

# INSPECTION REPORT

**MEONSTOKE CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
SCHOOL**

Meonstoke, Southampton

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116301

Headteacher: Mrs Meryl Duckhouse

Reporting inspector: Mrs Gloria Hitchcock  
2535

Dates of inspection: 12th-13th June 2000

Inspection number: 186038  
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chapel Road Meonstoke Southampton
Postcode:	SO32 3NJ
Telephone number:	01489 877568
Fax number:	01489 877196
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Rowe
Date of previous inspection:	19 <sup>th</sup> September 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Meonstoke C of E School is a much smaller than average school for children aged four to eight. There are 58 pupils (30 boys and 28 girls) who are taught in three classes by two full time teachers (including the headteacher) and five part time teachers. The average class size is 19. Three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well below the national average. Ten pupils are on the register for special educational needs and there are no pupils with statements of special educational need, which is below average. No pupils are from families belonging to minority ethnic groups and none speak English as an additional language, which is also below average. Some pupils leave the school at the age of seven, while others stay on until the end of Year 3, when they are eight. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, but the majority are from socially advantaged homes; most pupils' levels of attainment when they start school are above those expected of four-year-olds generally.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school. It makes first class provision for its pupils who achieve high standards within a caring, friendly and lively atmosphere. The headteacher, staff and governors work together effectively to create a school which is a central part of the community, where all children are valued and given a wide range of opportunities for learning. The teaching is very good. The school has an average level of income and provides very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards are high, mainly due to the very good teaching.
- The school provides a rich and stimulating range of learning opportunities.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership, has a clear vision of what the school should be and together with governors and staff, creates an atmosphere where expectations of success are high.
- The excellent partnership between parents and the school makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievements.
- Relationships are very strong throughout the school and help to create pupils' excellent attitudes to learning.

#### **What could be improved**

- The wide range of information on pupils' progress, which already exists, should be used to set goals for pupils.
- Parents should be provided with more specific information about the standards their children have reached and what they should do next to move forward.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has been very successful in building upon the achievement described in the last inspection report in October 1995 and the leadership has taken decisive action on the key issues for improvement. As a result the positive atmosphere has been maintained, there are now good systems for checking the quality of teaching, which has led to an improvement in teaching. The school now meets all the requirements for the National Curriculum, pupils' knowledge of design and technology has improved, as has the provision of staff training. In addition the school has improved the standards pupils achieve, has built a new classroom very cost effectively with the active involvement of parents, and has extended links with the community further by collaborating in the setting up of a pre-school group in the school grounds. The school has set challenging targets for pupils' achievements in English and mathematics and is well placed to maintain and build on the present high standards.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	A	A	A*	A*
Writing	A*	A	A	A
Mathematics	C	A*	A*	A*

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

This table shows that standards in writing are well above average compared with all schools and with similar schools. In reading and mathematics standards are even higher and are in the top five per cent nationally. It also shows that they are in the top five per cent when compared with similar schools. Since the last inspection, when standards in most subjects were judged to be average, standards have risen significantly. The school sets challenging targets for the proportion of pupils reaching levels above those expected of seven-year-olds. Those pupils who stay at the school until they are eight continue to make good progress and reach high standards. Particular strengths are pupils' standards in speaking and listening; they speak confidently in small groups and to the whole school and listen carefully to teachers. The standard of work seen during the inspection was consistent with the school's national test results. Given that pupils start school achieving standards that are above average and leave with very high standards, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make very good progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. The pupils are highly motivated. They like school and are eager to contribute in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well both in class and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent and a strength of the school. Pupils take responsibility willingly as when older pupils take care of younger ones during lunch.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils are keen to come to school and there is no unauthorised absence.

From the time they start school pupils make very good progress in gaining confidence. They love learning and throughout the school politeness and consideration for others is the norm.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Teaching was at least good in 93 per cent of all lessons observed. In 67 per cent it was very good and in a further 13 per cent it was excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This high proportion of very good teaching has a direct impact on the standards pupils achieve. In particular teachers are successful in encouraging a sense of enquiry and eagerness to find out further information, which makes a major contribution to pupils' very good progress. The teamwork between teaching and support staff has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The school meets the needs of pupils very well; those with special educational needs are supported very effectively, so that all pupils reach at least the level expected of seven-year-olds in the national tests. Those who find learning easy are extended and challenged effectively, though teachers are rightly conscious of the need to continually find ways of keeping these pupils interested and enthusiastic about learning. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very effective and basic skills are taught well. Pupils make particularly good progress in reading, partly as a result of the teachers and parents working closely together, as in the 'shared reading' sessions where parents and other adults read with the pupils at the start of each day.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Highly relevant, rich and stimulating curriculum. The school places strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills, but ensures that there is a wide range of other opportunities for learning such as music, art and French.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers and classroom assistants work together effectively to provide relevant support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. Particular strengths are provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, which play an important part in the impressive progress pupils make in understanding their responsibilities as part of the whole school community. The importance of mutual respect between adults and children is a key feature of the school's provision.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare; all staff show concern for pupils who are taken care of well, within a happy 'family' atmosphere.

A particular strength is the very close partnership between parents and the school. There is a genuine welcome for parents, many of whom come into school every morning and slot very naturally into the work of the classroom at the start of the day, reading with their children. Pupils whose parents are not able to come are, as a matter of course, absorbed into groups with other adults or join other children and their parents. This excellent start sets the tone for pupils' easy transfer into the more formal work of the day and has a very strong impact on their attitudes to learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher has an extremely clear idea of what she wants the school to be and has high expectations of success. This sets the tone for the school and she is supported very effectively by the governing body and staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are highly committed and proud of the school. They bring a wide range of expertise which they use for the benefit of the school and perform their duties conscientiously and effectively. There is a very good working relationship between the headteacher and governing body, which has a positive influence on the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are very good procedures for identifying areas for improvement, which have already had an effect, as in the significant improvement in mathematics standards and in the quality of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The headteacher and governors are innovative in using the money available in this small school to best effect, such as employing part-time teachers to provide specialist teaching as well as normal classroom teaching. Despite staff illness this year, they have maintained a wide range of learning opportunities for pupils. The governing body successfully applies best value principles when purchasing goods or services and the school is resourceful in raising additional money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The way the school is led and managed.</li> <li>• Behaviour is very good.</li> <li>• Children like coming to school.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information about how their child is getting on.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. They also agree with parents' wish to have more detailed information about their children's progress. Teachers are always happy to discuss particular concerns with parents during the course of the year, but parents should have more specific information about the standards their children have reached and what they need to do next to move forward.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Standards are high, mainly due to the very good teaching.**

