

Melbourne Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112593
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310937
Inspection date	29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Ian Hussey
Headteacher	Miss Jane Hinchliff
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Packhorse Road Melbourne Derby Derbyshire DE73 8JE
Telephone number	01332 862344
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector investigated the following issues: standards and progress in English and boys' writing skills; target-setting, assessment and monitoring procedures; and cross-curricular strategies to support the development of pupils' literacy skills. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils' work, parents' questionnaires, interviews with staff, pupils and the chair of governors and extensive school documentation including its self-evaluation report. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no reason to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average-size junior school serves the small town of Melbourne in south Derbyshire. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are no pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. Pupils' attainment on entry, although covering a wide range, is well above average overall. The school holds the ActiveMark and ArtsMark Gold Awards, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People and National Healthy School Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Melbourne Junior School is a good school with several outstanding features. It provides a good quality of education for its pupils and gives good value for money. The school works extremely well with other schools, agencies and the community to enrich pupils' education and ensure their well-being. Parents strongly agree. One parent's comment typified the opinion of many, 'My child is getting a very good education in a caring environment and a school that is exceptionally well managed'. A very small number of parents made some negative responses in the parents' questionnaires but there was no overall theme and inspection evidence does not support the issues raised.

The school sets and achieves very challenging targets. This high level of attainment is consolidated as pupils move through the school. The progress of all groups of pupils, including those who find learning difficult, is equally good. As a result, standards at the end of Year 6 are exceptionally high, with far higher proportions of pupils reaching and surpassing expected National Curriculum levels in English, mathematics and science than schools nationally. However, performance in English in 2007 was not as good as in mathematics and science, or as in English in previous years. This was because of a fall in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher than average Level 5 and because of weaknesses in boys' writing. The school is taking action to tackle these weaknesses and the early indications are that this action is having a positive effect.

Teaching and learning are good, and often outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic, have good subject knowledge and high expectations. Most lessons are carefully planned to ensure that pupils are actively engaged in interesting learning activities. Pupils respond exceptionally well. They make such good progress because they are eager to learn and really enjoy learning activities that challenge and extend them. Effective support from teaching assistants ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are also fully engaged in lessons. The school has introduced more systematic procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and this information is used well to track their progress. There are also examples of the effective use of this information to give pupils clear guidance on their next steps in learning. However, the school recognises that further progress needs to be made before there is consistency in the use of assessment information in this way across the school.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding because the school's expectations of them are very clear and consistent. They learn in a highly supportive and inclusive environment where they feel safe and valued as individuals. Pupils are encouraged to be thoughtful and to care for one another. Year 6 pupils, for example, take care of younger children in the playground. Pupils report that they feel safe at school, bullying is rare and, if it occurs, is dealt with quickly. They have a very good understanding of healthy eating issues and are involved in a range of sporting activities. They have excellent attitudes to school. This is reflected in their regular attendance and excellent behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils are also very willing to contribute to school life and to the local community. The school council is active and takes its role very seriously in raising money for charities and deciding on improvements that will benefit the school. The pupils' outstanding personal qualities, together with their excellent basic skills, mean that they are extremely well prepared for transfer to secondary school.

Good care, support and guidance underpin pupils' personal development. Staff demonstrate strong caring attitudes, and pupils receive excellent personal support at the time of transition

between schools. They say that they are able to talk with teachers about any of their concerns. The school fully meets statutory requirements for the protection of children and monitors health and safety issues closely. The good curriculum contributes significantly to the pupils' considerable enjoyment and learning. There is a strong focus on the development of key literacy skills in all subjects, with a particular emphasis on the improvement of boys' writing skills. The early indications are that this is having a positive impact on standards. The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors to the school and a particular feature is the strong curriculum link with the infant school. The school has responded well to the issue regarding information and communication technology (ICT) identified in the last inspection. Much improved ICT equipment is used effectively to support teaching and learning. Pupils also benefit from an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, with strong support from the recently appointed senior leadership team and all staff, is characterised by a very clear vision for the school based on continuous improvement and high achievement for all. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and effective in identifying areas for improvement, taking note of a wide range of views and monitoring the progress of initiatives. Governors know the school well and provide strong support. They share the vision for the future development of the school and, consequently, there is good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of higher ability pupils in English and raise the standard of boys' writing.
- Ensure that the guidance that pupils receive on their next steps in learning is consistent across all year groups.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	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.

Annex A

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

30 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Melbourne Junior School, Melbourne, DE73 8JE

Following my visit to inspect your school I am now writing to tell you what I found out. Before I do, I would like to say thank you for making me feel so welcome and making my visit one that I will remember for a long time. I have told your teachers how you were all so helpful and polite, and, through my discussions with you, it was good to hear how much you enjoy school. I particularly enjoyed your singing in assembly and seeing the way you take care of each other.

I agree with you and your parents that this is a good school and one that is helping you to do well. I particularly liked the way in which you enjoy school, work hard in your lessons and make good progress. Your excellent behaviour is a real help to your teachers as it allows them to concentrate on helping you to learn. All of the staff take good care of you and work hard to keep you safe and healthy. Your headteacher leads the school exceptionally well and, together with the governors, makes sure that you make the most of your time at school.

All the adults at school are keen to help you do as well as you can so I have asked them to:

- make sure that you do as well in English as you do in your other subjects and to help boys make their writing skills even better
- help you all to know exactly what you need to learn next, how you are going to do it and how you will know when you have been successful.

You are key players in the school's success and, having met you, I know you will all want to continue to play your part in helping the school to be even better. Through your hard work and the care you show each other, together with willingness to take on responsibility, you all help to make this such a happy and successful community.

With best wishes for your future.

Dr Kenneth C Thomas

Lead Inspector