



Melbourn Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110614
Local Authority CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Inspection number 288721
Inspection date 9 November 2006
Reporting inspector Tricia Pritchard HMI

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

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Mortlock Street |
| School category | Community | | Melbourn, Royston |
| Age range of pupils | 4-11 | | Hertfordshire SG8 6DB |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01763 223 457 |
| Number on roll (school) | 298 | Fax number | 01763 223 458 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mr N Greenaway |
| | | Headteacher | Mr J M W Dunlop |
| Date of previous school inspection | 28 October 2002 | | |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Age group 4-11 | Inspection date 9 November 2006 | Inspection number 288721 |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Description of the school

Melbourn Primary School is a popular community school serving the village of Melbourn. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above the national average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and with English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Melbourn Primary School is an outstanding school. There are significant elements which are exemplary. It promotes and achieves high standards in English, mathematics and science, particularly in Key Stage 2. Children in the Foundation Stage children enter school with weak language skills but make good progress in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. As a result of the good teaching in Years 1 and 2 and the focus on improving literacy skills, pupils make very good progress in writing by the end of Year 2.

A significant strength is the progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 in relation to their starting points and in comparison with progress made by pupils attending schools in similar contexts. Throughout the school, middle and lower attaining pupils do exceptionally well, as a result of well targeted and consistently good teaching. The progress made by higher attaining pupils is good but not so consistent. Tasks and activities are not always sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils, particularly in humanities work. There are also gender differences in the performance of higher attaining pupils. Boys do better in mathematics and girls do better in English. The school is addressing this discrepancy well through teaching pupils in groups of similar ability for English and mathematics and by providing literature which appeals more to boys' interests.

Pupils enjoy school and enjoy learning. They have access to a well balanced curriculum and their interests are well catered for. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to support teaching in Key Stage 2 and plans are in hand to extend this provision to younger pupils. The curriculum is enhanced significantly by a wide range of extra-curricular activities which promote pupils' personal development and well-being, and contribute to a strong sense of teamwork amongst staff and pupils. Pupils are well supported pastorally and academically. Melbourn Primary School is highly successful in its aim to be an inclusive school.

The school is very well led and managed. The leadership team has an excellent knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. There are clear links between self-evaluation, improvement planning and raising standards. The school has the capacity to improve further. It provides very good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan tasks and activities which meet the needs of higher attaining pupils and boost the progress and attainment of higher attaining boys.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Although pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average, their language skills are not so well developed as their mathematical skills. By the end of the Reception year they

have made good progress in developing their communication and literacy skills and are well prepared to enter Year 1.

In 2005, the school was placed in the top five percent of schools nationally for the progress made by Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science. This momentum was maintained in 2006 when Year 6 pupils made outstanding progress in relation to their starting points. Middle and lower attaining pupils make particularly good progress. By the end of Year 2, they attain scores for reading and mathematics which are above the national averages, and for writing which are well above the national average. Similarly, by the end of Year 6, lower and middle attaining pupils consistently make very good progress in English, mathematics and science. They make the fastest rate of progress in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs do well throughout the school.

The progress made by higher attaining pupils is good in comparison with pupils in other schools but is not so consistent. Gender differences in performance are most marked between higher attaining pupils. Higher attaining girls do better in English than boys at the end of both key stages. In Year 6, higher attaining boys do better in mathematics than girls.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are high throughout the school. In mathematics, they are consistently high. In science, there has been a steady rise in standards during the last three years. Standards fluctuate more in English from year to year but are always at least above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are highly motivated and enjoy school. They respond well to the merit award scheme and are keen to succeed. Attendance is average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The pupils' social skills are well developed from an early age and they are respectful of adults and of each other. Their behaviour is very good both in the classroom and in the playground. Increasingly, pupils are becoming aware of the importance of eating healthily. For example, they enjoy eating fruit at break times and members of the gardening club are developing a good understanding of how to grow healthy, organic food. Pupils are very keen to take part in physical exercise and this is reflected in the high levels of attendance at after school sports clubs, particularly the running club. Their cultural development is good as a result of the opportunities they have to participate in musical, dramatic and artistic activities both within and outside of the school day. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their contribution to community events and particularly about their charity work. They possess a keen sense of justice and are developing a good awareness of the importance of financial planning.

