

Meridian Angel Primary School

Albany Road, Edmonton N18 2DX

Inspection dates

14–15 June, 18–19 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school community has suffered from unstable senior leadership since it opened in 2014. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the early years provision, is inconsistent. The progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics across the school is variable.
- The school's system for keeping a check on the progress pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics does not fully support teachers in planning for pupils' needs.
- Planning and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who speak English as an additional language do not take full account of their individual needs. This does not help them to make strong, sustained progress.
- Parents express mixed views about the effectiveness of the school.
- Information gathered by leaders to assess children's starting points when they join the school is not thorough or accurate.
- Leaders and governors do not rigorously evaluate the impact of the pupil premium funding on the progress that disadvantaged pupils make.
- The learning environment in the early years does not reflect all the areas of learning sufficiently.
- Pupils in Year 6 are taught a narrow curriculum. Provisional information about their attainment in 2017 indicates that they achieved standards which are well below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders' actions to improve attendance have not had a significant impact. Despite some improvement, the rate of persistent absence remains very high.

The school has the following strengths

- Since taking up her post in September 2016, the headteacher, supported very well by the deputy headteacher and the governors, has taken effective action to improve teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, there are pockets of good teaching across the school.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in writing at the end of Year 2 was above the national average.
- Pupils behave well and are kept safe at school. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. There is a positive climate for learning in the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the assessment system supports teachers in meeting the needs of all pupils, including the most able pupils, those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - pupils in Year 6 benefit from a broad curriculum
 - adults responsible for teaching small groups or individuals with particular needs receive the necessary training and guidance to support the needs of the pupils with whom they work
 - information gathered to assess children’s starting points when they start school is rigorous and accurate
 - teaching is strengthened by sharing good practice so that pupils in all year groups make good, sustained progress in reading, writing and mathematics
 - leaders and governors rigorously evaluate the impact of the pupil premium funding on the progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school
 - leaders take further effective action to reduce the incidences of persistent absence, particularly for those pupils who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - the learning environment in the early years provision fully reflects all areas of learning and the quality of teaching improves.

An external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not secured a good standard of education for pupils since the school opened in 2014. The school community endured a period of unstable leadership until September 2016 when the current substantive headteacher was appointed.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher have been relentless in their drive to move the school forward. They have been well supported in this by governors. Leaders have successfully eradicated inadequate teaching. However, actions that have been put in place have not yet resulted in consistently good teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, the progress that pupils make is variable and some of it is weak.
- Assessment systems have been introduced by leaders but they are not effective in supporting teachers to plan sufficiently for the needs of groups of pupils across the school. For example, assessment processes do not take into account the specific needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who speak English as an additional language. Leaders' judgements about what is typical or expected progress for pupils in each year group are not consistent and their approach to 'breaking down' objectives for pupils who have specific learning difficulties do not meet their needs.
- One of the challenges faced by leaders is the highly mobile pupil population. Pupils join and leave the school at various points throughout the year. Leaders, rightly, separate information on how well pupils who have been at the school throughout key stage 2 are achieving in comparison to how well pupils who join the school at different points achieve. However, this information is based on unreliable information about pupils' starting points when they join the school and therefore does not give a wholly accurate picture.
- Leaders are not rigorous in tracking the progress that disadvantaged pupils are currently making across the school. Leaders were unable to present any information about the progress of disadvantaged pupils to inspectors. Leaders do not rigorously monitor the impact of their use of the pupil premium funding on pupils' progress.
- Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not used effectively to support the needs of these learners. Individual education plans do not pay due attention to pupils' specific needs but focus solely on academic achievement. Leaders do not make any distinction between pupils who require a very short-term 'catch-up' intervention and those who require specific support because they have special educational needs. This does not help them in meeting the varying needs of their pupils.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve attendance in the context of high pupil mobility. Their actions have had some impact but attendance remains below the national average. The rate of persistent absence, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is showing little sign of improvement.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Assemblies bring the community together and encourage them to think deeply about important themes. This is helping pupils to become respectful British citizens. Pupils work socially and collaboratively in lessons. They show a good understanding of right and wrong. The curriculum is broad and gives pupils opportunities to explore a range of themes and subjects. Leaders responsible for science have had a good impact in improving the provision and assessment of science.

- During the spring and summer term, Year 6 pupils focus too much on reading, writing and mathematics in order to prepare them for the Year 6 tests. This means that these pupils do not benefit from a broad or balanced curriculum.
- Pupils enjoy a good range of free after-school clubs provided by the school. Leaders use primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding well to support this provision and to secure the services of external sports coaches.

