

# Meldreth Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110615
<b>Local Authority</b>	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	310362
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gillian Smith

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	158
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Rosamund Rhodes-Kemp
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Janet Rayment
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	High Street Meldreth Royston Hertfordshire SG8 6LA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01763 260432
<b>Fax number</b>	01763 269919

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Meldreth Primary School is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who have English as an additional language are well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage varies from year to year but is broadly in line with standards expected for four year olds. The socio-economic circumstances of many pupils are favourable.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. Pupils grow in confidence and enjoy school life because staff throughout the school provide good levels of pastoral care and support for them. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards by Year 6. Most of the parents hold the school in high regard. Their views are typified by the comments of one parent: 'This school is a delight; it has a wonderful atmosphere and the staff are always friendly.'

Since her arrival three years ago, the headteacher has eradicated inadequate teaching and overseen a major building project. Some good new appointments have been made which are contributing to improvements in teaching quality. While teaching still varies in quality and is satisfactory overall, an increasing proportion of it is good. However, the impact of these improvements is not yet reflected in better achievement among pupils. This is partly because the quality of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils is too variable and the extent to which they involve pupils in the review of their work is limited. As a result, pupils do not always know how to improve. In addition, information gained from the assessment of pupils' work to track their progress is not used rigorously enough to raise standards and to improve achievement.

Good provision within the Foundation Stage helps children to make good progress. Pupils' progress and achievements, taking account of their prior attainments, are currently satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated around the national average, but were above average in 2007. There are strengths in reading and science. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. There is sound provision for pupils identified as gifted or talented, although pupils capable of reaching higher levels of attainment are sometimes not challenged sufficiently during lessons.

The curriculum is satisfactory and there is a very good range of enrichment activities, including various sports, gardening and chess. There is also a good range of visits and visitors, including a residential trip for Years 5 and 6 that helps to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The standard of care, guidance and support is good and pupils feel well looked after. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. Pupils' personal development is good and they behave well during lessons and at other times. They have a clear awareness of how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community and everyday school life, for example, through the school council and the Year 6 play leader scheme.

Satisfactory leadership and management enable the school to run smoothly and pupils to make sound progress. In some respects the school's evaluation of its performance has been too generous and has not focused sharply enough on evaluating pupils' standards and achievements. Consequently the school's plans for improvement give too little attention to raising pupil standards and to how their progress will be checked. Governance is satisfactory; while the governing body provides a great deal of expertise and is keen to do more, it is not involved enough in monitoring how well the school is doing. Improvements to the quality of teaching, accommodation and leaders' increasingly realistic view of the school's effectiveness reflect its sound capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Home visits, good links with local pre-school providers and a gradual introduction to school life ensure children settle in quickly and happily. A well-planned curriculum and good teaching

help them to make rapid progress in relation to their starting points, particularly with regard to their early reading skills and personal and social development. Children often reach above average standards by the end of Reception. Activities are carefully planned and resources are well chosen. As a result, children are enthusiastic, behave well and quickly learn to take turns and consider each other's needs. Basic skills are taught well and adults maintain an appropriate balance between developing pupils' independence and providing discreet care and support. Although the current lack of a covered outdoor area limits the range of activities that can be undertaken during bad weather, there are plans to install a canopy during the current school year.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the leadership and management provide clear educational direction that is focused sharply on raising achievement.
- Use assessment information more rigorously and consistently to monitor and improve pupils' progress in order to raise standards.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' marking and feedback so that pupils are more involved in their learning and know how to improve.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Over the last five years, standards at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated between average and above. Standards in reading are consistently the most positive, having been above average in four of the last five years. Standards in writing and mathematics dipped to average in 2007, both having been above in the preceding two years. Analysis of Year 6 results from the last three years indicates that pupils' progress and achievement has been in line with the national average as they move through Key Stage 2. Overall, Year 6 standards have varied but were at least average; in 2007 they were above average, with particular strengths in reading and science. However, standards in writing were not as good, with relatively few pupils reaching the higher levels. Inspection evidence indicates that the picture of mainly satisfactory progress and average standards is continuing. The school met or exceeded its 2007 targets in mathematics and English, although the latter were undemanding. Targets for 2008 are more appropriately challenging. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make sound progress, as do those who have English as an additional language.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils speak highly of their school and there is little they would like to change. They say that adults are approachable and that teachers usually manage any incidents of bullying well. Most of the pupils behave sensibly, listen carefully and work hard during lessons. However, sometimes pupils can become unsettled if the activity does not interest them or is not well matched to their ability. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they are well prepared for life in a multi-cultural society. They develop into articulate and confident young people who are enthusiastic contributors to everyday school life and the wider community. Pupils are well aware of how to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle and many take part in the

