

Meath Green Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125083
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	293189
Inspection date	15 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Lister
Headteacher	Mrs S Jones
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2003
School address	Kiln Lane Meath Green Horley RH6 8JG
Telephone number	01293 772708
Fax number	01293 822358

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- Children's academic and personal achievement.
- The accuracy of leaders' self-evaluation of the school.
- The progress being made by pupils in writing.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report. Evidence was gained from lessons and the school's own evaluations of its work. Discussions were held with staff and pupils and a range of documentation was evaluated. Pupils' work was scrutinised, especially in their writing. The views of parents were gathered from questionnaires.

Description of the school

Meath Green is an average sized and highly over subscribed school. The school serves a mixed community that includes generally little social deprivation. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds, although a few come from Black African, Asian and other White heritages. The school has an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. The school has gained the Healthy School Award, Investors in People and, the Quality Mark for standards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Meath Green Infant School is an outstanding school, where pupils are happy and thrive academically and socially. Pupils are seen as individuals and benefit from exceptionally strong care, guidance and support. Very high quality teaching and learning help pupils to reach exceptional skills. Parents and the inspector agree that pupils are very well prepared for their future lives and almost all achieve exceptionally well. Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that staff are kind to them and they have plenty of friends. 'The school is my children's second home' noted one parent. The school deserves its high reputation in the local community and almost all parents confirm that the school provides an excellent education. The only aspect where a few parents were unhappy linked to not having enough information about the organisation and provision in mixed aged. Leaders recognised this and this was addressed through a series of meetings with parents, as a group and individually.

At the core of this successful school is an impressive leadership team and very professional staff. All staff and governors share the same vision; for pupils to do as well as possible whatever their ability or background. The headteacher drives the work of the school exceptionally well. The inspector agrees with parents when one commented that she is, 'First class'. At the centre of her work lie the children for whom she has endless time. She has superb vision, high expectations and commitment to helping staff to develop. For example, staff have been involved in several research projects and they work very closely with the Horley Confederation of schools in their drive to share best practice and develop their skills. The headteacher will be retiring in the summer of 2008. The school has a good capacity to improve rather than outstanding as there will be a period of transition and settling down as a new headteacher takes over.

The school's evaluation of its work, as conducted by all leaders including governors, is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is checked thoroughly. Staff and governors know exactly how well pupils are doing. Teachers give pupils excellent targets for their individual improvement. Pupils' targets are written in such a way as to make it easy for young children to read and understand. Teachers regularly check that pupils are working on their targets, which aids speedy progress.

The school has maintained outstandingly high standards since 2005. From pupils' broadly average starting point, their progress is exceptional in reading, writing and mathematics. In particular, a very high proportion of pupils gain the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics. Pupils do especially well in reading because of very good teaching of phonics, regular assessments and, plenty of opportunities for them to discuss books. The recent 'Dads and Lads' event is a super initiative, which is enhancing boys' enjoyment of reading with their fathers. In mathematics, the rigorous focus on basic calculation skills and plenty of thinking, talking and problem solving aids attainment. Since 2004, the proportion gaining a Level 3 in writing has doubled but pupils' performance is not as exceptional at this level as is evident in reading and mathematics. New projects, such as 'Big Write', are helping to raise standards still further. Leaders have set very challenging end of year targets for improvement in reading and mathematics but the target for writing, although good, is not as ambitious. This is why target setting is good rather than outstanding.

The attainment of pupils with learning difficulties is also exceptionally good. These pupils mostly have specific learning difficulties or speech and communication difficulties. As one

parent commented, 'Very supportive staff, giving the help that is needed'. This enables their child to make outstanding progress.

The combination of ability group teaching, excellent focus on basic skills and superb relationships helps pupils to learn quickly. Lessons are well planned and pupils are encouraged to think and explain their ideas well. The work by skilled teaching assistants aids pupils' learning. Pupils develop confidence and self esteem. As one pupil said, 'Teachers sometimes ask really hard questions but it doesn't matter if you get it wrong-you just have to try'. Learning is supported by a variety of interesting activities, visits and extra clubs. Pupils' enjoyment is good but not yet outstanding. This is because although the curriculum is good, it is not as lively and exciting as it could be. Leaders have started to introduce more drama and role play to help with this and pupils say that they would like more. They commented that this helps them with their writing and inspectors agree. For example, it helps to enliven pupils' vocabulary and descriptions of characters, moods and settings in stories and poetry. As one teacher put it, 'Technically, the teaching and learning is very good but we need to look harder still at bringing out the sparkle'. Links with parents and the community enrich learning and the curriculum very well.

Pupils show respect for others. They follow rules well and almost all pupils behave outstandingly well. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through singing at local residential homes and by participating in local competitions and through fund raising for charities. Their awareness of different religions and beliefs is developing suitably for the age of the pupils. Leaders are correctly working to help pupils to appreciate that Britain is a very multicultural society. Pupils develop an excellent awareness of how to be fit and healthy through such initiatives as 'Whole School Health Days' visits to the 'Life Education Bus' and by taking regular exercise.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children join the school, their skills are broadly in line with what is usually expected. Children make good overall progress. Many reach high levels in their skills and knowledge by the time they are ready to join Year 1. Children quickly learn to work collaboratively, talk about their learning, follow the school rules and show their initiative. There is a good balance between direct teaching, independent activities and learning through play. This ensures that children enjoy school and achieve well. Leaders are correctly working to enliven learning to aid further enjoyment and develop greater creativity. Parents are happy with links with home, as one parent put it, 'I am impressed by the communication about the curriculum being taught and teaching methods...it helps parents to support their children effectively at home'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more creativity and fun activities to enliven the curriculum and learning, especially in writing.

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Annex A

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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

25 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Meath Green Infant School, Horley, RH6 8JG

You may remember that a school inspector came to your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly. I am writing to let you know what I found out.

Your school is outstanding, which means that it does many things fantastically. There is not much to be done to improve your school. This is because all of the adults are working amazingly well to make the school special for you. In return, you work hard and behave very well.

Congratulations for this. Your teachers make sure that you learn new things quickly. You clearly enjoy coming to school. I especially enjoyed talking to you and seeing your writing work. I agree with you that it would be fun to do even more drama and role-play. I also agree with you that this helps you with your writing. The teachers were very interested to hear this, as they are all busy working to plan more of this. I agree that the adults are caring and help you to do well. You do very well in all of your subjects and this means that you learn important skills for the future. Your teachers make sure that you are doing much better than many other children in other schools, so remember to say thank you to them for this. Your mums and dads also like the school. I was thrilled to hear about the 'Dads and Lads' reading activities. All of you do especially well in reading and mathematics. Well done for trying so hard to be healthy and working so hard on your targets.

I have asked your headteacher and all of the adults to:

- make activities even more fun for you all, especially so that you can get more exciting ideas for your writing.

Keep up the excellent work and well done!

Yours faithfully

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector