

INSPECTION REPORT

MEON INFANT SCHOOL

Portsmouth

LEA area: Portsmouth

Unique reference number: 116189

Headteacher: Mrs Carole Taylor

Reporting inspector: Mrs Lorna Brackstone
21872

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 4th July 2000

Inspection number: 187707

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shelford Road Milton Portsmouth Hampshire
Postcode:	PO4 8NT
Telephone number:	02392 731082
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Appropriate authority:	The Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ken Ramsay
Date of previous inspection:	22 April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Meon Infant School is situated in Milton, a part of the City of Portsmouth. It serves the immediate area that is residential and includes both private and council housing. The school is smaller than other primary schools and has 168 pupils on roll, with approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is 14.2 per cent and this is broadly in line with the national average. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is 12.5 per cent and this is broadly in line with the national average. There are currently no pupils with statements of special educational needs. A high number of pupils come from single parent families. The children start school at the beginning of the school year in which they will be five and are accommodated in one of two classes per year group. Although the majority of children start school having had some pre-school experience, attainment on entry is generally below that expected for this age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Meon Infants is a very effective school, which provides excellent value for money. Pupils achieve high standards in National Curriculum tests and have very good attitudes towards their work; they are kind, courteous and very well behaved. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. The headteacher and senior management team provide excellent leadership. The school benefits from the excellent involvement of an astute and very well informed governing body. Good standards in pupils' achievement have been maintained since the last inspection.

What the school does well

- At age seven, pupils achieve above average standards in National Curriculum tests; the headteacher, teachers and governors are strongly committed to sustaining these high standards. Pupils are well prepared for National Curriculum tests.
- Pupils' behaviour is of a high standard and they have very positive attitudes to their work.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is very good; teachers, supported by parents and friends of the school, give generously of their time to provide a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- It takes very good care of its pupils' welfare and personal, social and academic development.
- Parents have a very high regard for the school. They are very pleased with the standards the school achieves; their financial and practical support is invaluable in helping the school achieve and sustain high standards.
- The headteacher is an excellent leader and very well supported by the governors and senior staff in developing and managing the school.

What could be improved

The school has no weaknesses.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1996 and very good improvement has been made since then. Both a new headteacher and deputy has been appointed since the last inspection and it is clearly evident that the school is very capable of improvement. The previous report highlighted the need for lessons to have greater pace. Staff carefully identified areas that were considered problematic and weaknesses in pace have been successfully overcome through the use of the literacy and numeracy strategy, clearly defined time allocations and concise coverage of learning objectives. The previous report also suggested that the assessment procedures used in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science should be extended to other areas of the curriculum and this has been achieved well. In response to the comments on monitoring in the previous inspection, a well-organised mentoring plan has been developed and both staff and governors have been trained on monitoring issues. A particular improvement since the last inspection has been the detailed analysis of data that has been

used in comparison to other schools in the Portsmouth area. Further improvement has been in the resourcing of both literacy and numeracy through government grants, greater budget allowances and generous funding from the parent support group.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the performance of the pupils in both reading and mathematics was above the national average and well above the national average in writing. In comparison to similar schools, the pupils' performance in both reading and mathematics was above average and well above average in writing. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, the performance of the pupils in reading was above the national average, in writing it was very high and in mathematics it was well above the national average. Standards of current and recent work seen during the inspection indicate that at the end of Key Stage 1, pupil's achievement in English, mathematics and science are good and the school's targets are both demanding and realistic. Pupils also achieve well in other curriculum areas with the quality and presentation of topic work clearly a strength of the school. Children under five achieve well and attain standards which are above the recommended areas of learning for this age group.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, pupils are keen to learn. They apply themselves to work set and work happily and constructively together.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, both in and out of classrooms.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils have mature attitudes. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Very good, pupils enjoy coming to school. Punctuality is very good.

The wide range of extra-curricular activities such as the music festivals and visits to places of interest, provide very good opportunities for pupils to further their personal development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
15 lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	N/A

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.

Throughout the school and across the curriculum, the quality of the teaching and learning is very good. This confirms parents' opinions, 64 per cent of whom in their response to the parental questionnaire said that teaching was good. Teaching challenges and inspires all groups of pupils, expecting the most of them. The school has very well adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and both literacy and numeracy are taught very well. The very good progress and high achievement of the pupils is the result of the very good teaching they receive. Of the 15 lessons seen during the inspection, 47 per cent were judged to be good, and 47 per cent very good. This is better than at the time of the last inspection. Parents feel that the pupils achieve very good standards because of both the care and enthusiasm of the teachers and the level of individual attention that their children receive.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of opportunities provided by the school for all its pupils is very good and all statutory requirements being met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. This aspect of the school's work is very well led by the special needs co-ordinator.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Staff provide very good role models. Very clear codes of behaviour and strong values mean that pupils develop a mature understanding of their moral and social responsibilities. The school provides very good opportunities for both spiritual development and for pupils to appreciate cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's procedures for child protection and ensuring the health and safety of its pupils are very good.

