

# Merebrook Infant School

## Inspection report

---

|                                |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 131670         |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Milton Keynes  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 293808         |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 14–15 May 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Jeffrey White  |

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

---

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Infant   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–7  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     | 177  |
| School                                    |  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                                     |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mrs Jan Cook   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mr Steve Upton   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 12 March 2001  |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Dulverton Drive<br>Furzton<br>Milton Keynes<br>MK4 1EZ |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01908 522876   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01908 521534   |

---

|                          |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 4–7            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 14–15 May 2007 |
| <b>Inspection number</b> | 293808         |

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. The majority of pupils are of White British origin but the number of pupils of minority ethnic background is rising. One in five pupils does not have English as their first language and most are at an early stage. Two years ago the school changed from a First School to an Infant School. This resulted in a high turnover of staff.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This good school has improved after a period of some turbulence in staffing, following its change of character. The headteacher, staff and governors have a strong unity of purpose that is focused on improving pupils' academic and personal development. Most parents are happy with the school and are supportive. There are good partnerships with parents and the local community. Several parents, including governors, help regularly in the school.

The Foundation Stage provides an excellent start to the pupils' education and has improved significantly over the last two years. Standards by the end of Year 2 have risen and are average. There is every sign that standards are continuing to improve as pupils move through the school. Pupils make good progress from a range of different starting points. Their achievement towards meeting whole school targets is also good.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy their work and have good awareness of how to be safe and healthy. Attitudes and relationships are positive and most pupils behave well. They are keen to learn and this is illustrated by the improvement in their attendance which is now satisfactory. Pupils enjoy their good links with the community, for example, they enjoyed talking to the local Mayor about their job.

Teaching is consistently good in Year 1 and Year 2 and is a key reason why standards are improving. Teachers' expectations are high and, consequently, pupils make good progress in lessons. The staff manage behaviour well because of their calm and measured approach. Pupils' learning is good and they are developing good skills for working alone and for co-operating with others. The school provides a good curriculum, which is taught well, including the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils have opportunities to develop their skills in information, communication and technology (ICT) but do not use them enough in different subjects. Consequently, their standards are not as high as they could be. Pupils are well cared for and are given good guidance and support in their work. However, they are not sure about their targets for learning and are, therefore, uncertain about their progress. Not all targets are shared with parents.

Leadership and management are good and help to ensure the school runs smoothly. Pupils' performance and teaching and learning are monitored well and effective action is taken to remedy any shortcomings. The expected outcomes in the school's improvement plan are sometimes too general, which makes it more difficult for the school to evaluate its progress.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum, to raise standards
- Give individual pupils targets for learning and share them with parents
- Sharpen up the expected outcomes in the school improvement plan.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The children join the Foundation Stage with levels of knowledge and skills below those expected for four-year-olds. Their personal and social development is well below average. Excellent provision in the Foundation Stage enables children to reach the standards expected for their age, in all areas of learning, by the time they enter Year 1. Some pupils will exceed them. Good teaching in Year 1 and Year 2 ensures that pupils make good progress and attain average

standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The year groups vary considerably in terms of pupils' abilities and their starting points. Nevertheless, standards are rising and achievement is good. Pupils whose first language is other than English achieve as well as other pupils because they are well supported. Pupils with learning disabilities also make good progress because of effective support from learning assistants.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school celebrates its cultural diversity in lessons and assemblies. Pupils in the Foundation Stage make outstanding gains in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils throughout the school are happy and enjoy their learning. They say that they feel safe and know who to tell if they are unhappy. They enjoy exercise and sport and understand the importance of healthy eating. Relationships are good because adults, including parents, grandparents and others from the local community provide good support. This contributes very positively to the pupils' good attitudes to learning and prepares them well for the future. Pupils mostly behave well and attendance is satisfactory. Pupils in the school council make a positive contribution to school life and are proud to contribute to the school handbook, to act as buddies to new pupils and also to be 'flower friends' during playtimes.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Lessons are well planned and have clear learning objectives. Teachers manage discussions well and their sharply focused questions help pupils to explain their work clearly. Activities are well matched to the range of pupils' needs and this ensures that pupils make good progress. Effective use is made of group targets but pupils, by and large, are not given individual targets that could help them make further progress. Pupils are growing in confidence and relate well to their teachers and support staff. For example, pupils in Year 1 talked enthusiastically about their feelings when they discussed a poem they had read together. Pupils are diligent learners and concentrate well. On occasion, pace and challenge in the learning are not sustained throughout the lesson and some pupils begin to lose interest. Teaching is excellent in the Foundation Stage because it excites the pupils' interests and they learn rapidly how to be independent and how to work with others.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language. Consequently, pupils achieve well both personally and academically. Basic skills in English, mathematics and science are taught well and good links are made between subjects such as English, history and science. Pupils enjoy using ICT but do not use computers often enough across the curriculum. Pupils talk confidently about their enjoyment of the curriculum and especially the wide range of enrichment activities that include sports and music clubs as well as visits and visitors to the school. These activities contribute well to pupils' personal and social

development. The excellent Foundation Stage curriculum inspires and challenges children of all abilities and ensures that they make excellent progress.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school's ethos of 'learning and caring together' is reflected in all its work. Pupils' personal and academic development are assessed and tracked thoroughly. Vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties, those who are learning to speak English, and those new to the school are very well nurtured and supported. Consequently, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Good use is made of group and whole school targets to track pupils' progress. However, many are not familiar with their individual targets so they are not clear about how to improve their work or the next steps in their learning. Arrangements for child protection and health and safety procedures are reviewed regularly and are effective. Pupils are taught how to take care of themselves and others and they talk about the trust they have in the adults in school. A parent's comment that 'the school has a caring ethos', is typical of the views of most.

### **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher's leadership is good and he is ably supported by a relatively new and very keen senior leadership team. Staffing is now more stable than it has been for some time and the headteacher and staff are working well together. The leadership team have established a good balance of supporting the pupils' personal development as well as raising standards and achievement. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress have improved well since the last inspection and help the headteacher and staff to identify pupils who need particular help. Good use is made of whole school targets that have become more challenging over time. Monitoring and evaluation of lessons are systematic and thorough, and are well linked to teachers' professional development. The school improvement plan is a useful tool for helping the school to improve but its expected outcomes are sometimes too general. Governors are increasingly involved in evaluating the school's performance and discharge their responsibilities well. Together with the leadership team they have good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is outstanding because of the tireless dedication to raising children's achievement. The school's capacity to improve is good.

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 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  | 1   |
| 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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 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 | 2 |

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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   | 2   |
| 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**

23 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Merebrook Infant School, Milton Keynes, MK4 1EZ

Thank you for your help on our visit to your school. We enjoyed talking to you. Yours is a good school and your headteacher and staff look after you well. You told us how much you know about how to stay healthy and safe and how much you enjoy yourselves. You do lots of things in your community and with the adults who help you. Your teachers help you to do well in reading, writing and mathematics and they help you to improve. We have asked your headteacher and teachers now to give you your own targets for learning and to share them with your parents. You very much enjoy using ICT but we think you should be given more time to use computers. Your headteacher leads the school well and we know that he wants you all to continue to improve.

With best wishes

Jeff White

Lead inspector