

# Mendham Primary School

Mendham, Harleston, IP20 0NJ

**Inspection dates** 10–11 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The executive headteacher and assistant headteachers have rapidly improved the school in the last 18 months and addressed weaknesses in teaching.
- Pupils' progress has improved rapidly this year because of the good training for teachers provided through the newly formed federation, the 'Waveney Valley Partnership'.
- Attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average and is rising steadily at Key Stage 2.
- Over time, rates of progress have continued to rise so that currently all pupils in Year 6 are expected to do well in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The teaching of reading, linking sounds and letters, is improving.
- Support staff who work with pupils in need of additional help are making a strong contribution to their rapid progress.
- Excellent personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's success and underpins all of the school's strengths.
- There is good engagement with the community as well as parents and carers.
- Governors know the school well and firmly hold the school to account for its performance and its finances.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils are reaching the highest levels in English at Key Stage 1 and mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- Teachers are not all using the well-established collaborative learning style in the school to ensure that pupils are playing a more active role in their learning.
- Marking is not always used well enough to let pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough practice in solving 'real-life' mathematical problems in subjects other than mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons, all of which were seen with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made short visits to other lessons, looked at pupils' work and heard them read.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and four members of the governing body including the Chair and Vice-Chair. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and seven responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation including: nationally published assessment data and the school's own data, local authority reports, the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding policies, and records and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.

## Inspection team

Justina Ilochi, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than average.
- All pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- Few pupils are eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium. In this school, this extra government funding currently applies only to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special education needs is above average. Currently the school has no pupils supported through school action.
- More than one-quarter of pupils enter or leave the school at times other than the start of the school year.
- The school has undergone major changes since the previous inspection. It is now part of the Waveney Valley Partnership which was confirmed as a 'hard' federation in May 2013. The new executive headteacher was appointed in January 2012 and all bar one teacher, including two new assistant headteachers, were appointed thereafter. The majority of governors including the Chair are new.
- The school manages a breakfast club and after-school clubs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Make more teaching outstanding and further raise pupils' attainment to reach the higher levels in English in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2 by ensuring that:
  - teachers use the collaborative learning style adopted by the school to encourage pupils to participate more in their lessons and reflect deeply on their learning
  - marking is always used to help pupils know what they need to do to improve and, where appropriate, to indicate their level of attainment.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to practise the solving of 'real-life' mathematical problems in subjects other than mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- In the last two years the small number of children who entered Reception made good progress from starting points that are broadly as expected for their age.
- Although pupils in Key Stage 1 attained results that were below average in the last two years, a steady upward trend is shown in pupils' work. This, with unconfirmed assessment data for 2013 demonstrates that their attainment is now broadly average. However, not enough pupils in Key Stage 1 attain the higher levels in reading and writing.
- Attainment in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 has been average in the last three years.
- Attainment is improving particularly well in reading and is currently above average in Key Stage 1 and 2 because of strong teaching. This is also demonstrated by the above average results of the tests in phonics (the sounds that letters make) for six-year olds.
- Progress in writing in Key Stage 2 has been on an upward trajectory in the last three years. This improving picture directly reflects the school's frequent checking of how well pupils are doing through several writing projects.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has been improving for the last three years. The school's data show that pupils' progress in mathematics has improved particularly well for Year 2 pupils. In Year 6 most pupils are reaching nationally expected levels and a growing number are exceeding them. Whereas there has been a gap between the performance of girls and boys, this is now closing rapidly. However the number of pupils in Year 6 that have made more than expected progress in mathematics is lower than for writing and reading.
- There is an improving picture of progress for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in reading, writing and mathematics this year. This is because the school has identified these pupils' needs accurately and has provided additional help and guidance, especially in the classroom through the excellent work of teaching assistants.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity effectively. Those few pupils who benefit from the pupil premium funding and do not also have a statement of special educational needs reach similar levels of attainment to other pupils in the school in both English and mathematics and their progress is good. Those with special needs also make good progress. The funding has been spent wisely on meeting the needs of recognized pupils in all year groups through very well targeted one-to-one and small group teaching.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is not yet outstanding because there are some inconsistencies across the school. Consequently, not all pupils reach the highest standards they are capable of in their learning.
- Teachers create a calm, welcoming and extremely positive learning environment which fosters good relationships and promotes high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and know them well.
- Teaching in Reception and Years 1 to 3 is good because staff provide a stimulating learning

environment, inside and outside, where children quickly become confident and eager learners. Adults challenge pupils well, enabling them to make rapid progress in their communication and listening skills. The teaching of phonics is now having a strong impact on pupils' early reading and writing.

