

Inspection of a good school: Melbourn Primary School

Mortlock Street, Melbourn, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 6DB

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 September 2021

Outcome

Melbourn Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school where individuals are valued. Pupils are supported to be the best they can be. They are caring, kind and respectful to each other. Pupils behave well. They understand that unkind behaviour and bullying are not tolerated. Pupils are clear that, should it happen, they would immediately tell a teacher as 'they cannot help you if they do not know'. Children in the Reception classes quickly learn the routines of the classroom, putting up their hands to speak and sharing resources.

In lessons, pupils want to do their best. Pupils enjoy learning, finding out things and running round the brand new track to complete their daily mile. They benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as taking part in the Cows About Cambridge art trail or being a mini medic on NHS Day.

This is a tight-knit community with many parents describing the school as 'lovely' and 'amazing'. Some parents commented via Parent View, the Ofsted survey, that they are not always clear about some of the decisions that leaders make.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have prioritised developing and improving the curriculum since the last inspection. For example, they checked that the mathematics curriculum builds pupils' mathematical knowledge step by step. There are many opportunities for pupils to revisit and practise important learning. Pupils are confident and enjoy using their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. Pupils recall their times-tables and number facts speedily. Staff have received additional training and support, so they are fully confident when teaching the mathematical curriculum in line with leaders' expectations.

The reading curriculum is well considered and designed. Leaders have a sharp focus on developing children's language in the Reception class so that children are ready to learn to read quickly. Staff ensure books are woven into all activities so that children gain a love of reading early. To illustrate, children in Reception excitedly compared the size and shape

of buttons when reading a book about buttons in their mathematics session. Older pupils also love reading. They are motivated to read widely and often.

Teachers ensure they teach phonics in a clear and well-organised way. Pupils who are in danger of falling behind are quickly supported. Teachers watch pupils carefully and make sure that pupils read books that suit their ability. Adults provide helpful catch-up sessions to pupils when extra support is needed. For example, staff teach pupils key vocabulary effectively before they read a text so that pupils can learn and remember more in lessons.

In most subjects, leaders have ensured that there is breadth and quality in what pupils learn. In subjects such as physical education (PE), pupils learn the techniques and skills of the sport before they compete in a team game. Pupils can take part successfully and improve their understanding of different sports. The PE curriculum includes well-chosen visiting speakers who inspire pupils to want to pursue the sport later in life. Similarly, pupils study artists and their art forms in depth. Pupils practise the techniques of artists they study and develop their own artistic talents and style. They enjoy seeing their completed artwork professionally mounted and displayed at the end of a series of lessons.

Leaders are improving the curriculum in other subjects. Leaders are currently reviewing geography and history plans so that the content is as well designed as in other subjects.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a strength. Staff identify children's needs early. Leaders work with pre-school settings and nurseries so that teachers have the information they need to support children when they join the school. Pupils who are in receipt of an education, health and care plan have specialist support which helps them to access the curriculum. Learning support assistants use sign language to enable pupils to participate in lessons. Pupils with lower levels of need are also supported well in lessons by well-trained teachers who make sure they can access the curriculum.

Leaders have chosen a therapeutic approach to help pupils maintain and improve their behaviour. Some parents who responded to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, commented that they are unsure of the success of this approach. However, leaders' evidence and records show that pupils are managing their behaviour choices, working through their problems and thinking positively. Teachers successfully manage pupils who have complex behavioural needs. Disruption to learning in lessons is infrequent.

Other parents commented that the reasons for leaders changing the structure of the school day were less clear. Most parents were positive and appreciate the work of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know their pupils well and are quick to pick up on any concerns. Leaders work effectively with appropriate agencies to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are kept safe. Staff have a good understanding of the latest government guidance in relation to

sexual behaviour in schools. Staff have been suitably trained. Staff understand the risks that pupils in the local community face.

Pupils feel safe and can easily recall their learning about how to stay safe when they are using online technologies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have designed the curriculum well in most subjects. However, they have not considered the content well enough in subjects such as geography and history. Pupils are not currently developing the knowledge and understanding they need. Leaders should ensure the quality of subject planning and delivery matches that of other well-established subjects.
- Leaders and governors do not clearly communicate some of the reasons for changes they make to the parents and carers. A small number of parents are unsure of the success of changes that are made. Leaders should consider improving the communication with all in their school community.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	110614
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10199669
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	386
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Chris Shadforth
Headteacher	Stephanie Wilcox
Website	www.melbournprimaryschool.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	8 and 9 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school finishes at 1.30pm on a Friday. Pupils can stay at school to go to Friday afternoon club. Other days in the week are longer with staggered finishes for different year groups.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has grown. As a result, some year groups are larger than others.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority, governors, leaders, staff and pupils about the school's provision. In particular, she asked pupils what it is like to be a pupil at this school.
- The inspector spoke with parents when they came to collect their children.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and how they conducted themselves around the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and PE to evaluate the quality of education at the school. She spoke to senior leaders and subject leaders about the curriculum. She also spoke to teachers and pupils. The inspector looked at pupils' work in those subjects. She also looked at the curriculum plans for other foundation subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector spoke with pupils about how they are taught about safety. She spoke with staff and leaders about safeguarding and looked at the school's policies, procedures and records.
- The inspector scrutinised key documents, such as school development plans, the headteacher's reports to governors, the school's admissions information and the school's website.
- The inspector gathered pupils' views when talking to them in groups.
- The inspector considered the 36 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- The inspector considered the 150 responses to Parent View and read the 101 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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