

Melbourn Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	110614
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	395295
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2012
Lead inspector	Marion Wallace

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	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Norman
Headteacher	Stephanie Wilcox
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2006
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Marion Wallace

Additional Inspector

Selby Thomas

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Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 14 teachers in 26 lessons and held meetings with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at: improvement plans for the school and for subjects, the governing body minutes, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, they carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work, listened to readers and analysed 145 questionnaires received from parents and carers, some of whom they met at the beginning of the school day.

Information about the school

Melbourn is larger than the average primary school. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well below average, as is the proportion with a statement. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average and no pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. There are 12 classes: ten are mixed-age and the two Reception classes are single-aged. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. There is a breakfast club that was inspected during this inspection. There is a pre-school and after school club on the site which is not managed by the school's governing body and was not part of this inspection. The headteacher was appointed in September 2011; prior to this the school experienced an unsettled period with no permanent headteacher for two years.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It has improved rapidly since September 2011. The use of assessment procedures, tracking and the setting of challenging targets to accelerate progress are contributing to the improved progress pupils make. It is not yet good because pupils' achievement has not been consistently good over time. This is especially so for older more-able pupils, particularly in writing. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. It is not yet consistently good in all classes and has not been good over time. Children make a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and their progress is mostly good in these phases. The progress pupils make from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Attainment is broadly average in English and slightly above average in mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils do better in mathematics than in English, especially at the higher levels.
- Teaching is satisfactory but improving rapidly across the school, particularly in mathematics. There are some good and outstanding lessons, but sometimes teachers' expectations are too low and writing activities lack challenge. Teachers occasionally miss opportunities to ensure pupils fully extend their work, especially the more-able pupils in writing tasks. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously but do not always challenge pupils to strive for the next level and do not always make explicit what must be improved. French teaching is good and achievement in the subject is good.
- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning, show initiative and perseverance and can think for themselves and say that they feel safe in school. Parents and carers report that behaviour has improved immensely as a result of new initiatives in place.

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- Leadership and management, including the leadership of teaching and management of performance, are good. Standards have risen rapidly especially in mathematics throughout the school, in Key Stage 1 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has improved and these pupils are now making the same progress as their peers. The quality of teaching has improved across the school as a direct result of rigorous monitoring and feedback to teachers. Behaviour has improved rapidly and is now consistently good or better because initiatives such as the 'weather' system that involves pupils, parents and the whole school has been a resounding success. The headteacher has inspired senior and middle leaders who now have a strong vision for developing the school. They monitor teaching well and ensure improved learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the standard of writing and ensure pupils improve the quality of their handwriting skills by:
 - ensuring key skills are taught consistently well
 - ensuring teachers plan writing tasks more rigorously, seize every opportunity to extend pupils' writing skills and ensure all pupils have plenty of time to write at length.
- Ensure more pupils at Key Stage 2 reach the higher National Curriculum levels, especially in writing, by making sure that:
 - teachers use assessment rigorously to plan lesson activities that challenge all groups, but especially the most able pupils
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better over time and marking is consistently good or better so that pupils are clear about how to improve their work

Main report**Achievement of pupils**

Achievement is satisfactory because teaching and learning are satisfactory over time. Children join the Reception classes with the expected basic skills for their age. They make good progress in both Reception classes in all areas of learning. They enjoy learning, particularly making flags, planting beans and writing simple messages such as, 'A bag of yummy crisps.' Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and attainment is above average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Writing skills are being suitably developed in other subjects, for example, Year 2 pupils used writing skills to enhance learning in design and technology and mathematics. One Year 2 pupil proudly used 'scrumptious' to describe the food she would have at her class party. Pupils used writing in their science and technology to describe how a catapult works.

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Older pupils' satisfactory progress means that they reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6, including in reading, with higher attainment in mathematics than writing. Pupils enjoy learning because teachers plan interesting tasks. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to fully extend learning, especially for more-able pupils in writing. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to use lively description, but the quality of work sometimes suffers because of pupils' weak handwriting skills. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress over time because support is appropriately focused and based on a sound analysis of individuals' learning needs. Since September the gap between the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals and others is closing. This is because lower and average attaining pupils' progress has accelerated; they have exceeded their targets in all areas and more are reaching the expected level. This said, the progress of older more-able pupils is inconsistent.

Pupils read confidently and they know how to tackle difficult words. More able readers in Year 2 explain why they like their favourite author such as Roald Dahl; they explain that they like his imaginative use of words such as 'scumdiliumptious.' Pupils' achievement in reading is satisfactory. However, improved teaching of phonics in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is accelerating pupils' progress in the subject at a good rate. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to challenge more-able readers in Key Stage 2. For example, more-able Year 6 pupils do not always find the selection of books in school challenging enough.

Most parents and carers think that achievement is good; inspectors judge it to be satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is an increasing amount of good or better teaching in all years but teachers' expectations have not been consistently high enough over time to ensure good learning in Key Stage 2. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well with plentiful opportunities provided for them to learn through activities led by adults and those that they choose for themselves. Throughout the school relationships are good, teachers explain tasks clearly and are well organised. Occasionally the pace of learning slips because expectations of the quality of work to be produced are not consistently maintained, especially in writing. In a Year 6 lesson pupils were challenged to identify effective writing but not enough time was given for pupils to give a written response to the task.

