

Menston Primary School

Main Street, Menston, Ilkley, West Yorkshire, LS29 6LF

Inspection dates 19–20 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics and standards of attainment are above average. Progress in reading is exceptionally strong and standards of attainment are high.
- Teaching is good. Staff make sure that pupils feel happy in school and are ready to learn. Teachers plan activities that pupils enjoy and find interesting. Children in the Reception classes are taught early reading, writing and mathematical skills well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy school and behave well in lessons and at break times. In lessons, they are hard working and persevere with tasks, even when they are hard. At lunchtimes older pupils enjoy playing with and looking after younger pupils.
- Pupils feel safe in school.
- Good use is made of the extra funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The attendance and achievement of these pupils has improved as a result.
- The headteacher, well supported by senior leaders and governors, is ambitious for the school. Leaders have succeeded in maintaining at least good achievement. As a result of well-planned actions, pupils' achievement in writing improved a great deal in 2013.
- Leaders are thorough in checking that teaching is effective. The school makes the most of partnerships with local schools and the skills of its own staff so that the quality of teaching is improving.
- Pupils enjoy a good range of educational activities in the before- and after-school care club. Staff make sure that pupils are safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching in mathematics does not always lead to good progress, especially in Key Stage 1. Some pupils struggle to do sums on paper because they have not had enough practical experience to help them understand the mathematical concepts.
- In some lessons, the most able pupils are not doing as well as they should because the work is not hard enough for them.
- Pupils do not always know what they must do to improve their work because teachers do not always make this clear enough when they mark work or give guidance in class.
- Although improving, some elements of leadership are not strong enough. Some middle leaders, who are new to their role, have not yet developed the skills they need to contribute fully to school improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 part-lessons. Two of these were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors analysed pupils' work in their books during visits to classrooms. Inspectors carried out a further scrutiny of pupils' workbooks jointly with the headteacher.
- An inspector listened to children from Years 1 and 2 reading.
- Discussions were held with staff, pupils, governors and two representatives of the local authority.
- Documents looked at included the self-evaluation summary, improvement plans, information on pupils' progress, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, documents relating to safeguarding and the school improvement advisor's reports on the school's performance.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 78 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors held conversations with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning. Inspectors took account of a survey of 226 parents carried out by the school in July 2013. The lead inspector received two letters from parents.

Inspection team

Gillian Salter-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Firth	Additional Inspector
David Halford	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an above average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Of the small proportion from different minority ethnic backgrounds, the proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- A well-below-average proportion of pupils is supported through school action. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard that sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides before- and after-school care for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils' progress speeds up even more, especially in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and for the most able pupils, by:
 - providing more activities that help pupils to understand mathematical concepts fully so that they are more confident when they tackle sums on paper
 - making sure that the most able pupils are consistently given work that is hard enough for them and enables them to make the progress of which they are capable
 - improving the guidance that teachers give to pupils in class and when they mark work so that pupils are very clear what they can do to improve their work.
- Improving the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that middle leaders new to their role develop the skills they need to improve teaching and pupils' progress even more quickly
 - looking more closely at the progress of the most able pupils so that any potential underachievement is recognised and addressed quickly
 - improving the way leaders keep records of actions taken and their consequences following any serious incidents of misbehaviour by pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From individual starting points that are mostly typical for their age, children in the Reception classes make good progress. By the end of the Reception Year levels of development in all areas are better than the national average. Children have plenty of chances to improve their early reading, writing and number skills. The wide range of exciting activities both indoors and outdoors give children lots to talk about. Children learn to read quickly and develop a love of books and reading because the teaching of letters and the sounds they make is well structured; staff do a great deal to encourage parents to support their children's development of reading.
- Results of the national check on pupils' early reading skills (the phonics check) in Year 1 are above average. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 so that attainment by the end of Year 2 is well above average in reading and a little above average in writing and mathematics. There is room to improve further the proportion of pupils reaching above average levels of attainment in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. Overall standards of attainment are consistently above average. Attainment and progress in reading are exceptionally strong. Attainment in writing and mathematics are better than average. In 2013, writing improved significantly. Inspection evidence for pupils currently in school shows that these improving standards are set to continue.
- Of the very small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, most make at least similar progress to those who are not eligible and the gap in attainment in English and mathematics is narrow. The school has used its pupil premium funding very effectively. Staff have worked with pupils and their families, sometimes providing a mentor to act as an 'adult friend or supporter' for each individual, so that pupils feel valued and very well looked after in school. As a result, the attendance and achievement of these pupils have improved. Among current pupils there is no significant difference between the progress they make and that of other pupils. In some cases these pupils are making better progress than others.
- The most able pupils make good progress in reading and writing. In mathematics, not enough of them reach above average standards in Key Stage 1; in Key Stage 2, not enough make better than expected progress. Leaders have recognised this issue and have established small-group work that is focused on reaching higher standards, such as Level 6 work.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similarly good progress as other pupils and sometimes make better progress than others. Leaders are quick to identify pupils' specific special needs and make sure that pupils get the extra support and guidance they need.
- The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make as good progress and sometimes better progress than others. Leaders keep a close watch on how well these and every pupil makes progress. Any potential underachievement is spotted quickly. No time is lost in finding ways to get pupils back up to speed in their progress, reflecting the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching is good