1. The pupils' performance in the 1999 National Curriculum tests was very high in reading and in mathematics. Results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally and, what is even more significant, in the top five per cent when compared with similar schools. In writing pupils' performance was not quite as high, but was still well above average compared with all schools and with similar schools. Teachers' assessments show that pupils also achieve very high standards in science. This positive picture is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were generally judged to be average, with scope for further improvement.
2. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress and achieve well during their time in school and it is possible to identify clear improvements in their achievements as they move from year to year. For example, pupils' progress in reading is often dramatic. One example is the way pupils in the reception class learn to read in a very short time, so that by the end of their first year they read simple stories with enjoyment and with skills above those expected for their age. Another example is where a pupil joining the school part way through the year moved from reading below the level expected for her age to a level 15 months above that expected for her age within nine months. Teachers take great care to match the work pupils do to their abilities and to provide additional challenge for the more able pupils. The school has good plans to ensure that this aspect is strengthened even further.
3. Part of the reason for the school's success in reading is the effective implementation of the literacy strategy, which has raised expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading, writing and spelling. However, the school has a tradition of strength in English and a major contribution to the high reading standards is the school's successful partnership with parents. The outstanding start to the day, where large numbers of parents come into school to do shared reading with their children has a significant impact on pupils' learning and enjoyment of reading. A further reason for the improvement in standards is the very good teaching pupils receive. Teachers are enthusiastic and generate a real sense of curiosity in pupils. This has a major impact on standards.
4. Another strength is the high quality of pupils' skills in speaking and listening. They listen carefully to teachers and speak very confidently both in class and in front of the whole school during assemblies. This confidence grows as they move through the school and is encouraged by the teachers' very good questioning, which challenges pupils to really think about their answers and to find out more through their own research. It is noticeable that pupils are not afraid to 'have a go' and risk wrong answers, and this is a result of the whole school emphasis on respect for each other. During one assembly three pupils took part in an impromptu dramatisation on the theme of 'Forgive us our trespasses' from the Lord's Prayer, with great confidence, while all the rest of the school listened courteously.
5. The numeracy strategy has been implemented effectively and pupils enjoy the new format of the lessons, with increased emphasis on number. They love trying to work out mental challenges, as when pupils in Year 2 were bursting to answer a series of quickfire questions such as the cost of 54 apples costing 2p; they instantly came up with the answer £1.08. There was a dramatic improvement in standards in mathematics two years ago, as a result of the headteacher's monitoring of teaching and analysing the results. Together with the introduction of the numeracy strategy, this had and continues to have a significant impact on standards.

6. Pupils' use of information technology in all subjects has been one of the school's targets for improvement and is being tackled successfully. Pupils respond well and use information and communication technology confidently to support their work generally. They achieve well and make very good progress, as when Year 1 pupils programmed a toy robot to respond to their commands.

**The school provides a rich and stimulating range of learning opportunities.**

7. The emphasis on teaching the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics does not detract from the school's determination to provide a rich diet of learning experiences for pupils. Consequently pupils also reach good standards in other areas; for example in geography Year 2 and 3 pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of how to use maps of the local area, loaded onto computers, to identify local landmarks, their own houses and routes through the local area.
8. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills in other areas such as French. In art they produce attractive clay models of sunflowers to illustrate their study of Van Gogh. Music is another strength, and pupils respond very well to the opportunities to develop their skills. One example of their keenness occurred when pupils in Years 2 and 3 were disappointed that inspectors had not observed their lesson. They had already lined up to leave the room when they seized the opportunity to provide an impromptu, high quality performance of a tango on their recorders.
9. Strong emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils' curiosity and love of learning and, as a result, staff consistently try to stimulate pupils' interest in extending their work in school by finding out more information for themselves. Teachers try to end lessons with a question, to encourage further speculation by the pupils, and this has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and the high standards they achieve.

**The headteacher provides very good leadership, has a clear vision of what the school should be and together with governors and staff, creates an atmosphere where expectations of success are high.**

10. The headteacher's strong sense of purpose and commitment to provide a high standard of education for the pupils are of crucial importance to the school's success. She has a clear view of what the school should be and has effectively created an atmosphere where staff, governors, pupils and parents all pull together for the good of the school. The high expectations of success in pupils' academic progress and personal development percolates throughout the school and are reinforced by all staff. This, in turn, is transmitted to pupils, who know that they are expected to do their very best at all times.
11. The strong and effective partnership between the headteacher and governing body contributes positively to the efficient management of the school. Together they make innovative decisions about how the money available to the school is spent, in order to create the best education for the pupils; for example the skills of part-time teachers are used to provide specialist teaching in art, French and music.
12. The school's role as a focal point in the community is taken very seriously and practical steps to ensure that this is strengthened are taken, as in the school's proactive approach to helping the local pre-school group build a new centre in the school grounds.
13. At the time of the last inspection, standards attained by the pupils were generally average and in design and technology were below average. Decisive and successful action was taken by the leadership to improve standards, whilst maintaining the positive atmosphere and excellent relationships in the school.