The curriculum is broad and relevant and caters well for the wide range in pupils' interest and abilities. The early years' curriculum ensures children under five have equal opportunity and access to early areas of learning. Visits to places of interest and extra-curricular activities, such as music festivals, provide practical experiences to extend the pupils' understanding of the wider world. Work designed especially for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make very good progress. Teachers know their pupils very well and the very high quality of support and guidance that is given enables them to achieve well. The school also works very closely with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership in the school is excellent. There is a strong feeling of involvement about the school, collective purpose and enthusiasm for success. This is excellently cultivated by the headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities excellently. They are very knowledgeable about the work of the school and carefully influence its direction. They have a real commitment to achieving the highest

	standards in National Curriculum tests.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent evaluation of National Curriculum tests and baseline assessment provides the school with precise information to set targets and group pupils. The school has a rigorous programme for monitoring teaching and this ensures sustained improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent use is made of all staff, of time, of material resources and of the accommodation both inside and out.

In evaluating its work, the school has a very clear picture of its performance in relation to other schools. It constantly challenges itself. The school draws parents into its work and consults them on such aspects of its work such as improving the play areas and improving behaviour in school. When using resources made available to it, the school seeks best value for 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"> • Their children like school. • The school expects their children to work hard. • They feel comfortable approaching the school. • The school is well led and managed. • The teaching is good. • Their children are making good progress. • The school works closely with them. • The school helps their children to become mature. • Behaviour is good. • They feel that the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wider range of extra-curricular activities provided.

The inspection team endorses all the positive comments but cannot justify the view that there are not sufficient extra-curricular activities. In fact, there are more opportunities for the pupils at Meon than are normally provided in infant schools of this size.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

At age seven, pupils achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and science.

1. Pupils achieve standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science that are above the national average. The children in the reception classes quickly develop an interest in books. They show delight in stories, recognise that print tells a story, anticipate what might happen next and know terms such as 'author, and illustrator'. Children willingly offer suggestions about the story and are encouraged to talk about books, being asked skilful questions by the teacher. In Year 1, pupils learn new vocabulary and identify words with similar patterns to support their spelling. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know how to use the contents, index and glossary in a book. They read with expression, accuracy and fluency.
2. Pupils make very good progress in writing. The children in the reception classes develop control of writing tools, taking care to form letters in the correct way. In Year 1, pupils begin to write familiar words such as 'have' and 'some' unaided. They write sentences that are mostly correctly punctuated with a capital letter and a full stop. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils write lengthy sentences and use more elaborate ways in which to join ideas; for example, they use words such as 'who' and 'which' and use an increasingly wider range of interesting words to interest the reader. Pupils have good opportunities to write for a range of purposes and audiences. They understand drafting and work is presented neatly. There is a wealth of writing in various forms, including creative stories, poems, detailed instructions, factual accounts and different types of letters. Good use is made of information technology to support this writing.
3. Children in the reception classes develop a good understanding of mathematics. Teachers provide a good range of mathematical activities, including the use of information technology, to reinforce and extend learning. In the reception classes, the children count up to numbers beyond 20 and count on in two's. Pupils in Year 1 know doubled numbers up to 20 and add three numbers together. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand place value. They add two digit numbers together to make a three-digit number. Pupils show a good mental agility and understand a range of mathematical terms. The teaching provides a good range of experiences for pupils, which reinforces and extends their understanding and confidence.
4. In science, pupils have a good understanding of practical and experimental work. In Year 1, for example, they know about different ways to group types of 'mini beasts', according to their properties. They describe their investigations using scientific language and record their work well. Pupils recognise ways of recording an experiment, such as stating what is to be found out, what will be needed, how to make a fair test and the conclusion. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils label diagrams, predict and evaluate their results. They understand well plant life, health and safety, forces and materials. The school's new environmental area is used well and has successfully enhanced both the teaching and learning of science within the school.

Pupils' behaviour is of a high standard and they have very positive attitudes to their work.

5. In classrooms, around the school and in the playground, the behaviour of pupils is very good. Pupils' show respect for each other and adults.

6. Pupils like coming to school. The vast majority of pupils arrive punctually for school and lessons start promptly. No time is wasted when pupils change classes for teaching groups which have been planned according to their particular needs.
7. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work and the school successfully encourages them to become confident, independent learners. It promotes self-discipline and respect, along with care for others. Teachers instil enthusiasm for learning by making lessons interesting and pupils' presentation of their work is of a good standard. The support given by parents at home contributes well to pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour.
8. Pupils respond enthusiastically to opportunities to show their initiative and work together; for example, during the inspection two boys in an assembly capably showed pictures on the overhead projector whilst the headteacher read a story.

Overall, the quality of teaching is very good.

