

# Meredith Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116186
<b>Local Authority</b>	City of Portsmouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	379212
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Mann HMI

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Caroline Hopkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lynn Counsell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15–16 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Portchester Road North End Portsmouth PO2 7JB
<b>Telephone number</b>	023 9266 3846
<b>Fax number</b>	023 9279 8556

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<b>Age group</b>	4–7
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	21–22 September 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. They observed a total of 26 lessons, either wholly or in part. All available teachers were observed, and a number of learning assistants were observed when teaching pupils. The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, and the governing body. They also met with a representative of the local authority. They spoke with a group of pupils and with representatives from last year's school council. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including minutes of meetings, achievement data and analyses, and development planning. Inspectors scrutinised 44 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as those completed by members of staff.

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

- Pupils' achievement, particularly in writing, in relation to their starting points.
- The extent to which all pupils are fully engaged and suitably challenged in lessons by the quality of teaching received.
- The quality and impact of provision for more able pupils, particularly in writing, to determine whether teaching is consistently challenging.
- The effectiveness of senior and subject leaders in improving pupils' achievement.
- Attendance and punctuality, and the success of improvement strategies employed by the school.

## Information about the school

Meredith Infant School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are currently three classes in each year group. There is on-site childcare which is managed privately, so is inspected separately. Most children are of White British heritage. There are a number of children from minority ethnic backgrounds, including Bangladeshi and Eastern European. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school achieved the 'Let's Get Cooking' award in July 2010.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

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

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**4**

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

**4**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Leadership at the highest level lacks clear direction. The senior leadership team and subject leaders have been ineffective in tackling weaknesses and lack a sense of urgency in prioritising and addressing key inadequacies. They implement new initiatives too quickly, without proper consideration for need or impact. Systems of monitoring and evaluation are weak and do not provide accurate assessment of many aspects of school life. For example, pupils' attainment at the end Key Stage 1 in 2011 was significantly lower than forecast to the governing body by the leadership team. As a consequence of this unreliable base, the governing body is unable to plan with confidence for future development. Standards have declined since the previous inspection and are now low. The quality of teaching is variable and inadequate overall. Performance management arrangements at all levels have been insufficiently rigorous so have failed to improve provision and classroom teaching sufficiently. As a result, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate.

Achievement and progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are inadequate. Children have a better experience in Reception, where they make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. This pace of learning is not sustained once pupils reach Key Stage 1.

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. They are polite and play well together at break times. Many are keen to learn and eager to participate in school life. However, provision for their learning does not meet their needs. Pupils appear passive and are not given enough opportunity to nurture their willingness to learn. No member of staff has a clear overview of the curriculum so learning content is not planned well. Timetables do not include sufficient focus on literacy, and some staff do not adhere to them so expected lessons are not delivered. As a result, lessons and the curriculum fail to meet pupils' needs sufficiently well to foster satisfactory levels of achievement.

Most aspects of pupils' personal development are satisfactory, as is the level of care, guidance and support offered to pupils. Transition arrangements enable pupils to

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move into and out of the school without significant disruption to their well-being. Suitable arrangements to safeguard pupils' welfare are implemented sufficiently well.

Levels of attendance are inadequate and too many pupils arrive late for school. This curtails their learning time, and lessons for others are disrupted by latecomers. The school has adopted a sensitive approach and has tried to work with families to improve pupils' attendance. However, the causes of absence and poor punctuality are not analysed effectively to promote successful solutions.

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

- Develop the school's capacity to improve by ensuring that leaders, including those at the highest level:
  - prioritise and plan realistically to address key weaknesses
  - implement rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluation as a matter of urgency.
- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 so that by July 2012 none is inadequate and the large majority is good or better, by ensuring that:
  - performance management is improved
  - systems for assessing learning are consistently applied, monitored and evaluated so that staff understand pupils' abilities and provide suitable challenge for all, including more able pupils
  - pupils learn actively so that their willingness to learn is encouraged.
- Improve the achievement of all pupils, particularly in writing, by:
  - ensuring that sufficient time is allocated to teaching literacy
  - ensuring that more pupils achieve the higher Level 3 by the end of Key Stage 1 in 2012
  - identifying a leader to take responsibility for the curriculum and its planning
  - improving the curriculum so it provides a stimulating and appropriate framework for pupils' learning that meets individual needs.
- Improve attendance and punctuality throughout the school, so that the proportion of pupils who attend is in line with the national average by July 2012, and fewer pupils arrive late for the school day.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****4**