**The excellent partnership between parents and the school makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievements.**

14. The partnership between parents and the school is outstanding and reflects the school's position as a central part of the community. The start of the day provides a good example of the way in which this partnership works in practice. Parents come into school and spend time each day sharing reading books with their children. Pupils whose parents cannot come are absorbed easily into groups with other parents and children, or read with adult helpers. When it is time for registration, parents melt away and pupils start the formal business of the day smoothly.
15. This routine not only has a marked effect on pupils' progress in reading, it has a positive impact on their attitudes to learning and sets a good tone for the lessons which follow. Communications between parents and the school are very good. There is a genuine welcome for parents and their help is valued. One area which is a comparative weakness is the amount of specific information parents receive throughout the year about how their children are attaining and what they can do to move forward.
16. The partnership with parents extends to fund raising, for example there is an annual dance, attended by parents and past pupils, which raises funds for the school. One parent agreed to build the new classroom for the cost of the materials, which saved a considerable amount and members of the community raised funds to equip the classroom. There are many photographs of staff and parents labouring on the project, including digging and decorating, which has contributed to the feeling of ownership of the school.

**Relationships are very strong throughout the school and help to create pupils' excellent attitudes to learning.**

17. The effect of the very strong teamwork that operates between all teaching and support staff has a significant impact on the development of the pupils as confident, happy members of the school community. Strong relationships are apparent throughout the school. The headteacher, governors and staff create a climate where success is expected, but recognise that pupils are more likely to reach their full potential if they are happy and confident. This has a marked effect on pupils' excellent attitudes to learning; they are keen, eager to learn and anxious to demonstrate what they know.
18. The good examples set by adults make an important contribution towards the relationships between pupils, who are aware that teachers, classroom assistants, cleaning and administrative staff respect each other and enjoy working together. This has a positive effect on the way pupils treat each other and on their behaviour. During the inspection there were many examples of pupils supporting each other, as in the computer club, where older pupils were teaching some younger children how to program robot toys to travel a pre-determined route.
19. Pupils take responsibility willingly; a good example is the way older pupils look after younger pupils on their table at lunchtime and if the Year 3 pupil in charge of a particular table is away, Year 2 pupils take over the role automatically.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The wide range of information on pupils' progress, which already exists, should be used to set goals for pupils.**

20. Teachers know the pupils very well and assess their strengths and weaknesses carefully; for example there are detailed records of how far each child has progressed in reading. Teachers use their knowledge of how well pupils understand what they are learning to influence their planning for lessons and often change their plans in the middle of activities to take account of this.
21. However, the information is not used to set new goals for individual pupils and contributes only informally to the way the school sets its targets for how the school will achieve in the national tests.
22. The current arrangements do not help teachers to make their own detailed knowledge of pupils' achievements clear to pupils, and do not set goals towards which pupils can work.

**Parents should be provided with more specific information about the standards their children have reached and what they should do next to move forward.**

23. Parents do not receive enough specific information about the progress their children are making throughout the year and equally importantly, what they should do next to move forward.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

24. The school should now:
  - 1) Use the assessment information already gathered by teachers to
    - Set goals for individual pupils;
    - help the school to set its own targets for how each year group will perform.
  - 2) Provide parents with more specific information about:
    - The standards their children attain;
    - what their children need to do next to move forward.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
13	67	13	7	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	58
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	10

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	7	9	16

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	6	7
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	16	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (66)	94 (78)	100 (74)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	7	7
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	15	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (72)	100 (64)	100 (66)
	National	82 (80)	86 (85)	87 (85)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	58
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y3**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.9
Average class size	19.3

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y3**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998-1999
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	£
Total income	154,031
Total expenditure	160,185
Expenditure per pupil	2,715
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,140
Balance carried forward to next year	9,986

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	58
Number of questionnaires returned	45

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	22	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	44	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	80	18	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	47	13	0	4
The teaching is good.	76	20	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	42	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	18	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	18	7	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	58	33	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	84	11	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	27	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	67	24	4	0	4

NB: Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest integer, sum may not = 100%