- Most work is set at the right level for each pupil. Adults who support pupils in need of additional help, such as pupils who are supported on school action plus or with a statement of special education needs, or pupils who are eligible for funding through the pupil premium, are making a strong contribution to pupils' good progress. This is because their work is well matched to each individual's needs, and they are well trained and briefed on how best to support these pupils.
- In the best lessons, teachers inspire pupils to learn and tasks are set to stretch their thinking and reasoning skills. Pupils rise to their teachers' high expectations and challenge and show high levels of motivation and engagement as well as strong independent learning skills. For example, in an effective mental mathematics lesson the teacher, using a game of cards, encouraged pupils to work in groups and challenge each other's knowledge of units of measurement. Pupils enjoyed this approach and progress was good. However, this collaborative style is not used enough in all lessons.
- Exciting writing opportunities are provided across a range of subjects to raise pupils' attainment in writing. For example, in a science lesson on healthy living the teacher ensured that pupils developed reading and writing skills as well as investigative skills exceptionally well. A similar emphasis is not given to mathematical skills. Teachers do not give pupils enough practice in solving 'real-life' mathematical problems in subjects other than mathematics.
- Pupils' work in English and mathematics is regularly marked and some teachers' comments help pupils to know their next steps in learning. However, on occasion opportunities are missed to give pupils information about the levels they have attained, linked to lesson objectives.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils act responsibly in the play areas, where older pupils ensure that younger pupils are well cared for. They are proud of their school and care for their farming environment. For example the Year 5 and 6 pupils take turns to feed the school's chickens while younger pupils check daily for eggs.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently good in almost all lessons and this plays a significant part in their good achievement. Pupils are keen to be involved in lessons by answering questions and sharing their knowledge and understanding with others whenever teachers give them the opportunities to do so.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well and use a common system which rewards pupils who try hard to produce their best efforts and addresses the occasional 'off task' behaviour occasionally shown by a few. All the parents that responded to the on-line questionnaire and school staff confirmed that behaviour is good and well managed.
- Members of the community work well with the school to promote spiritual and moral reflection, for example by using role play in an assembly. Committed staff also encourage pupils who visit the breakfast club to play and talk to each other. As a result, pupils have good social skills, get on well together and work constructively in groups.
- Attendance is above average in almost all year groups and improving. Pupils enjoy school, are

respectful of each other and this contributes to their good learning.

- Pupils feel safe in the school. They take responsibility for their own and others' safety. They know right from wrong and often correct each other. They are fully aware of all forms of bullying, including e-bullying.

## **The leadership and management** are good

- The executive headteacher and assistant headteachers are the driving force behind the school's continuing improvement. Since their appointment and the development of a new management structure for the schools within the 'hard' federation, achievement in English and mathematics have risen and the capacity to secure further improvements has been clearly demonstrated.
- Good systems and procedures have been developed in the last two years for monitoring and checking that the assessment of pupils' work is rigorous, robust and accurate. All pupils, including pupils who have joined the school other than the usual start date, have been given appropriate and demanding end of key stage targets. Subject leaders are fully involved in checking that good use is made of up-to-date assessment information to raise achievement further.
- Staff performance is managed well, based on thorough monitoring of teaching quality and analysis of pupils' progress. Training is sharply focused and linked to the school's action planning. The recent focus of training on collaborative learning styles is already having a positive impact.
- The school engages well with parents and carers. Parents have ample opportunities to discuss any concerns because of the school's 'open door' policy. They are invited frequently to assemblies and to meetings to discuss their child's learning.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and well supported by a good range of after-school clubs and visits, which are well attended and enjoyed by pupils. This actively promotes good relationships and tackles discrimination by ensuring development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They are encouraged to learn about a wide range of cultures and faiths that reflect local, national and international contexts.
- The local authority now provides effective 'light touch' support, focused mainly on training of staff and governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has made a strong contribution to the good quality of education the school provides. It has been effective, especially in the appointment of an executive headteacher and senior leaders for the new 'hard' federation and has overseen the appointment of new teachers for the school. Even though key members of the governing body are new they have been well trained. They know what the school is doing well and where it could do better because they are involved in the school's self-evaluation activities. They have an insightful understanding of information on pupils' progress, and use it to make comparisons with national expectations. Governors know that the school's funds are managed well. For example, they check the use of the pupil premium funding and are rightly proud of its impact on this group's achievement this year. Governors are giving more emphasis to the school's evaluation of teaching and its management of staff performance in relation to pay progression. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and that equal opportunity is promoted well.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124598
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	406256

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	33
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Phil Golding
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01379 852520
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