- Children are taught well in Reception. Classrooms are welcoming and have plenty of activities to interest children and stimulate their imagination. Staff build positive relationships with children and their parents so children are happy and settled. Children are busy and active in the outdoor area. Activities are carefully planned so that children progress well in all areas of learning. Staff keep a close eye on children's progress and ensure that they are encouraged to do their best.
- Pupils across the school enjoy learning and become confident learners because staff build supportive relationships with pupils, give them well-deserved praise, and encourage pupils to find things out for themselves.
- In most lessons, pupils improve skills, knowledge and understanding quickly because staff plan lessons where pupils build on what they already know. Close checks on progress help staff to fill

any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

- Pupils develop good communication skills because staff make sure that pupils have many well-planned chances to discuss their ideas with each other and to think things through before they answer questions. 'Big Talk' homework, when pupils are encouraged to talk about a topic at home, helps pupils to think through ideas before they write about them.
- Pupils improve their writing skills at a good rate and enjoy writing about a wide range of topics. Teachers ask much of pupils and encourage them to use their imagination. Pupils improve their writing because carefully planned activities ensure that they understand how to broaden the range of vocabulary and the complexity of the sentences they use.
- Year 5 and 6 pupils were captivated by a rope with a tassel on the end hanging from the ceiling when they came into the classroom. Staff skilfully used this stimulus to help pupils write exciting pieces that described what they thought this rope was for. They went on to write at greater length and complexity about the body language and feelings of a character after they watched a video of the consequences of 'pulling the rope'. Throughout, teachers and support staff checked on how well pupils were coping with the task. They encouraged pupils to talk through their ideas and use each other's ideas and the adults in the room to improve their writing.
- Reading is widely encouraged. Pupils are keen to read and enjoy a good range of books and poems. They are keen to use the library.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics when teachers show pupils how calculations work using practical apparatus. In a few lessons, more in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2, pupils struggle to carry out written calculations because there are too few practical activities to help pupils understand how the mathematics works.
- Teaching assistants help a good range of pupils to learn in classrooms, especially the less able, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They pose good questions that make sure that pupils work things out for themselves.
- In most lessons, pupils of all abilities make good progress. However, there are occasions when the most able pupils are not given hard enough work. Sometimes teachers have not made it clear to pupils what more they are expected to achieve, compared with others, so they do not take those extra steps to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Teachers mark pupils' workbooks regularly. They make sure that pupils have clear and relevant targets to strive towards. The school marking policy that sets out what has been done well, 'tickled pink', and what more needs to improve, 'green for growth', is not followed by all staff. Consequently, pupils do not always know what they should do next to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Leaders and staff establish a caring and supportive atmosphere where pupils, including those more disadvantaged, feel well supported and valued.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy school and learning. In most lessons they settle down to tasks quickly. They are enthusiastic, hard working and keen to do well. Pupils enjoy sharing ideas with each other and helping each other out. Just occasionally pupils do not concentrate as well as they should with less experienced staff, or when they have not understood what they need to do.
- Pupils are considerate towards others. The dining area is sociable and orderly. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously; many enjoy their play-time role when they look after and play with younger pupils. Pupils appreciate recent improvements to the range of activities at lunchtimes. Pupils say there is something for everyone now.
- Pupils' workbooks show that most take a pride in their work. Pupils are clearly captivated by many topics and enjoy writing about them, for example, the topic on outer space. Some older pupils have not practised their handwriting often enough and it is not well formed.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and secure in school.