Governance of the school

- The chair of governors, who took up her post in September 2016, has a clear understanding of the challenges that have faced the school community since the school opened. Her experience as a headteacher enables her to use her incisive knowledge of school improvement work to steer the work of the governors appropriately.
- Governors have a realistic picture of where the school is on its journey to becoming a good school. Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for the school and share a coherent vision for its successful future.
- Governors recognise the areas of their work which they need to develop. Their action plan identified that they need to be rigorous in challenging leaders about the use and the impact of the pupil premium funding.
- Records show that governors offer a high level of challenge to leaders during meetings. They also provide good support to the headteacher and the staff. Documentation shows that they understand the aspects of the school's work which need improving and they have the necessary skills to support leaders in moving the school forward.
- Governors carry out their safeguarding duties effectively. They keep a close check on the records that leaders keep with regard to the safe recruitment of staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. They understand and use the school's referrals systems effectively in order to safeguard pupils who are vulnerable or at risk. Leaders seek appropriate advice and external services to support pupils.
- Pupils are taught about online safety and the curriculum gives them various opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. They are clear about being careful when they use their mobile phones. They have benefited from local police guidance with regard to the dangers of gangs within the community.
- Safeguarding is an agenda item on every senior leadership team meeting. There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school; all staff are clear that they are part of the safeguarding 'team'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is inconsistent and leads to variability in the progress that pupils make.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are committed to improving their skills and want to do the best that they can for pupils. However, teaching sometimes fails to meet pupils' needs. Tasks set for pupils of different abilities are occasionally either too easy or too difficult. Pupils' skills and knowledge are sometimes above the level of the teaching they receive. Pupils are at times held back by teachers accepting work without challenging or questioning pupils to help them to improve it.
- Not all adults working with groups or individuals have strong or secure subject knowledge. This is particularly true of the adults who are deployed to work with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or pupils who speak English as an additional language. Plans to support pupils identified as needing support for special educational needs and/or disabilities are not always effective. They do not help staff to identify strategies that will enable them to support pupils and their specific needs. Communication between class teachers and adults taking group sessions is fairly limited. This means that teachers cannot pick up on any misconceptions which occur during targeted group work.
- Resources and activities provided to pupils who speak English as an additional language are sometimes inappropriate and ineffective. For example, pupils with very little English were given complex sketches showing a wide range of different items. The task was to learn the name of individual items to expand pupils' limited vocabulary. Pupils were unclear as to the item being focused on because the picture showed so many different things. Leaders are aware that staff need further guidance and training to help them be more effective and are planning appropriate training and support.
- Leaders have recently taken action to improve provision for the teaching of reading across the school and to help pupils develop a love of reading. For example, the deputy headteacher's 'special book club' is inspiring developing readers and motivating them to learn to read. Reading is prioritised as a key homework activity.
- Phonics teaching is a strength of the school and pupils are confident in applying phonics skills in reading. However, progress in reading is variable and standards in reading at the end of key stage 2 are extremely low.
- Leaders have ensured that the teaching of writing has started to improve. Pupils across the school are writing for a range of purposes and audiences. Many pupils are writing with confidence and at length but this is not yet consistent in all classes. Not all teachers adhere to school policy regarding the presentation and organisation of work. As a result, there are inconsistencies in the quality of handwriting and presentation across the school.
- The headteacher has put actions in place to improve the teaching of mathematics and there are early signs of the impact of this work. Older pupils are engaging far more with tasks involving reasoning and problem solving than previously and there are pockets of good progress in mathematics evident across the school. However, pupils who are assessed by teachers as being the most able mathematicians are working at, not above, the expected standard for their age.

