

# Melbourn Primary School

Mortlock Street, Melbourn, Royston, SG8 6DB

**Inspection dates** 14–15 November 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Too few pupils exceed expected progress in each year group.
- Teaching is not consistently good, especially in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils do not always have enough time to work independently because lesson introductions go on for too long.
- At times, the activities pupils are asked to undertake do not reflect the purpose of the lesson sufficiently closely.
- Marking is uneven across classes, especially in the extent to which pupils are given the time to respond to teachers' comments.
- Work is not always set at the right level for all pupils and this slows their progress.
- Teachers do not all have the same high expectations of what pupils can produce and achieve.
- Subject and team leaders who have taken on new roles have not developed them yet to have a full impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors rely too heavily on the headteacher to provide them with information about how the school is doing and do not make sure they have all the information they need to challenge senior leaders about the school's performance.

### The school has the following strengths

- Attainment is rising and in 2013 was above average in reading and writing by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well.
- Leaders and managers have tackled underperformance and teaching is improving.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school and say they feel safe.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and, together with the headteacher, looked closely at examples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- The inspectors met with pupils chosen at random by the lead inspector. Discussions were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the vulnerable groups champion, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 94 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View. They also spoke with parents and carers and considered letters.
- The inspectors examined 23 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector
John Greevy	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There are two Reception classes and three mixed-age classes in Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for certain groups such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- Several leaders and managers have taken on new roles this year. The deputy headteacher shared the leadership of the school with a consultant for most of the last academic year during the absence of the headteacher.

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

- Move all teaching to consistently good or better across the school, but especially in Years 3 and 4, by:
  - giving pupils enough time to work independently
  - making sure that the activities chosen for a lesson reflect what pupils have to learn
  - ensuring that marking is of the same high quality across all classes and that pupils have the time to respond to teachers' comments and act upon them to improve their work.
- Increase the proportion of pupils in each year group that exceed expected progress by making sure that:
  - work is set at the right level for all pupils
  - teachers' expectations are equally high regarding what pupils can produce and achieve.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - developing the roles of subject and team leaders who have recently taken on new responsibilities; for example, in checking the quality of teaching in their subjects
  - making sure that governors have all the information they need to challenge the school about its performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is inconsistent in Key Stage 2 because teaching varies, especially in Years 3 and 4. There is a legacy of underachievement from weaker teaching in the past.
- While progress is now improving following changes of staff, it is not yet consistently good. Most pupils make the progress they should, but too few pupils exceed expected progress. This is because work is not always set at the right level for all pupils and is sometimes too easy. Books show that teachers' expectations of what pupils can produce and achieve are sometimes not high enough.
- Children join the school with skills that are usually typical of those expected for their age. They make good progress in Reception because they enjoy a variety of stimulating experiences in well-resourced and spacious accommodation. In 2013, standards were above average by the end of Reception and children were well prepared for entering Year 1.
- Pupils benefit from the systematic teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and use their developing skills to read unfamiliar words. The proportion of Year 1 pupils who reached the required standard in the national phonics reading check was above average in 2013, and boys and girls performed equally well.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 were a little above average in reading in 2013 and average in writing and mathematics. This represented good progress for this group of pupils in relation to their lower starting points.
- In other year groups, attainment is rising as teaching improves. Year 6 pupils in 2013 made expected progress from their starting points in Year 2 to reach above-average standards in reading and writing. Attainment was average in mathematics. However, nationally published data show that the proportion of pupils who exceeded expected progress was below average in writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because they are well supported by teaching assistants and they receive help that is tailored to suit them.
- The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is too small to comment on their attainment without identifying them. However, the additional funding is spent on a wide range of programmes to meet these pupils' needs throughout the school and enrich their experiences, so that their progress is similar to that of their peers.
- Writing has improved since the previous inspection because pupils are able to write at length and teachers show them what good-quality writing looks like. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to write in subjects other than English. Progress has been inconsistent in Years 3 and 4 because of previous weaknesses in teaching.
- In mathematics, pupils are encouraged to explain their thinking and to use accurate mathematical vocabulary. They are given clear guidance on how to develop new concepts.
- The progress of the most-able pupils is good when they are sufficiently challenged, but occasionally the work is not demanding enough to draw the most from them.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good. At times, teachers are not crystal clear about what they want pupils to learn, so that the activities they are set do not reflect the learning intention closely enough. For example, in a lesson about writing instructions the teacher's focus was on aspects of story writing rather than on writing instructions.
- In some lessons, pupils do not have the time to work independently to practise their skills because lesson introductions go on for too long. Work is not always set at the right level, and this slows their progress.
- When teaching is good, teachers promote pupils' independence by allowing them to organise their own learning, including setting targets in their target books. They make good use of teaching assistants, who are well briefed, to help individuals and groups of pupils.
- In a successful French lesson, the teacher used colourful and attractive resources to interest pupils, and actively involved them in learning through playing games that expanded their vocabulary about places to go in a town.
- Books show that pupils make good progress over time in some year groups, especially in Years 1, 2 and 6. This is not consistent across all year groups, however. There is variation in the amount of work teachers expect pupils to produce, and how neatly they present it.
- Marking has improved considerably since the previous inspection and teachers often give useful advice to pupils about how they can improve their work in a range of subjects. Pupils do not always have enough time to respond to these or show they have acted upon them.
- Teaching in Reception has a positive impact on children's learning, as they have plenty of opportunities to explore and try new things, such as colour mixing with their hands. They are encouraged to make choices and to become independent learners.