Achievement for most groups of pupils is inadequate and they do not enjoy their learning enough. The achievement of pupils at the end of Year 2 over the past three years has been variable: a small trend of improvement in results in reading and mathematics has not been sustained. Attainment dropped sharply in 2011 in all subjects and especially in writing. In the classroom, pupils demonstrate a reasonably diligent attitude to work. However, their learning is too slow because tasks are often dull or too simple. For example, pupils in Year 2 spent time cutting and sticking pictures of the Great Fire of London into their books rather than writing more about it themselves. More able pupils in particular do not make enough progress because

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their learning is not extended.

Children have a better experience in Reception where they make satisfactory progress. Currently children start school with levels of development that are broadly in line with national expectations. In recent years, some children have started school with levels that were below these. Children move to Key Stage 1 with attainment that is variable but broadly average. Pupils then make insufficient progress, so their attainment is below average when they leave the school.

Pupils know their targets and are keen to achieve them in many instances. However, lack of understanding of individual pupils’ needs and insufficient analysis of pupils’ progress means these targets are basic and not tuned to individual requirements sufficiently well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make better progress than other groups. This is because early assessment of their needs and appropriate intervention programmes provide satisfactory support for their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make inadequate progress. In particular, the majority of those whose needs can be met in school rather than requiring the involvement of outside specialists, do not achieve expected levels. This trend is most marked in writing. Pupils are not prepared sufficiently well for the future because their basic skills, and in particular their writing skills, are weak.

Other outcomes are satisfactory. Pupils have a sound understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They are active at playtimes, and enjoy running about or skipping, which promotes their physical well-being. Pupils say they feel safe at school and most know who they can talk to if they have a problem. Pupils play a satisfactory part in school life. Members of the school council contribute to decision-making within the school. Pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of the needs of others and they know the difference between right and wrong. They have time to reflect on moral and religious issues in assemblies.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</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

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<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is inadequate. Teachers do not demonstrate sufficient aspiration for their pupils and expectations for achievement are low. Pupils are not involved sufficiently in their learning. Teachers spend too much time talking, which limits pupils' time to think and reflect. Since teachers lack a clear overview of how well pupils are doing, activities are seldom designed to meet the needs of those of differing abilities. As a result, pupils are insufficiently challenged, and their learning experience is not fulfilling. Some teaching methods are inconsistent. For example, phonics is not correctly taught in all lessons so pupils receive confusing direction, which slows their progress. The use of assessment to support learning is not firmly established. Systems of marking, informing pupils about objectives, and reviewing objectives have been tried over the past three years, yet none have become embedded or evaluated effectively. In recent weeks, a new system has been introduced but it is too soon to measure its success.

The curriculum has a number of significant shortcomings in Key Stage 1. Insufficient time is dedicated to literacy. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing, despite this being an area of focus identified by the senior leadership team. Interruptions to learning are frequent because timetables do not take sufficient account of pupils' learning needs. For example, a 20 minute assembly begins 15 minutes after the school day starts. This interrupts learning early in the day at a time most conducive to effective study. Timetables do not provide enough of the learning to which pupils are entitled.

All pupils receive suitable pastoral care. Staff readily seek assistance from outside services to provide for more vulnerable pupils. This enables these pupils to engage successfully with school. The support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is sensitive and effectively organised; it helps them to settle and make satisfactory progress. The school nurse 'drop-in' sessions are a source of professional advice for those pupils and their families who feel in need of extra support.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>4</b>

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**The effectiveness of care, guidance and support**

**3**

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

Serious shortcomings in Key Stage 1, including low levels of attainment, are known to senior staff and governors but action to address them has been unsuccessful. Other serious issues have not been identified by leaders, such as the inadequate curriculum and generally poor quality of teaching and learning. Weak systems of evaluation do not provide a realistic view of the school or involve key partners such as governors and senior staff well enough. As a consequence, the basis for secure, pertinent improvement planning is not robust.

The governing body has a reasonably accurate overview of the school’s work, but has been unable to address many of the serious shortcomings despite attempts to do so. It has liaised with the local authority and made attempts at improvement in the performance of some staff through monitoring. However, key issues of concern have remained. Therefore, the effectiveness of governance is inadequate. Since the school fails to provide an effective standard of education for its pupils, it provides inadequate value for money.