They say that there is very little bullying. They know about different types of bullying. They are confident that staff will help them if the need arises. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in many different situations, including when using modern technology.

- Rates of attendance are above average and improving. Leaders have used pupil premium funding very effectively to work with eligible pupils and their families to improve their attendance and achievement.
- Parents and staff are happy that behaviour in the school is good and that children are kept safe. They appreciate the well-managed before- and after-school care that is provided.
- Leaders record the very rare serious incidents of misbehaviour, but are not rigorous enough in recording the actions taken and the outcomes of that action on pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the school. They have maintained good achievement and improved it in writing, increasing rates of attendance and the achievement of pupils whose circumstances render them more vulnerable. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and what needs to improve.
- Accurate checks on pupils' progress identify potential underperformers. These pupils receive timely, well-focused support, both for their academic progress and their personal well-being. As a result most pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, catch up. However, the school is not routinely analysing the progress of the most able pupils as a separate group. The school is aware that it needs to speed up the progress of some of these pupils and has established teaching groups in Key Stage 2 to do this. It is too soon to evaluate the impact of these arrangements.
- Leaders are successful in improving the quality of teaching. Rigorous checks on teaching and well-planned training, closely linked to the school's priorities, are helping to improve teaching.
- Leaders work in close partnerships with other local schools to share best practice and gain from others' expertise. The recent focus on helping pupils, especially boys, to enjoy and improve their writing, is working well.
- Staff, including newly qualified teachers, are supported well. Increasingly, staff take a lead in training within the school. Recent internal training on early reading skills (phonics) is resulting in effective teaching of reading.
- Performance management targets are linked to school priorities, for example, improvements in writing. Salary progressions are awarded for effective performance.
- Middle leaders take a role in checking on the quality of teaching and supporting some improvements. However, a number are new to the role and have not developed the skills to enable them to make a full contribution to school improvement.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Topics and activities are chosen carefully and include plenty of exciting visits and activities to interest pupils. For example, a visit to the Colour Museum in Bradford during the inspection led to challenging work in science. Leaders make sure that reading, writing and communication are planned and practised well across all subjects. Common approaches to calculations in mathematics are well established; however, not enough practical experience and demonstration of mathematic concepts is holding back some pupils' understanding.
- Leaders are fully committed to encouraging learning in the outdoors. The extensive grounds have been developed well to provide different areas to suit different types of learning activity.
- School sport funding is being used well. Extra coaching is providing more pupils with good quality lessons and providing training for teachers. The school is involved in more local sporting competitions and more competitions are held within the school. The number of pupils benefitting from the additional activities has increased a great deal.
- The school has positive relationships with parents. Leaders consult parents regularly and act upon their views. For example, a recent increase in the opportunities for parents to meet

teachers formally to discuss their children's progress is in response to parents' views. A strong parent body contributes funding and organises social activities for pupils and parents. The vast majority of parents are happy with the way the school is working with their children.

- Safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements.
- The local authority keeps a watching brief on the performance of this good and improving school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are experienced and bring a good range of skills to the role. They undertake appropriate training. Many visit the school on a regular basis.
- Governors know how well pupils are performing and understand the school's priorities, such as, standards in writing.
- Governors are happy that the pupil premium is spent effectively and that it is making a difference to the progress of these pupils. They have asked for even greater analysis of the spending to help them evaluate the impact of spending more precisely.
- Governors are kept well-informed about the quality of teaching and of the performance of teachers. They support the headteacher's decisions on salary progressions. They are aware of the level of support provided for teachers, particularly those less experienced. They ensure that the headteacher has challenging targets and that these relate closely to school priorities.

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	107299
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	431319

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	369
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Twigg
Headteacher	Iain Jones
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2009
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