

Mellis Church of England Primary School

Yaxley Road, Mellis, Eye, Suffolk IP23 8DP

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The multi-academy trust (MAT) and school leaders have accurately identified areas to improve. Their actions have been effective in addressing the decline in progress in reading, writing and mathematics over time.
- The MAT is providing effective support to leaders and governors to raise standards and improve pupils' outcomes.
- The school's nurturing ethos – combined with the varied and rich curriculum – contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' welfare is at the centre of leaders' work. Pupils – particularly the most vulnerable – are given the help they need to access their learning and make good progress from their starting points in a safe and supportive environment.
- Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported to make good progress from their different starting points.
- Strong and effective leadership in mathematics and English is ensuring that current pupils are making good overall progress in both key stages.
- Children in the early years make good progress because of the strong and effective provision in place.
- Leaders provide a rich curriculum where pupils excel in a wide range of sporting activities and specialist subjects, such as music and modern foreign languages.
- Parents and carers spoken with are very positive about the leadership of the school and all that the school provides for their children.
- Pupils are happy, safe and well looked after. All processes for safeguarding pupils are effective.
- Leaders do not know well enough how teachers are using the information they provide about pupils' progress.
- Although progress overall is good, a few teachers do not consistently use information about what pupils can already do to plan tasks that help them make the good and better progress of which they are capable, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Not all teachers insist on the same high standards as others for the presentation of pupils' work, particularly in writing.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics do not have a clear enough understanding of the strengths and the areas that they need to develop in their subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - monitoring more closely how teachers use information about pupils' progress to move pupils on in their learning
 - ensuring that leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics develop their practice to the same high standards as the leaders of English and mathematics.
- Develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all teachers consistently plan tasks that consider pupils' individual starting points so that they make the good and better progress of which they are capable
 - all teachers set high expectations in the standards of pupils' work across all subjects, particularly in writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has built a committed and passionate workforce. However, unforeseeable staff absences over a short period of time had a negative impact on the progress pupils have made. Leaders are successfully addressing the decline in progress, which is showing significant signs of improvement. Inspection evidence confirms that current pupils are making overall good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher values all staff and invests appropriately in relevant training so that they can do the very best in their roles to support pupils. In this nurturing school, all staff contribute significantly to the well-being of pupils.
- The MAT is fully supportive of leaders and is continuing to support them to raise standards. Mellis works with other schools within the MAT to challenge one another and share good practice. For example, senior leaders lead writing moderation sessions, where leaders and teachers join together to check the accuracy of their judgements of pupils' work.
- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding provided for the small number of pupils who are disadvantaged. Pupils are provided with a wide range of enrichment opportunities – as well as small-group support – to help them make good progress from their different starting points.
- Leaders use SEND funding well. The special educational needs coordinator is highly effective at ensuring that pupils who are struggling to learn are identified early and receive the support they need immediately. She organises appropriate training so that staff can support pupils as much as possible in class. She works collaboratively with agencies, parents and teachers to ensure that all pupils with SEND receive what they need so that they make good progress from their different starting points.
- English and mathematics leaders know their subjects well. Both have an accurate view of how pupils achieve in these subjects and what needs to improve. They have successfully improved the quality of teaching in their subjects, which is helping pupils to achieve better.
- Additional sport premium funding is used to provide pupils with a wide range of sporting experiences. The school's own home-grown specialist has developed pupils' physical education (PE) skills to a very high standard. Pupils compete and achieve well in a variety of sports such as swimming, cricket, mini tennis, gymnastics, cross-country and athletics. The school achieved the School Games Gold Award in 2018.
- The curriculum is wide-ranging and inspiring. Recruitment of specialist teachers has supported pupils to make good and better progress, particularly in their learning of French and music.
- The school offers pupils many extra-curricular activities, such as board games, gymnastics, choir, construction and eco club. Parents are appreciative of these. Parents who were spoken to were very positive about the school staff. One commented, 'They all go the extra mile.' Another added, 'an incredibly supportive, lovely village school'.

These views were typical of many.

- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics check pupils' work to ensure that pupils are being taught well in a wide range of subjects. However, they do not have an accurate view of what pupils can and cannot do so that they can address any weaknesses and raise standards in their individual subjects.
- Leaders identify pupils who are not making the progress they should. However, leaders are not monitoring well enough how teachers use this information to ensure that all pupils make the best progress they can.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and the areas that need to improve further. Governors bring a range of skills and experience that put them in good stead to support and challenge school leaders effectively. Minutes of governing body meetings demonstrate that governors hold school leaders to account for the achievement of pupils.
- Governors are very involved in school life. They are supportive of school leaders and take individual responsibility for specific areas of whole-school improvement. For example, governors work with school leaders so that they are fully informed about the actions of leaders to improve outcomes in writing and mathematics across the school.
- Governors are proactive and do their best to gain knowledge and improve their understanding. For example, they work with other governing bodies within the MAT, exchanging visits to review, share and improve practice.
- Governors ensure that they have undergone all statutory safeguarding training and that safeguarding pupils is a standing item on their governing body meeting agenda. They look for opportunities to develop their own roles further and ensure that new governors are supported to perform their roles effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and teachers are committed to ensuring that pupils are safe and attend school regularly. Staff understand their responsibilities and complete the relevant training in respect to safeguarding children. Processes are clear, and concerns are followed up swiftly.
- Pupils told the lead inspector that they feel safe at school, and parents who responded to Parent View – Ofsted's online questionnaire – say that their children are safe and well looked after.
- The school's single central record and employee files are well maintained and contain all statutory information. Leaders make sure that all adults have undergone the necessary checks to be suitable to work with children.
- Pupils are taught how to use the internet safely and understand the dangers when online. In addition, the school does its best to raise awareness within the community by arranging sessions for parents and pupils to find out more about the potential

dangers of online activity.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers across all year groups demonstrate good subject knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' work and lessons seen confirmed that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and is now good.
- The school's current approach to the teaching of English is having a positive impact on pupils' writing. Pupils learn useful skills that help them to progress in their writing. For example, pupils learn to plan, draft and – through editing – take ownership for improving their work. Most pupils use grammar and punctuation skills accurately. Pupils' writing is improving, and current pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils with SEND are given the specific support they need to make good and better progress from their starting points. Teachers have a good understanding of the many challenges that some pupils face. Teachers are quick to seek support and adapt their teaching and learning so that pupils with SEND make good progress over time.
- Reading is given a high profile from when pupils start school. Teachers regularly ignite pupils' love of reading with a book that engages them in class and inspires them to read at home. Teachers extend pupils' comprehension skills further, for example asking pupils to consider characters' thoughts and feelings and each writer's choice of language. Leaders provide extra sessions for those pupils who need extra support in reading.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Results in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 have been consistently high. Teachers model sounds well and continually check pupils' understanding. Within phonics sessions, teachers plan purposeful activities that help pupils practise their phonics knowledge in their writing.
- The school's new approach to teaching mathematics is ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to practise and develop their reasoning skills. For example, in key stage 2, teachers ask pupils to explain their strategies and give reasons for their answers. In problem-solving activities, pupils are asked to prove their answers. In key stage 1, pupils build on their number work by exploring number sentences in a variety of ways, for example by exploring the relationship between addition and subtraction.
- Pupils enjoy their topic work and can enthusiastically recall facts from what they have learned. In Year 4, pupils could talk confidently about their work on rivers, explaining the source of a river, the mouth and the creation of oxbow lakes. Science books show that pupils learn about a range of topics, such as habitats and how animals adapt to them. Experience days and weeks in subjects such as science enrich and consolidate pupils' learning well. PE is taught particularly well, which is demonstrated in pupils' achievement in a wide range of sporting competitions.
- Teachers know their pupils well and develop good working relationships with them. In most cases, pupils listen and work well. However, in some instances, teachers do not plan activities well enough that take into consideration pupils' starting points. When this happens, pupils lose concentration and do not make the good progress they should. This often means that some pupils are not challenged sufficiently to reach the higher standards of attainment or make the good and better progress they should.

