

Medmerry Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125926
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	293399
Inspection dates	19–20 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Janet Sinclair

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Ault
Headteacher	George Bell
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2002
School address	High Street Selsey Chichester PO20 0QJ
Telephone number	01243 602738
Fax number	01243 605274

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Medmerry is an average-sized primary school. It serves families from a wide range of backgrounds. Some families face particular economic and social challenges. The majority of pupils are White British, with a few from other minority ethnic groups. There is an above-average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. When children start school, their skill and ability levels are below those expected for four-year-olds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Medmerry is a satisfactory school. It has a strong caring ethos, and pupils' pastoral care and personal development are given a high priority. Parents are pleased with the good level of care their children receive. As one parent said, 'The school encourages responsibility and caring behaviour between children of all ages'.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress across the areas of learning to achieve the levels expected on entry to Year 1.

Across the school, pupils mainly make satisfactory progress to reach broadly average standards. The main weakness is the achievement of the more able in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage, which ensures these children achieve well. In all classes, lessons are well planned and organised; there are good relationships and effective teaching assistants. As a result, pupils behave well and are keen to learn. However, work is not always matched well enough to pupils' needs, particularly those of the more able, who do not make the progress of which they are capable. Teachers' marking, although supportive, does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve. The school is aware of these issues and is beginning to tackle them.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school, have good attitudes to work and behave well. Pupils are clear about how to stay fit and healthy and through the school council have their say in purchases to improve their play. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is mainly planned well to ensure continuity in pupils' learning and is satisfactorily enriched with visits, visitors and after-school clubs. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. There are good procedures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils. As a result, pupils feel confident of adult support if they have any worries. They find the school's inclusion assistant particularly helpful in this context. Pupils are pleased that they help other children through their roles as peer mediators. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. Pupils' progress is tracked termly, group targets are set and support is given where needed to ensure pupils make sound progress, but individual pupils are not always aware of their particular points for improvement. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has created a good team ethos and a caring school, but is aware of the need to improve teaching and pupil achievement further. Although the revised management team is fairly new, they are also fully committed to improving provision. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and there is a sound capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning in order to accelerate pupils' rate of progress.
- Improve the level of challenge for more-able pupils, in Years 3 to 6 in particular, by ensuring a better match of work and higher expectations.
- Ensure pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve by improving marking and target setting.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and by the time that pupils leave in Year 6, standards are usually broadly average. Some variations in standards from year to year reflect the make-up of particular cohorts. Pupils are developing satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills to equip them for the future.

Children start school with skills that are below the levels expected for their age and make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage to reach broadly average levels by the end of the year. Pupils make steady progress in Years 1 and 2 and, by the end of Year 2, standards are usually broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards were below average in 2006 because of the high proportion of lower-ability pupils.

Pupils continue to achieve satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6 to reach broadly average standards. In national tests in 2006, standards were above average and exceptionally high in mathematics. This is because pupils had made satisfactory progress from above-average performance in their Year 2 tests. The school exceeded its targets in 2006 and is working hard to ensure it meets its targets for current Year 6 pupils. However, this year there are fewer pupils than expected working at the higher levels, particularly in science. This is because there is not enough attention given to pupils finding out for themselves or extending their knowledge through investigative work. Work is not always sufficiently challenging for more-able pupils. The school identified some pockets of underachievement in Years 3 to 6 and has moved swiftly to address this through clear target setting and regular monitoring.

Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory and sometimes good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, are confident, friendly and caring towards each other. Relationships between adults and pupils are good and pupils work together amicably. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their work, and this helps their learning and enjoyment. They say they enjoy coming to school and feel happy and safe. They do not see bullying as a problem and feel that any incidents are dealt with promptly by the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils reflect on what they are good at. They develop their moral awareness through, for example, making class rules. Their good social awareness and contribution to the community are demonstrated by their support for charities, their involvement with senior citizens and their help with the community 'tidy up'. Their awareness of art is raised by displays like the featured 'artist of the week', but they have less understanding of Britain as a multicultural society. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and enjoy selling fruit at break-times and the weekly 'Fruity Friday' competition.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage, where staff provide a caring and purposeful learning environment in which children feel secure and well motivated to learn.

Across the school, teachers plan and organise lessons well and are caring and supportive of their pupils. As a result, pupils are well behaved and keen to learn. However, the good opportunities for independent learning started in the Foundation Stage are not continued well across the school. Work in Years 1 to 6 is mainly directed by teachers, with insufficient opportunities for pupils to ask questions or discuss work in order to clarify their ideas or extend their thinking. Teachers try to match work to pupils' needs, but are not always successful. This particularly affects higher-attaining, pupils who are not always challenged enough. Learning support assistants make a good contribution to the teaching through the help they give to small groups and individuals. Marking, although encouraging, does not tell pupils what they need to do to improve. The school recognises this and has recently introduced a list of criteria for pupils to assess how well they are doing in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactorily planned to ensure coverage and continuity in pupils' learning. The Foundation Stage curriculum covers all areas of learning, is well matched to children's learning needs and provides a good balance between child-chosen and teacher-directed activities. In Years 1 to 6 there is a sound emphasis on planning for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Work is not always challenging enough for more-able pupils, especially in science. There is sound provision overall for pupils with learning difficulties, and good small-group support from learning support assistants. Pupils' personal development is promoted well through good attention to health and safety, for example, 'Walk to School' week, and discussions about how smoking affects health. Visits, visitors and after-school clubs enhance the curriculum and add to pupils' enjoyment. They particularly enjoy the residential visit to Bristol, taking part in sporting tournaments, and visitors such as the Egyptologist.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The commitment of staff and good relationships ensure good personal care. Teachers and assistants provide good support to pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Identifying children who have pastoral needs, and ensuring that they are supported by the inclusion learning support assistant, makes sure all are valued and cared for. Procedures to ensure child safety are organised effectively. Academic guidance is satisfactory and developing. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is clearly tracked and targets are set for groups of pupils and regularly reviewed. Precise individual targets, and constructive marking to help pupils achieve them, are not used consistently. In other subjects, the assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills, and the use of this information to help improve achievement, are being developed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and two senior staff who make up the management of the school are working hard to eradicate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning and to improve pupil achievement, but there is still some way to go. They complement each other well, with skills in data analysis, curricular development and assessment systems. Effective self-evaluation ensures they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and aspects requiring improvement, but monitoring of the progress of key initiatives is not sufficiently rigorous. Improved systems to monitor pupils' progress during the year, especially in English and mathematics, are being developed. Governors carry out their role satisfactorily, but they are not involved sufficiently in challenging the school or establishing systems to monitor progress towards priorities, such as improving science. Use of resources, including finance, teachers and support staff, ensures that the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and were very grateful for all the help you gave us with the inspection.

We found your school to be satisfactory. The care, guidance and support you get are satisfactory overall. We particularly like the fact that you are well cared for by everyone in the school and we know that you take your roles as peer mediators seriously. We could see that you enjoy school and are given a lot of help by your teachers and support assistants. The way you are taught and the school's curriculum give you a sound education and ensure you reach average standards and achieve satisfactorily. However, you need individual targets to help you improve your work even more. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are satisfactory and they are working hard to make sure the school keeps improving. Your personal development is good. You behave well and are keen to learn and we were pleased that you are clear about how to stay safe and healthy, particularly through your fruit tuck and Fruity Friday.

We have asked your school to make teaching better by ensuring the work you get challenges you fully and helps you to make faster progress. We know your teachers mark your work and tell you what you do well. They also need to tell you how you can improve it.