders regularly monitor pupils' progress in the core skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Learning seen in the vast majority of lessons is good with examples of outstanding learning in both Key Stages. Opportunities for pupils to assess their own and each other's work contribute significantly to the good and better learning seen. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils were accurately assessing and analysing each other's work, using sophisticated technical language to identify strengths and areas for improvement. This was a remarkable achievement given that pupils have only very recently moved into this year group. Work of this quality was consistently seen across Key Stage 1 and in the upper Key Stage 2 classes. A small minority of learning is only satisfactory as the work set is not closely-matched to the pupils' prior knowledge so the pace of learning is too slow. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in both English and mathematics has been above or well above average for a number of years although there was a dip in 2009 to broadly average. Concerted action has led to a rapid recovery. Attainment on entry to the school is just below what is typically expected and low in some aspects of literacy and numeracy development. However all pupils, including those with special educational needs/and or disabilities make good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy, by the time they leave.

Pupils' understanding of how to keep safe is outstanding. They say they feel very safe and their thoughtful and supportive actions as peer mentors and playground leaders confirm their contribution to keeping all safe. Their involvement beyond school is good and the recently-formed Junior Parish Council provides the potential

for developing outstanding opportunities to make a difference in the locality. Above-average attendance and pupils' outstanding social and very well developed literacy, numeracy and information, communication and technology (ICT) skills, combined with excellent levels of punctuality, ensure they are very well-prepared to move on to high school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The moral and social opportunities provided in working and playing in an exceptionally harmonious community ensures all feel valued and, in turn, value and support each other as evident in the excellent behaviour seen throughout the inspection. This is supported by a rich religious education and cultural programme with strong international links.

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	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good. A substantial proportion of teaching seen was outstanding. Particular strengths are the teachers' subject knowledge, their insistence that pupils of all ages provide accurate and precise answers to probing questioning and in ensuring pupils' enjoyment and the development of their self-confidence through the activities provided. For example, a Year 2 group working on building sounds and letters was excitedly working with partners. A sharp focus on the correct formation of sounds ensured that pupils made rapid progress but their enthusiasm to succeed and make and say the words was infectious and this contributed significantly to the outstanding learning seen. Assessment is good and most marking provides good advice to pupils on what they need to do to improve. A small minority of teaching is satisfactory, when the work set is not matched precisely enough to what pupils know already, so some pupils make slower progress.

Pupils study a wide range of topics beyond their literacy and numeracy work and are given good opportunities for extra-curricular experiences such as residential visits and through the work of visiting speakers. For example, pupils were keen to share the poetry they had produced with a guest poet and talk with enthusiasm and awe about the 'Bird Project'. The school rightly evaluates the curriculum as good rather

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

than outstanding. It has accurately judged that further work is needed to identify and provide opportunities to assess the progressive development of core skills for each year group in the foundation subjects. A robust curriculum review is under way to achieve this outcome.

Melling provides exceptional care, guidance and support for all its pupils. A telling example of this is the high quality of the transition arrangements into the school and then on to the high school. Support for pupils with particular needs or for families who are facing particularly difficult circumstances, from teachers, classroom assistants and through contact with a wide range of external agencies, is of very high quality. Examples were seen, where pupils and their families had been outstandingly well supported through very difficult circumstances. A strong feature of the care provided is the way pupils' self-esteem, confidence and emotional understanding is developed through their learning. For example in a literacy lesson, the pupils' level of empathy for the plight of the 'workhouse children' was very evident in their excellent writing. Their spontaneous appreciation of the quality of work presented to the class by pupils, including those with special educational needs, was exceptional and a privilege to watch. As a teacher said to one pupil, after their presentation, but it was true of all pupils in this lesson, 'That was so good you could bottle it and take it home – you should be so proud of yourself'.