School Council members take their responsibilities seriously. The older members are good at suggesting improvements to the playground. Younger members, too, are developing their confidence to represent the views of their peers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. It is consistently very good in Key Stage 2 and especially in Years 5 and 6. Teachers plan lessons which are interesting and engage the pupils. Their subject knowledge is very good and they target questions to ensure that all pupils contribute. In Key Stage 2, teachers are confident using ICT to support their teaching. However, pupils do not have enough opportunity to use ICT in their own work. In Key Stage 1, the use of ICT to support teaching and learning is underdeveloped owing to a lack of resources at present.

Planning is linked closely to the National Curriculum programmes of study. Tasks and activities are matched well to middle and lower attaining pupils but they do not always stretch the higher attaining pupils. This is especially evident in humanities work where worksheets in some classes do not challenge pupils enough.

Pupils' overall progress and performance in English, mathematics and science is tracked systematically from year to year. Challenging targets are set, which most pupils achieve by the end of Year 6. Teachers diagnose accurately the needs of pupils with additional learning requirements and they meet these pupils' needs well. Teaching assistants are well deployed, especially in group work. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in supporting their children's learning. Teachers set appropriate homework.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well organised. There is a good balance between time spent on teaching English, mathematics and science and on other subjects. With the exception of limited provision of ICT resources at Key Stage 1, the curriculum is well resourced. Classrooms are bright and welcoming and reflect the broad nature of the curriculum although in some classrooms and in the library, books are not well displayed to enable easy access.

Teachers use assessment information effectively to plan a curriculum to meet the needs of groups of pupils. For example, intervention programmes for lower attaining pupils in English and mathematics are well planned. There is a reading recovery programme for Foundation Stage pupils. The setting of pupils by ability for English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 works well and pupils benefit. For example, boys' interests in non-fiction are being targeted effectively in one of the literacy sets in order to boost their performance.

The curriculum is enhanced significantly by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. It reflects the school's strong commitment to encouraging pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Personal, social and health education assume a high profile.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There is a strong ethos of a caring community throughout the school. Relationships are very good. Pupils are well supported pastorally and academically by teachers and teaching assistants. Consequently, pupils feel secure in answering questions and in learning from their mistakes. Pupils with additional learning needs are exceptionally well supported. There are strong links with outside agencies to promote their well being and ensure that their needs are met fully. Transition arrangements are very well managed when pupils join the school, change classes and move to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school is led and managed very well. The headteacher and senior management team provide a clear sense of direction and they are very ably supported by the governing body. There is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school. All teachers are subject leaders and carry out their duties effectively. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored regularly and teachers receive open and honest feedback. The coordination of special educational needs is excellent. The school is highly successful in being an inclusive school.

The school improvement planning process is well developed and all staff contribute. An exemplary feature is the senior management team's knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and their rigorous analysis of pupils' progress and performance from year to year. This results in well focused action plans which identify the right priorities. For example, staff development has been targeted appropriately at literacy since the last inspection. The school is well aware of the need to improve ICT resources and to boost the performance of higher attaining boys. There are clear links between financial planning, the deployment of resources and the raising of standards.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 1 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 1 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 1 |

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Melbourn Primary School, Mortlock Street, Melbourn, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 6DB

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school for the day on November 9. I enjoyed talking to you all. Your school is outstanding and your teachers plan interesting lessons. It was good to see you enjoying your lessons and wanting to learn. Well done! Your interest in learning is helping you to make very good progress and helping you to achieve high standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science. I was very pleased to see how well you write. I also looked closely at how well boys and girls were doing and noted that girls tend to do better in English and boys tend to do better in mathematics, particularly at the end of Year 6. Your teachers are aware of this too. I want to encourage the boys especially to read more as reading helps to improve writing skills. You have books in your classroom and the library although in some areas they need displaying better so that you can select more easily an appropriate text. Key Stage 2 teachers use interactive whiteboards very effectively to support their teaching and I know there are plans for these to be made available for Key Stage 1 teachers and pupils.

Your behaviour in lessons and in the playground is very good. You take good care of one another. You are learning a lot about how to eat healthily and I was pleased to see so many of you enjoying your fruit at break time. You are very well supported by teaching staff and teaching assistants. Your school council representatives, too, are good at suggesting ideas for improvements to the playground.

During the day, I had a long conversation with Mr Dunlop, Mr Casey and Mrs Leadbeter who form the senior management team. I was impressed about how well they knew the strengths and areas for development of the school and how they work together to ensure that your well-being is promoted and that high standards are maintained and improved.

Good luck for the future and enjoy the rest of term!

Best wishes

Tricia Pritchard

(Her Majesty's Inspector)