Teachers use assessment information adequately to plan interesting curriculum work. They use questions effectively to check pupils' knowledge and understanding, but sometimes miss opportunities to vary questions for different ability groups. Some good examples of marking were seen that informed pupils how to improve their work, but this was not consistent in all classes. Pupils with additional needs are suitably supported by teaching assistants in class. Teaching and learning for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is satisfactory over time but there is an increasing amount of good teaching, since September 2011, that is accelerating

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individuals' progress. Most parents and carers say that teaching is good, and so do the pupils. Inspectors found teaching to be satisfactory and improving.

The planned curriculum provides memorable experiences, and the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning, behave well, get on well socially, and have good attitudes to school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good relationships are evident and, consequently, behaviour is good throughout the school in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. The new 'Weather' behaviour system is extremely popular with parents, carers and pupils. Parents and carers say how good it is to receive a message informing them that their child has been in 'sunshine' for two weeks. Pupils and staff show considerable respect for each other and for visitors to the school. Most parents and carers who replied to the inspection questionnaire, or who talked to inspectors, felt that their children were safe in the school and most thought that behaviour was good or better. A few parents and carers thought behaviour could be better. Behaviour for learning is good. Pupils are motivated to learn, can work independently and use their initiative when given opportunities to do so. Most pupils who responded to the questionnaire and those who talked to inspectors said that they felt very safe in school and that behaviour was good.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, care and welfare are good, and this contributes to children's very positive experience of school, their very positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour. Older pupils talked knowledgeably about safe use of the internet, and they were aware of different types of bullying and the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Pupils know the difference between falling out and bullying and say that they can discuss with adults any problems, including bullying worries, that they have. They report that any concerns are dealt with effectively. They take responsibility seriously and older pupils look after younger pupils at break times.

Good behaviour contributes well to learning. Case studies show clearly how well the school deals with any pupils who have behavioural problems. Attendance is above average because strategies to improve attendance are effective. Most pupils are punctual for the vast majority of the time.

Leadership and management

Since the last inspection the school has experienced a difficult period where they were without a permanent headteacher for two years. The current headteacher's skilful management and good leadership have inspired senior and middle managers who communicate strong drive and ambition. Many pupils, parents and carers commented on the positive impact of the headteacher's work, the impressive changes made, and their impact on school improvement. Improvements include rapidly rising standards in mathematics and much improved provision, especially teaching, and outcomes in Key Stage 1 and the current Year 6. Staff work together well and they have a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of

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the school. Equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination are pursued effectively. Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has improved so that these pupils are now making the same progress as their peers. Gaps in pupils' performance are narrowing, particularly for those entitled to free school meals. A continual drive for improvement is underpinned by effective systems for evaluating the strengths and further areas for development of the school. The school's good organisation, strong, shared vision and much improved outcomes, indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further. Over the past year the ethos of the school has improved significantly.

Rigorous leadership and management of teaching have ensured that teaching is improving rapidly. Effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and effective professional development have enhanced teachers' skills and methods used across the school especially in mathematics. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed, with good induction arrangements and good links with parents and carers. There is a strong sense of purpose and the school deploys its resources well.

The school's evaluation of its own performance is rigorous. Tracking of progress over time is thorough, and senior leaders quickly identify any dips, and develop sensible strategies and interventions to promote improvement. Appropriate developmental areas to further improve the effectiveness of the school are clearly identified in the school improvement plan. The governing body ably supports staff and challenges the school well to ensure school improvement initiatives are successful. The governing body monitors and evaluates the work of the school effectively and is well organised.

The curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and it promotes equality and tackles discrimination effectively. Assemblies give very good opportunities for reflection and provide musical and artistic opportunities for pupils. Parents, carers and pupils appreciate the good extra-curricular opportunities and enrichment activities such as the 'Big dig' project, gardening club, music tuition and residential trips to Snowdonia and Scarborough. French is extremely well taught and enjoyed by Key Stage 2 pupils.

All safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements, and the governing body monitors provision rigorously.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.

30 April 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Melbourn Primary School, Royston, SG8 6DB.

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school. We thoroughly enjoyed your assemblies, talking with you and your teachers, and reading the views of those who returned questionnaires. You and your parents and carers told us that most of you make good progress in your learning at Melbourn Primary School. We agree that the school has many strengths, but it is satisfactory overall because teaching and your progress over time are satisfactory. These are the things we liked best.

- You get off to a good start in the Reception classes and continue to make good progress in Year 1 and 2.
- You all enjoy learning and teachers give you interesting things to do such as your 'Inspirational days,' trips, visitors and visits that make learning fun.
- Your attendance is above average.
- Your behaviour is good. You have good attitudes to learning and are sensible and know how to keep safe. The new behaviour 'Weather' programme is popular with you and your parents and carers.
- There are good opportunities for you to take on responsibilities as monitors and members of the school council, and contribute to helping your school improve.

The headteacher, governors and all the staff know what needs improving and have made impressive changes. We have identified three things that will help the school get better. The headteacher and governors must:

- Ensure standards in writing are as high as they are in mathematics. Teachers must give you more opportunities to write at length and help you improve your handwriting.
- Help the older pupils to reach the higher National Curriculum levels, especially in writing.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better over time and that marking challenges you all to improve your work.

Best wishes for the future. You can all help by continuing to work really hard.

Yours sincerely

Marion Wallace
Lead inspector

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