

Meredith Infant School

Portchester Road, Portsmouth, PO2 7JB

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
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 determined leadership of the headteacher has resulted in significant improvement.
- Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, work effectively together with a shared sense of purpose based on an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Teaching throughout the school continues to improve and makes sure that pupils take a keen interest in their learning.
- Pupils' progress is closely monitored and where underperformance is identified it is addressed quickly and effectively.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Teachers know their pupils well and use this information to plan lessons that develop the knowledge and skills of learners.
- From often low starting points pupils make good progress in learning. They leave school having reached average standards in mathematics and English.
- Behaviour is good in lesson and around the school. Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe at all times.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in learning.
- The range of subjects is carefully planned to provide pupils with memorable learning experiences. It effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons teachers do not always respond or adapt quickly enough when pupils who need further challenge or support.
- Leaders and managers do not always use the information gathered from the work of the school to adapt provision and set more challenging targets.

Information about this inspection

- A total of 13 lessons, two learning walks and one assembly were seen.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, three representatives from the governing body, senior and middle leaders and pupils. The lead inspector also held meetings with the previous executive headteacher and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out a work scrutiny. They looked in detail at the content and quality of pupils' written work, the effectiveness of marking in promoting pupils' learning and how well pupils responded to the marking of their work.
- Inspectors looked at plans for improvement, information on pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the headteacher's monitoring information, school records and policies. Inspectors heard a selection of pupils read and looked closely at their work in class.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed inside and outside the classroom and the school's safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.
- By the end of the inspection there had been insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View to register. However, an inspector met with a small group of parents and responses from the school's own questionnaires to parents over the past year were also taken into account.
- As this inspection began as a monitoring inspection, questionnaires were not circulated to staff and so their views of the provision were collected during conversations held during the course of the inspection.

Inspection team

David Edwards, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ken Bryan

Additional Inspector

David Shears

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Meredith Infant School is an average-sized infant school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average.
- There are currently three classes in each year group.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported through school action is above the national average. Similarly, the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is also above the national average.
- There is on-site childcare which is managed privately, so is inspected separately.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by ensuring teachers respond to pupils' learning in lessons and where necessary adapt their teaching to provide additional challenge or support.
- Strengthen the systems that leaders and managers use to gather information on the work of the school and ensure it is analysed rigorously so that it can be used to set challenging targets for further improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children begin school displaying aptitudes and skills that are below those expected for their age. Standards have risen steadily in recent years because of improved provision and as a result, children are now well prepared to enter Year 1.
- Strong leadership maintains an appropriate focus on supporting children's personal and emotional needs which ensures all children settle quickly into school routines and develop a positive attitude to learning. As a result, children make good progress in developing their language and number skills while some make outstanding progress relative to their low starting points.
- The 2012 Key Stage 1 national tests show pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is now broadly in line with the national average at all levels.
- The focus on raising attainment in writing has been particularly successful throughout the school in the past two years and attainment has risen. The school's close and rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress in this area shows that currently pupils are on track to achieve their end of year targets. Senior leaders maintain high expectations of the most able writers and this continues to be an area of focus within Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is a strength throughout the school. This is because all adults are skilled in teaching phonics (the sounds letters make) and take every opportunity to extend provision into outdoor learning where there is particularly good reinforcement activities for pupils to do. Pupils who read to the inspectors did so with confidence, accuracy and enjoyment. They used a range of methods including phonics to work out unfamiliar words. They also showed a good understanding of what they were reading and so read with fluency and expression.
- There are no significant differences in the progress made by groups of pupils, including pupils from different ethnic groups. The impact of well-planned actions and personalised support has resulted in improvement in the achievements of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The school has successfully narrowed the gap between their attainment and that of all other pupils. As a result, the school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' secure subject knowledge leads to well-paced learning and good levels of engagement among pupils. Supportive relationships between staff and pupils are strong. This is evident through the good rapport teachers build with pupils in lessons.
- Teachers set high expectations of pupils and plan very carefully to make sure that the work they set provides the right level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. The harder work they provide for the most able pupils in writing means that these pupils now make good progress and achieve well. Where teaching is strongest teachers adjust their questioning in lessons and make sure that pupils are confident in what they need to do before they start to work on their own.
- In a small number of lessons teachers spend too long explaining what to do at the start of lessons or interrupt pupils unnecessarily when they are working on their own to give further guidance. This means pupils do not always have enough time to complete work in lessons which slows their progress.
- Teachers use their secure knowledge of individual pupils along with the detailed information regularly provided by senior leaders to ensure the great majority of lessons capture pupils' imagination and interests. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are nearly always positive and their enthusiasm in lessons is clearly apparent. This was particularly evident towards the end of a numeracy lesson where, with the effective support of a teaching assistant and the good use of

modern technology to engage pupils' interest, the teacher skilfully questioned pupils to check their understanding of how to double numbers.