additional sporting activities. Pupils' impressive personal qualities and strong basic skills ensure they are well prepared for their next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Satisfactory teaching helps pupils to make steady progress as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2. However, while teachers' planning caters adequately for the range of ages and abilities in each class, there is not always enough challenge for the more capable pupils. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to aid learning; they also manage behaviour well and working relationships are good. Teaching assistants provide skilled support to those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and help them to make satisfactory progress in their basic skills.

There are some examples of excellent practice in teachers' marking and feedback to pupils, but this is not consistent across the school. Overall its quality varies considerably and there is no school marking policy. In addition, pupils are not sufficiently involved in reviewing their work so many do not know how well they are doing or what they should focus on next.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

There are some good examples of ICT being used to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. Provision for pupils with particular gifts or talents is satisfactory. Pupils who are good at mathematics may be moved up to the next year group and the receiving secondary school runs master classes for nominated pupils during the summer term.

Pupils' enjoyment of learning is promoted well through a very wide range of additional activities and older pupils undertake residential visits to Derbyshire and an outdoor activity centre. These opportunities help to promote pupils' good personal development and prepare them effectively for secondary school and their lives as young adults.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Parents feel their children are very well looked after during the school day and inspectors agree. Health and safety and child protection procedures meet current requirements. Pupils feel secure in school and say that the arrangements to prevent bullying and racism are effective. The high standard of pastoral care underpins pupils' good personal development. There are close links with specialist community agencies, and vulnerable pupils, including those with individual medical or learning needs, receive good support.

Academic support and guidance are satisfactory and are reflected in pupils' sound achievement. Target setting with individuals and groups is sound but, as with marking, there are variations between classes and subjects in the rigour with which progress towards the targets is monitored and reviewed with pupils and actions taken.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management have a satisfactory impact on pupils' progress and achievement. Since the last inspection, the headteacher, senior staff and governors have improved important aspects of the school, most notably by eradicating inadequate teaching and improving the accommodation. The school promotes equality of opportunity soundly and statutory requirements regarding the recording and reporting of racist incidents are in place. The day to day administration of the school and its finances is efficient and it gives satisfactory value for money. These features demonstrate the school's potential to improve further, and the quality of its self-evaluation is satisfactory. However, the school's analysis of pupils' progress and standards lacks sufficient rigour to quicken the pace of improvement. This is reflected in plans to improve the school, as communicated, for example, in the school improvement plan and main self-evaluation document, which are not focused sharply enough on raising achievement.

Governors offer a high level of commitment and skill and are keen to be more involved. However, these qualities are not exploited enough by the school to help it monitor and improve the provision for its pupils. Governors are too reliant on the information they receive from the senior staff. As a result, the school's overall targets and expectations of what pupils can achieve, have not been ambitious enough.

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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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
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

<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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

11 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Meldreth Primary School, High Street, Meldreth SG8 6LA

We enjoyed our visit to your school last week and want to thank you for the way in which you helped us while we were there. We had some interesting discussions with your teachers and with some of you. I want to tell you what we found out about your school and how it can get better in the future.

These are the things we particularly liked.

- You enjoy coming to school, get on well with each other and behave sensibly.
- You attend regularly and know how to stay safe and healthy.
- You are well looked after and this helps you to concentrate on your learning.
- Your teachers work with lots of people outside the school to make sure you have exciting things to do and receive special help if you need it.

Here are some of the things we have suggested to help your school improve.

- Make sure that everyone is thinking very clearly about how changes made at the school will help you to make more rapid progress.
- Keep a closer eye on your progress so that your teachers can help those of you who are not doing as well as they should, to improve.
- Improve marking and make sure teachers discuss your work with you so you have a better understanding of how to improve.

Best wishes for the future.

Gillian Smith

Lead inspector