Appropriate arrangements are in place to safeguard pupils’ well-being. All requirements, such as training and checking of adults, are met. Procedures to address child-protection concerns are sufficiently rigorous. The school sustains a suitably positive relationship with parents and carers. Adequate information is provided through open days, newsletters, and parents’ meetings, although the school website is not operating at present. Some parents and carers attend workshops to help them understand how subjects are taught, and a recent mathematics session was quite well attended.

Most other partnership activity does not result in improved outcomes for pupils. Some partners are involved with the school to provide additional services, such as a sports partnership. However, insufficient evaluation means the impact of these is not known. The school does not promote community cohesion well enough. The governors and leaders have recently initiated steps to address this. They have carried out a basic assessment, and a policy has been devised. Staff have shared ideas on the actions required to develop pupils’ understanding of the community, but these are yet to be implemented.

The school is not promoting equal opportunities sufficiently well. The school is aware of the groups which make up the school community, but analysis of how well these achieve is insufficient to address any inequalities. There is no clear overview of how well pupils progress during their time at the school, both individually and as a cohort. Pupils do not receive their entitlement because the curriculum is not sufficiently well planned.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
<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>4</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>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make sound progress in their learning in Reception, and many demonstrate good levels of personal, social and emotional development. The children learn actively when they were engaged in child-initiated play. They demonstrate a strong motivation to explore and learn when they were given the opportunity. The daily routine provides several periods when children are required to sit on the floor or at tables. At these times, some children become less well engaged because they lose interest or become uncomfortable. On occasion, routines do not take account of the young age of the children. For example, snack time, reading and adult-led learning are delivered consecutively; children are required to sit still for long periods of time as a result. Children demonstrate a reasonable understanding of rules and how to stay safe, and many show consideration for one another.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is suitable for the age range. The spacious environment is resourced appropriately in all classrooms. Some teachers are skilled in the delivery of child-initiated learning. However, some staff are not confident in extending children’s learning through their play, and opportunities for development are lost as a result. The outdoor area of Reception is used adequately, although children only access this at certain times and when the weather is fine. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The recently appointed leader has an appropriate understanding of how children learn.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaire responses was approximately half that generally received at similar schools. Almost all parents and carers who responded said that their children enjoy school and they believe the school keeps their children safe. A very few responses suggested concerns about behaviour, the way the school takes account of suggestions from parents and carers or makes them welcome, and the extent to which the school prepares children for the future and transfer between classes. Inspection evidence indicates that behaviour and its management are satisfactory. The evidence also found the school’s engagement with parents and carers to be satisfactory. The inspection team judged that there are weaknesses in the way the school prepares pupils for the future.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meredith Infant 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 254 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	77	9	20	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	25	57	16	36	0	0	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	52	16	36	2	5	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	28	64	14	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	28	64	14	32	0	0	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	55	17	39	1	2	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)	21	48	12	27	3	7	1	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	20	45	19	43	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	36	19	43	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	48	15	34	4	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	50	16	36	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	24	55	17	39	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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 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"> <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.**



23 September 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Meredith Infant School, Portsmouth PO2 7JB**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we visited recently. Thank you to those groups of pupils who talked to us. We enjoyed meeting you, and it was a helpful part of our inspection of the school.

Your school is not helping you to learn well enough. We think it could do better, and we have asked the governors and the headteacher to improve the school. Children in the Reception classes do quite well but progress in Years 1 and 2 is too slow. We can see that lots of you try very hard in lessons. Most of you behave quite well in lessons and at break times. This helps you to stay safe and to learn. Some of you do not come to school as often as you should. Too many children come late to school. We would like you to help your teachers by coming to school whenever you are well and by arriving on time. This will help you understand lessons better because you will not miss things the teacher has said.

We have asked the school to make your lessons more interesting. We would like them to make sure you have the opportunity to learn about everything you should. We have also asked teachers to try and involve you more in your learning.

We would like the school to check how well it is doing more closely, and plan carefully to make the improvements needed. That way, all of you can do as well as possible. I am sure you would like this to happen too. Inspectors will visit again in a few months to check on the school's progress.

I would like to wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Mann  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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