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 has established high expectations and 'raised the bar' for the school. He, together with the governing body which has a good range of expertise to support and challenge the school, have recently completed a detailed, analytical self-evaluation of the school's work that sets high expectations about what the school needs to improve. Middle leadership is good and improving as a result of the development and monitoring of whole-school approaches to assessment. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. The governing body have particular expertise in this area, providing an additional level of support and challenge to a well-trained staff. The school has introduced some innovative elements, such as different coloured badges for visitors so that pupils are quickly aware of their status and who they are allowed to talk to. The promotion of equal opportunities is good. There has been some variability in the achievement of groups of pupils. Improvements made in tracking and monitoring pupil progress and whole-school approaches to developing writing has significantly reduced this variability with current pupils. This is a very harmonious community and, in order to strengthen its plans to support some of the wider aspects of community cohesion, the school has accurately evaluated the need to re-establish some previously provided first-hand opportunities for pupils to meet other pupils from a wider range of social and cultural

contexts. Given the outstanding outcomes, the school gives outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for the 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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception class provides good and often better learning and personal development opportunities for the children. Detailed assessment of children when they enter reception, along with good links with the providing nursery schools and excellent relationships with parents and carers, enable children to settle in very quickly to the school. The staged entry for the youngest children gives them a little extra time to settle in which is a good example of the outstanding care that individual children receive. Teaching is good with outstanding elements particularly in the way children are monitored and assessed and in the way activities are planned to access the full range of early learning goals effectively. The children observed were very confident given they have only been in the school for a few weeks. Routines are well-established with the youngest taking great delight in showing how they can now dress themselves ready for outdoor activities. They were keen to go out despite the rain!

Very close liaison with Year 1, including a shared approach to learning, with Year 1 having its own well-resourced outdoor provision, ensures that transition to Key Stage 1 is very smooth and a strong indicator that the reception class builds up social, emotional and basic skills well. Attainment on entry is below the expected levels although there are some aspects of writing and calculation development that are well below expectations. Good learning experiences, for example in phonic development, and consistently good or better teaching ensures children catch up quickly in these aspects. By the time they leave, the vast majority of children have achieved the expected outcomes, showing progress is good across the year. The setting is led and resourced well and the team of staff works very well together, clearly enjoying their time with the children. They provide excellent care, guidance and support for all children so that parents and carers express very high levels of satisfaction with what the school provides.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming view of parents and carers is that the school provides extremely well for their children’s needs in a very safe and happy environment. The proportion who ‘strongly agree’ with the school’s work is very high, particularly in relation to their children enjoying school, feeling safe, the quality of teaching they receive, the way the school is led and their overall level of satisfaction with their child’s experience in school. Inspectors found nothing less than good and a number of aspects of the school that are outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Melling 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 129 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 200 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	110	85	19	15	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	114	88	14	11	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	89	69	38	29	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	86	67	42	33	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	107	83	20	16	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	87	67	39	30	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	91	71	36	28	1	1	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)	91	71	34	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	91	71	33	26	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	87	67	36	28	3	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	82	64	41	32	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	107	83	22	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	107	83	22	17	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and is 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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up 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.



14 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Melling Primary School, Melling, L31 1DA

I would like to thank you for the way you greeted me and the team and how you made us so welcome during our recent inspection of your school. We judged that you go to a good school. You make good progress during your time in school and reach standards that are above average and sometimes very high. Well done to all of you. We think you are well taught. In particular, we were delighted in the way you were able to assess your own and others' work and the way you were pleased for your friends when they did well. It is clear you enjoy school and all it offers. We sometimes saw lessons where you did not make good progress because you were not set work which was always at the right level for each of you so we have asked the school to make all learning opportunities as good as the best.

We thought you were very responsible and behaved extremely well in lessons and around school. Your teachers and the other staff look after all of you exceptionally well, particularly if you are having some difficulties in school or outside. Your curriculum is good but we want your teachers to make it even better by identifying the skills that you need to become, for example, good historians or skilled technologists, and ensuring that these are developed and assessed as well as they are in English and mathematics. You were keen to tell us about the additional activities like the visiting poet and the excellent and inspiring 'Bird Project' that you clearly remembered with excitement.

We, like you and your parents and carers, think your school is led well. Your headteacher, staff and the governing body have ambitious plans to make your school even better. We wish all of you good luck on this exciting journey to becoming outstanding in all that you do.

Yours sincerely,

Michael McLachlan
Lead Inspector

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