- Teachers ensure that pupils benefit from a range of subjects up to Year 6. The teaching of science is improving because of strong leadership. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 4 have made some sustained progress in art.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development requires improvement. Poor attendance has a negative impact on pupils' self-confidence as learners because too many pupils miss too much learning time. There has been a slight reduction in the rate of persistent absence this year but it is still well above the national average.
- Pupils try hard in lessons, even when teaching does not meet their needs. They try to take pride in their work but they do not receive consistent guidance on how to present their work well.
- Occasionally, some adults are not positive in their responses to pupils and are not good role models in terms of being polite. For example, some adults do not always say please and thank you when giving children instructions and this occasionally has an impact on children's personal development. However, most staff show kindness and affection for pupils and are good role models for being respectful to others.
- Pupils feel safe and are kept safe at school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons, in the playground and around the school. They are reserved but friendly and polite when spoken to. Pupils were keen to help inspectors find their way around school and showed kindness and respect at all times during the inspection.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to school. Poor attendance is not an issue relating to pupils' attitudes or behaviour but it does have an impact on their learning while at school.
- Low-level disruption in lessons is rare, even when teaching does not interest or engage pupils. Indeed, pupils show a great deal of self-discipline and resilience when they grapple with tasks which do not fully support their needs.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The school opened in 2014. Consequently, this is the first year that Year 6 pupils have taken the end of key stage 2 tests. Provisional information indicates that pupils have achieved standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are well below the 2016 national averages. Attainment in reading looks to be exceptionally low, with only 26% of pupils achieving the expected standard. According to leaders' analysis, a much higher proportion of the pupils who have been at the school since it opened have achieved the expected standard in writing and mathematics than pupils who joined the school at other times. However, only 38% of pupils who have attended the school since it opened achieved the expected standard in reading.

- Leaders were not able to provide information about the progress that disadvantaged pupils who are currently in the school have made this year. Books show that they have made similar, variable progress to their classmates. Pupil premium funding has therefore not had a strong or sustained impact on pupils' progress.
- The most able pupils across the school, including those who are disadvantaged, have not been challenged sufficiently to achieve greater depth in their learning. Books show that the most able pupils across the school are working at, not above, the expected level for their age.
- The school's information about the progress all pupils have made this year shows some variability within and between year groups. Books show that there is more variability in progress than the school's information suggests.
- The school's provisional information shows that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 has improved this year in all areas, with a significant increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils achieved less well than all pupils nationally in reading and mathematics and were broadly in line with other pupils in writing.
- In 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good overall level of development at the end of Reception was just below the national average. In 2017, provisional information shows that this has increased.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was just below the national average. In 2017, this has increased and is now in line with the 2016 national average.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders' evaluation of the quality of the early years provision is overgenerous. The quality of teaching requires improvement. Adults responsible for teaching early literacy skills lack secure subject knowledge. For example, the most able children are held back and told to 'slow down, don't rush ahead' when they are simply reading with pace, fluency and enjoyment. Signs displayed in classrooms contain inaccurate spelling. Children are not helped to form letters or numbers confidently or correctly.
- Leaders' assessments of children's starting points when they join the school are not accurate because they do not take account of all the areas of learning which are assessed at the end of the early years. Similarly, the learning environment does not fully reflect all areas of learning, particularly expressive arts and design.
- While outcomes are broadly in line with the national averages at the end of Reception, the progress that pupils make across the year is unclear. This is because their starting points are not assessed reliably.
- Relationships between children and adults in the early years are good. Parents agree that their children are kept safe and that they feel secure and happy. Adults clearly care about the children but are not well equipped to help them make the best possible progress that they can.
- Leaders demonstrate good phonics teaching for other adults in the Reception class, helping them to learn how to improve their practice.

- The strong outcomes achieved at the end of Reception indicate that children are well prepared to meet the demands of the Year 1 curriculum.

School details

Unique reference number	141017
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10031677

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Eve Hearn
Headteacher	Mrs Cheryll Milner
Telephone number	020 3773 3895
Website	www.meridianangel.org.uk
Email address	office@meridianangel.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is part of The London Community Learning Trust which comprises three schools. Meridian Angel is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has a highly mobile population with large numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school at different points throughout the year.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is larger than average.
- The large majority of pupils are from any other White background. The next largest group are of Black African heritage.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average.
- This is the first year that the school have had Year 6 pupils. Provisional assessment information for 2017 indicates that the school will not meet the government's floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- The section 5 inspection took place on 14 and 15 June. The inspection was suspended during the second day of the inspection as the school generator broke. A second visit to secure additional evidence took place on 18 and 19 July.
- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups at least three times. Observations were undertaken with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the inclusion manager.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the governing body and a range of other governors.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their learning and their views on the school. Pupils took inspectors on a 'curriculum tour' of the school.
- All leaders met with inspectors to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to pupils in the lunch hall, in lessons and as they moved around the building.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school, improvement plans, curriculum plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined school records relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised a very large sample of books to see what progress pupils make across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and of information gathered from discussions with parents during the inspection. They also took account of the information gathered from the school's own recent parent survey.
- Children from Year 5 were out on a school trip for the third day of the inspection and pupils from Year 3 were out on the final day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Storrie	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Murphy-Dutton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Noeman Anwar	Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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