- In some subjects, teachers do not have consistently high expectations of how pupils present their work. Pupils' books are untidy. For example, handwriting is not consistently joined, and titles and dates are not underlined.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders are extremely mindful of pupils' emotional well-being. Leaders have an acute awareness of the early signs of mental health concerns. Leaders have made a concerted effort to ensure that staff learn as much as they can. They work with the relevant agencies and charities to access training and raise awareness among staff, parents and pupils. Concerns about pupils are quickly addressed so that they are successfully supported to learn.
- Leaders shared evidence that demonstrated that, by successfully identifying pupils' needs, they have been able to give precise support to help a significant number of pupils in difficult circumstances thrive at Mellis Primary School.
- In most lessons, pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and engage enthusiastically. The school's core values – for example 'To Be Our Best' – help to develop confident and resilient individuals. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the 'golden book' and celebration assembly at the end of the week.
- Pupils have a mature understanding of different religions. They spoke confidently about the similarities between them and told inspectors that all religions have a set of rules and values to live by.
- Pupils enjoy assembly, where values are reinforced. They are respectful, participate well in singing and listen attentively to the speakers who visit.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying and say it rarely happens. Pupils are given opportunities to explore the impact of bullying through anti-bullying work they are taught in lessons. Pupils know an adult to speak with if they are worried and are confident that their concerns will be dealt with.
- Pupils are sociable and polite. They mostly listen to each other and adults attentively. When tasks are not planned well enough, a few pupils lose concentration and become disengaged.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy school. Leaders closely monitor pupils' attendance, ensuring that any dip in attendance is identified quickly and swiftly addressed with the families concerned. Attendance is currently above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over time, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics had declined from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6. In 2018, mathematics progress improved compared to that in 2017. Although writing progress slightly improved, it was still well below the national average. Inspection evidence shows that leaders have taken effective action to improve pupils' outcomes at key stages 1 and 2 and that current pupils are making good progress overall.
- Pupils' attainment in reading has been consistently above the national averages in both key stages 1 and 2 at the expected and the higher standards of attainment. Progress at key stage 2 is broadly in line with national expectations.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils that met the higher standard of attainment in the key stage 2 grammar test was above the national average. Pupils' work shows that they write for a range of different purposes and most apply grammar skills accurately.
- Pupils' outcomes in mathematics are improving. In 2018, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 was above average, and broadly in line at the greater-depth standard. In key stage 2, attainment was above average at the expected standard but below average at the greater-depth standard. Current assessment information indicates that more pupils are making good and better progress from their starting points and are therefore on track to reach the higher standards of attainment at the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils in key stages and 1 and 2 attain broadly in line with other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Current assessment information is showing that pupils in both key stages are at least meeting national expectations. In addition, the school's new approaches to the teaching of mathematics and writing are raising attainment further.
- Pupils make at least good progress across a range of subjects and in all years. Pupils' work in books and displayed in communal corridors and classrooms shows that they produce good work in subjects such as geography, science, history, art, and design and technology.
- In most teaching and learning, pupils are challenged to do the best they can and – in the main – pupils who struggle are well supported. However, not all teachers consistently consider what pupils can already do, preventing some pupils from making the progress of which they are capable and from reaching the higher standards of attainment.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years get a good start to their full-time education. The early years provision is well led and managed. Teachers are enthusiastic and passionate about their work and know the children very well. Adults find out as much as they can about the children before they start so that their social and emotional needs can be met immediately. Children make good progress in the early years. Most children leave with a good level of development which is sustained into Year 1.
- Children enter Reception with skills typical for their age. Most children enter Reception having attended one of several nurseries or preschools. Leaders work with these providers and visit children in their home to ensure a smooth transition. As a result,

children settle quickly and learn routines that build their confidence so that they are ready to learn.

- The early years classroom is well resourced and inspires children to want to learn. Careful thought is given to where resources are placed so that children learn quickly where to find things they may need. Children learn to 'choose it', 'use it' and 'put it away'. This encourages children's independence and builds confidence to explore new ideas, as well as to learn more about the things that interest them.
- Leaders promote reading from day one. All children are given a picture book on entry and are taught to read for 'fun or for information'. They learn to see themselves as readers before they can read. Phonics is taught well, with children exploring and learning new language through very effective modelling by adults.
- Teachers are skilful at using questioning to encourage children to think more deeply within their learning. During independent play, adults continually check and record children's progress. Adults interact with the children, asking questions and offering ideas that successfully help children to extend their thinking.
- There is careful thought given to the teaching of writing. Adults assess children's core skills, particularly their ability to grasp and grip equipment. Teachers encourage children to write whenever they see an appropriate opportunity. This has had a positive impact on engaging boys in their writing.
- The outside environment is exciting and busy. Children access a range of activities that help them develop skills and build on knowledge in many areas of learning. Children have an opportunity every week – through 'Welly Wednesday' – to go into the school's woodland area to explore and learn.
- Children play and learn well together. They are well looked after in a safe nurturing environment.
- Children are sociable, confident and enthusiastic learners. Many can form letters well and write simple sentences, with words spaces and letters on lines. They have a good understanding of number and shape, and leave Reception well prepared for the next key stage.

School details

Unique reference number	143807
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10085490

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	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jane Sheat
Headteacher	Paul Ryle
Telephone number	01379 783376
Website	www.mellis.suffolk.sch.uk/
Email address	office@mellisprimaryschool.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- In June 2017, the school became part of the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust.
- There is a local governing body.
- A very small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was initially scheduled as a one-day inspection following concerns about the school's performance. The inspection converted to a full inspection completed by the lead inspector and two additional team inspectors on the following day.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across all year groups.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, governors, senior leaders, school staff and the deputy chief executive of the MAT.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' written work, information on pupils' attainment and progress, curriculum planning and records of leaders' monitoring of subjects. The inspectors also looked at the minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documents – including mandatory checks made on the recruitment of new staff – and the school's website.
- Discussions were held with the school council, and informal conversations with pupils took place during lessons and breaktimes.
- The inspectors took account of 26 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View. An inspector also spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Daniel Gee	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nick Rudman	Ofsted Inspector

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