9. During the inspection, all lessons were at least satisfactory or better with 47 per cent of lessons being very good, and 47 per cent of good quality. This overall very good quality of teaching has a significant impact on the quality of education provided. The school places a strong emphasis on ongoing improvement that includes the monitoring and evaluation of teaching. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of all subjects and their planning is of a very high standard. They identify precise learning objectives and adapt work carefully to meet the needs of all pupils. Lessons are stimulating, have a good pace and structure, and sustain pupils' interest. Teachers enjoy very good relationships with their pupils. Pupils' progress is closely monitored, using very effective assessment procedures. These features contribute strongly to the above average standards and progress achieved.
10. In one reception class, the teacher gave a well-structured introduction to a 'big book' during a literacy session. This contained a number of rhymes and was used to effectively reinforce words, which had been learnt during an earlier session; for example, pupils recalled words, such as 'hen' and 'Ben'. The lesson was clearly explained and developed, building carefully on what pupils had already learned. Similarly, in another reception class, the teacher's effective numeracy lesson about money enabled pupils to make rapid progress. Good use was made of time and pupils were managed well. Work was very well planned for all the varying levels of pupils' attainment.
11. Teachers encourage and praise pupils' good effort. The good relationships are often reflected in shared humour; for example, in a Year 1 science lesson, there was a great deal of delight shown when the pupils were dipping nets in the school pond to find different forms of life. In whole class reading sessions, pupils respond well to encouragement to read expressively. During the inspection, pupils responded well in an art lesson when they were encouraged to make collage pictures of snails.
12. Very good planning and use of assessment to guide planning and teaching is seen throughout the school. There are detailed schemes of work which show how skills are developed throughout the school. For example, reception class teachers ensure the youngest children make a good start to their learning. Their language and social skills are given high priority for development and children make good progress. Both teachers and support staff organise and guide children effectively; for example, whilst the teacher focuses on one group, other staff and volunteer parents help with computers, outdoor play and creative tasks.

13. Children's progress is carefully recorded and annual reports convey both educational and personal achievement. Parents feel that these are of high quality and are specific to the individual children. The school has devised detailed individual pupils' files, which show each stage of their progress throughout the school. Information is carefully collected and used to plan individual targets. Pupils' work is marked conscientiously and helpful comments show the pupils how they may improve.

The school takes very good care of its pupils' welfare and personal, social and academic development.

14. The level of care that Meon Infants School extends to its pupils is very good. It continually strives to create conditions in which pupils can achieve their potential. Their safety, welfare and security are paramount. All policies and procedures are clear and well known by everyone who needs to know and the school has ensured that more than adequate numbers of adults have the necessary skills to deal with emergencies or ensure children's safety.
15. There are very clear procedures to promote and monitor pupils' personal, social and academic development. Staff know both the children and their families well and use this information to ensure that everything is being done to help the individual child to do as well as he or she can. A close watch is kept on the registers to identify reasons of absence and parents are actively discouraged from taking holidays during times when standardised testing is taking place. Regular academic targets are set and recorded for each child to ensure that their progress is monitored. Parents are kept fully informed about every aspect of their children's development to ensure that nothing is missed and that everyone is working towards the same objectives.

Parents have a very high regard for the school. They are very pleased with the standards achieved; their financial and practical support is invaluable in helping the school sustain high standards.

16. In the questionnaires completed for the inspection and in their meetings with inspectors, parents expressed their satisfaction with the standards achieved in the school. Parents felt that their children had made good progress since joining the school. Parents are very interested in the school and support their children very successfully. The school's very thriving 'Friends Association' raises considerable amounts of money, which is used to improve the provision for the pupils. A high number of parents help in school on a regular basis. They hear pupils read and support in art, information technology and science lessons. Parents have also had a significant involvement in the project to improve and develop the playground.

The headteacher is an excellent leader and very well supported by the governors and senior staff in developing and managing the school.

17. The headteacher provides clear educational direction for the work of the school and is held in high esteem by parents. The over-riding characteristic of the excellent leadership is the teamwork. The different groups do not work separately on behalf of the school but in consultation with each other. For example, the governors support the school very well. Their wide range of skills and expertise is used very successfully to ensure that the school's resources are used to best effect.
18. The role of subject co-ordinators and members of staff who hold responsibilities for aspects of school life, such as special educational needs, play a genuine and significant

part in leading and managing the school. Amongst other things, they analyse National Curriculum tests results and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum.

19. Priorities for development are managed well and are carefully determined by the headteacher, staff and governors. They take very good account of the money available to effect successful developments. The budget is closely monitored, making good use of new technology.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The school has no weaknesses.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

20. Maintain and consolidate its current high standards across the curriculum.

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	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	47	47	6	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 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		168
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.9
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	27	37	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	26	25
	Girls	31	34	35
	Total	56	60	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (68)	94 (80)	94 (81)
	National	82 (80)	83 (80)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	25
	Girls	32	33	32
	Total	56	58	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (70)	91 (78)	89 (78)
	National	82 (80)	86 (84)	87 (85)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	166
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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 – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28 : 1
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	118

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	[]
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	[]

Total number of education support staff	[]
Total aggregate hours worked per week	[]

Number of pupils per FTE adult	[]
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	408 403
Total expenditure	413 888
Expenditure per pupil	2449
Balance brought forward from previous year	31 981
Balance carried forward to next year	26 576

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	168
Number of questionnaires returned	68

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	35	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	34	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	41	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	49	9	0	6
The teaching is good.	76	21	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	49	4	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	12	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	24	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	59	38	1	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	76	22	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	29	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	32	12	9	26