- A system for marking and giving feedback to help pupils understand how well they are doing is consistently applied throughout the school. Inspectors saw some good examples in books of older pupils responding to their teachers' marking. Pupils receive clear guidance on how to improve their work, particularly in English, although in mathematics there is less of an emphasis on developing progression in mathematical skills through marking.
- Teaching assistants work closely with pupils under the direction of class teachers. Their commitment, expertise and effective use of questions to promote pupils' understanding in small groups is a significant reason why pupils of all abilities make good progress.
- Classrooms are carefully managed to stimulate learning. The displays of current work in classes and along the corridors are attractive and celebrate pupils' achievements. They promote the school's aim that, 'Together we will make a difference; supporting, encouraging and inspiring everyone to be: successful learners, responsible citizens and happy, confident individuals.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Pupils' respect for one another is good. The school manages behaviour effectively and behaviour logbooks confirm that overall, pupils' respect for one another is good. Although space for the outdoor learning environment is limited children in the Early Years Foundation Stage behave and play well together. Supervision from adults is carefully managed and pupils who spoke with the inspector say they believe their school to be a safe and secure environment.
- Adults actively teach good behaviour and pupils are responsive to their guidance. Pupils behave very well in lessons and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are polite and well-mannered and work well together as well as independently. Occasionally, teaching does not always challenge or support pupils fully and as a result some pupils become distracted from their work which hinders their good attitudes to learning.
- The range of subjects supports pupils effectively in the development of their personal skills and their emerging understanding of how to manage everyday risks for themselves, such as those associated with the internet. The school draws on the expertise of outside agencies to support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.
- Attendance was an area for improvement at the time of the previous inspection and has improved although it remains currently slightly below the national average. However, the school is working closely with families and the school's partners in order to address this issue and lateness is no longer a cause for concern. Senior leaders are aware of the need to strengthen monitoring systems to ensure attendance is analysed rigorously so that it can be used to set challenging targets for further improvement.
- The parents who spoke to the inspector consider that their children are taught well and make good progress.

The leadership and management is good

- A smooth transition in leadership, under the expert guidance of the executive headteacher and her deputy headteacher, to the new headteacher and her team, was expertly managed to ensure pupils' entitlement to a good education was not compromised in any way. In a relatively short space of time the new headteacher has successfully built a cohesive team of enthusiastic and highly aspirational professionals who are demonstrating the ability to provide securely good learning experiences for all pupils. Together they have set high expectations for pupils' achievement in a new vision statement and through this process have successfully gained the full confidence of staff, governors, parent community and local authority.

- The school's system for tracking pupils' levels of progress and achievement is now fully embedded and provides leaders with regular and accurate information on the work of the school. However, senior leaders, including governors, acknowledge that greater rigour in the analysis of the school's work is now required in order to determine the effectiveness of interventions so that they might respond more quickly to the individual needs of pupils and thereby set challenging targets for further school improvement.
- Teachers' professional development is linked closely to school improvement and their individual needs. The system for managing the performance of teachers regularly informs the headteacher and governors of the progress pupils are making and this is linked to salary progression for teachers. It is also linked with the training and development needs of teachers' strengths and interests. Feedback from teachers unanimously says they receive very good support and direction from senior leaders. They are held accountable in an open and collaborative way which is helping them to improve their teaching skills further.
- Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet requirements and ensure pupils are safe at all times.
- Middle leaders are providing consistently effective support to senior leaders and they possess a clearer understanding of their roles. Each year group uses pupils' progress information and regular work reviews to inform their next steps in planning. These improvements have resulted in greater consistency in teaching and the maintaining of good outcomes for pupils. Senior leaders demonstrate a very clear understanding of next steps for the school in order to bring about sustainable good quality teaching and learning. The rigorous implementation of well-focused improvement plans are based on robust and accurate self-evaluation which means the school is well placed to improve further.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The improved systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school have meant that the governing body is much better informed about the work of the school including safeguarding arrangements and the performance management of teachers. It is able to monitor the work of the school effectively. Governors are gaining confidence in holding senior leaders closely to account and undertake regular training to enhance their effectiveness. However, they acknowledge the need to strengthen the systems that leaders and managers use to gather information on the work of the school so that they might provide for pupils' needs more effectively and set challenging targets for further improvement.
 - Resources for the most vulnerable pupils identified through the pupil premium and additional funding for sporting activities from the government to supplement sporting activities for all pupils have been deployed appropriately and are being used wisely to make sure individual pupils get the right sort of support. Good communications with the school ensure governors are increasing their knowledge about the school. They visit the school regularly and do not just rely on the detailed reports they receive from the headteacher. They are rightly confident that now they have secured stable leadership and good teaching and learning the school has the necessary capacity to maintain good standards and confidently address areas for development.
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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

Unique reference number	116186
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	420397

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alister Sutherland
Headteacher	Lucy Carroll
Date of previous school inspection	September 2011
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