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

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They are enthusiastic about learning and enjoy taking part in lessons or assemblies. Their behaviour is good in class and around the school. They show respect towards one another and to adults.
- Pupils say that bullying is not an issue and they feel safe in school. They understand about different types of bullying including name-calling and cyber-bullying. They realise that discrimination is not tolerated. They know how to keep safe; for example, when cycling or when crossing the road.
- Pupils are keen to help their local community and to raise money for charity. For example, they came out in force dressed as their heroes to support 'Children in Need'. They take their responsibilities seriously as peer mentors and play leaders.
- Staff manage behaviour consistently, and pupils understand the system of weather symbols that tell them how well they are doing, aspiring to reach the 'rainbow' for particularly impressive conduct.

- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because, occasionally, pupils' attention strays if the work is not demanding enough for them and they are not fully engaged with learning.
- Attendance has improved this year as a result of a concerted effort to work closely with families whose children have been frequently absent. It is now broadly average.

## The leadership and management

## requires improvement

- The school has had several changes of leaders and managers, including the absence of the headteacher for most of the last academic year. This has made it difficult to accelerate the pace and momentum of improvement, even though the school has clearly made progress since its previous inspection.
- Several leaders have taken on new roles this year, for example as team leaders, and are becoming established. Not all of them have had the opportunity to observe directly the impact of teaching and learning in their areas, although there are plans for them to do this.
- The headteacher's passion for the school is evident in her clear vision to see every pupil do his or her very best, and leaders have acted swiftly to eliminate inadequate teaching. Staff questionnaires show that everybody is behind this vision and work well as a team. In this way, equality is promoted for all pupils.
- Teachers' performance is managed carefully and their targets are linked to pupils' progress. They receive support in improving their practice. This is having a positive impact on moving teaching towards becoming more consistently good.
- The many parents who responded to Parent View were overwhelmingly positive about the school's work and its impact on their children. This was also reflected in some of the conversations inspectors held with parents and in the letters received. A small number of parents expressed contrasting views, and felt very strongly that the school fell short in many respects, but these views did not reflect those of the vast majority or inspectors' findings.
- The curriculum is well planned and engages pupils. Music plays a key role. All Year 4 pupils are learning the ukulele. Pupils sing well. French is well taught. Pupils are given a say in the topics they study so came up with the sinking of the *Titanic*, and Ancient Egypt. Planning draws on their interests, such as *Dr Who*. In Reception, the role-play area is a mechanic's workshop, complete with spare car parts. These activities make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The curriculum is enriched through clubs, visitors and visits, such as to a local Victorian museum. The primary school sport funding is being spent on additional coaching and opportunities for pupils to take a more active part in a range of sports. The school has plans to measure the impact of this activity on pupils' health and well-being.
- The school has chosen not to use the local authority for aspects of its monitoring and development work and uses an external consultant.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very supportive of the school and the headteacher. They show a great interest in its work and often visit to help out and see the school in action. Governance requires improvement, however, because governors have not always stepped back to take a more strategic view of the school's work, and they are not fully aware of what information would

help them to hold leaders more fully to account for its performance. Like other leaders and managers, their view of the school's effectiveness has been too generous and not searching enough, not taking enough account of variations in performance and the quality of teaching. They know about how teachers' performance is managed, how pay is linked to pupils' progress and how underperformance is tackled. They make sure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

## 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>	110614
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	429054

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>	309
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Julie Norman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephanie Wilcox
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 April 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01763 223457
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