



Mendlesham Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124599
Local Authority SUFFOLK
Inspection number 293048
Inspection dates 18–19 January 2007
Reporting inspector Derek Watts

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Old Station Road
School category	Community		Mendlesham, Mendlesham
Age range of pupils	4–9		Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 5RT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01449 766224
Number on roll (school)	81	Fax number	
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr R Fenning
		Headteacher	Mrs H Franklin
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003		

Age group 4–9	Inspection dates 18–19 January 2007	Inspection number 293048
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Mendlesham is a smaller than average primary school providing education for pupils from the age four to nine. Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and those eligible for free school meals are below average. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is broadly in line with national expectations.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Mendlesham is a good school providing a good quality of education for all its pupils. Pupils achieve well and they make good progress in their personal development. The school is well led and managed. Parents hold positive views about the school and give it good support. They make favourable comments about approachability and the positive climate. A typical parental comment was, 'There is always a very pleasant atmosphere here and all staff are always willing to help.'

Good care, guidance and support contribute significantly to pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils thrive in the school's positive ethos. They thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected by their good attendance and their enthusiastic participation in activities. Behaviour in the school is often outstanding due to clear expectations by staff and very good relationships. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and safe practices. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and make positive contributions to the school community. Their good progress in literacy, along with their well developed social skills, prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Pupils make good progress due to effective teaching and an interesting curriculum. Clear explanations and instructions promote learning well. Children in Reception get off to a good start and make good gains in all areas of learning. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 but there is variation in attainment and progress between subjects. Pupils make better progress in reading and writing than they do in mathematics. In mathematics, not enough pupils attain the higher Level 3. Tasks in mathematics are not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs, particularly the higher attainers. In Year 4, standards are well above average in writing, and above average in reading, mathematics and science.

The headteacher provides enthusiasm and clear educational direction. The curriculum has been revised effectively with more emphasis on independent study and links between subjects. A new library and updated information and communication technology (ICT) provision have successfully enhanced pupils' learning and enjoyment. Leadership responsibilities are shared effectively in this small school. The role of subject leaders is developing well. Successful action has been taken to raise achievement in reading after standards declined to average levels. There are appropriate improvement plans to raise achievement in mathematics. However, indicators to check the success of the plans are not sufficiently precise or measurable.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in mathematics at least in line with those of reading and writing by matching tasks to pupils' needs.
- Devise precise indicators for the mathematics improvement plan in order to measure its success.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good but there are variations between subject areas in Years 1 and 2. Children in Reception make good progress in all areas of learning. In Year 2, standards have been consistently well above average in writing. This is because pupils have plenty of opportunities to write for different purposes. Standards in reading declined in 2004 and 2005, but the school has taken effective action to address this and standards have risen to above average. In mathematics, standards in Year 2 have been average during the past two years and not enough pupils are attaining the higher Level 3. The school has recognised that pupils do less well in mathematics and is taking action to tackle this. Standards in Year 4 are above average overall. Across the school, pupils who have learning difficulties make good progress because of the good support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In assemblies, pupils are attentive, participate well and reflect on important issues such as listening to others. Pupils are friendly, considerate and relate very well to adults and their peers. They thoroughly enjoy school and this is demonstrated by their enthusiastic participation in activities. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. They take regular exercise and show a good knowledge of healthy diets. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and have made good suggestions to improve playground facilities. Junior road safety officers promote care and safety on the roads. Pupils make positive contributions to the local community by singing carols in the local church and planting trees in the local Millennium Wood. Good progress in literacy skills and well developed social skills prepare pupils well for their future economic well-being. ICT skills are used well but the application of numeracy skills is only satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Effective teaching and learning contribute to pupils' good achievement. Teachers share learning intentions with the class so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Clear explanations, demonstrations and effective questioning promote learning well. Interactive whiteboards are used well by teachers and pupils to illustrate key learning points. Assessment is usually used effectively to match tasks to pupils' different abilities and needs. As a result, pupils are suitably challenged, interested, and make good progress. Teachers deploy teaching assistants well so they provide good quality support to those who need it. Despite the many strengths in the teaching, occasionally, the pace of learning slows because of overlong introductions to lessons or tasks not being sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs, particularly in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum contributes effectively to pupils' good overall progress and to their good personal development. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of basic skills of reading and writing. However, the mathematics curriculum has been less effective in promoting good achievement but the school is improving this. There have been good improvements to ICT provision and this is being used well to support teaching and learning in a range of subjects. The introduction of project work is successfully developing pupils' skills of independent study. Pupils speak with pride and interest about their Victorian Project. Weaknesses in the religious education programme identified at the last inspection have been remedied. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and clubs. Popular clubs include computers, drama and hockey. The development of important skills such as healthy lifestyle and personal safety receive good attention. Productions such as 'Victorian Christmas' successfully encourage pupils' participation and develop their confidence. These are much appreciated by parents and the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are effective procedures to ensure that pupils are cared for, and are safe and secure at school. Staff know the pupils very well. Parents are particularly pleased with the level of care and support. They commented, 'The teachers are always very approachable and make you feel welcome', and 'Teachers are very helpful and caring to pupils and parents'. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support. Positive partnerships with other agencies, such as the educational psychologist and school nurse, enhance this provision. Effective programmes for pupils with specific needs are devised and enable these pupils to make good progress. The school has developed effective systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress. This information is usually used well to plan the next stage of pupils' learning. Where this is not the case, pupil progress is hindered. The marking of pupils' work is effective. It recognises and praises what they do well and provides clear guidance to help them improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are effectively promoting pupils' achievement and their personal development. Teamwork is strong and the headteacher and staff have created a welcoming and positive atmosphere where all pupils are valued. A positive partnership with parents has been established.

The headteacher provides good leadership and direction. This has led to improvements to the accommodation, to the curriculum, in reading standards and ICT provision. The role of subject leaders is being extended so that they are more involved in measuring

the quality and overseeing the development of their subjects. School self-evaluation is effective and the school has a clear overview of its performance. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively. The need to raise achievement in mathematics is recognised and suitable action plans are being implemented. However, planning does not always have clear criteria to measure its success. For example, the mathematics plan does not specify how much progress pupils are expected to make or what proportion of pupils might attain the higher levels.

Governance is good. The governors are committed and supportive. They make a positive contribution to the life of the school. For example, a high quality assembly was led by a governor which was engaging and conveyed important messages to the pupils. Recent improvements in reading and ICT demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

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

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

20 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Mendlesham Primary School, Old Station Road, Mendlesham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 5RT

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I enjoyed my visit and would like to tell you what I found out. Mendlesham is a good school and one you can be proud of.

These things are strengths of the school:

- You clearly enjoy school and this is shown by your enthusiasm when taking part in activities.
- Children in Reception get off to a good start.
- Teaching is good, which is why you learn so much.
- You are making good progress, particularly in reading and writing.
- Your behaviour in lessons is outstanding.
- The staff know you well and you receive good care and support from them.
- You get on very well with others.
- The school is well run by the headteacher.
- Your parents are pleased with the school.

These are a few things the school has been asked to improve:

- Some of you could make more progress in mathematics and your teachers are working hard to make this happen.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors should check really closely the improvements that you make in mathematics.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the best for the future.

With kind regards

Derek Watts

Lead inspector