

Meredale Independent Primary School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	887/6007
Unique Reference Number	134858
Inspection number	330417
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Dennett

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended.

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.

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Meredale Independent Primary School is located in Rainham, Kent and provides full-time education for boys and girls from four to 11 years of age. It is part of the Kinder Group, owned by the proprietor. The school was first opened in January 2005. There are 57 full-time pupils attending the school. The numbers of children entering the school from the Nursery located on the same premises, varies from year to year. Pupils transfer to a number of state and independent secondary schools at the age of 11. One pupil attending the school has a statement of special educational need. The school was last inspected in November 2005.

Evaluation of the school

Meredale Independent Primary School offers a good quality education. Teaching is good and pupils clearly enjoy their lessons. The school is led effectively by the headteacher, who, with her staff, have created a caring yet challenging learning environment. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils are well behaved. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start to their education in the Reception class. The school has made good progress in addressing the issues raised by its last inspection and now fully meets all regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and supports pupils' academic, physical, social and spiritual development well. There are well-written policies, which cover all subjects of the National Curriculum, Christian education (religious education) and French. It is implemented effectively, enabling pupils to make good progress in most subjects, although progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which supports pupils' learning effectively. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of educational visits which contribute to pupils' physical and social development, as well as their knowledge of the wider world.

There are detailed schemes of work for all subjects taught in the school, which are translated into effective plans for each term. Personal, social and health education is taught through effective 'Life Skills' lessons. Teachers day-to-day planning is good

and usually identifies what pupils will learn and the tasks are well matched to the needs of different ability groups within the class. However, this is mainly in English and mathematics. In other subjects, work is usually only differentiated by outcome or support, not by task.

Teaching is good and this enables pupils, including those with learning difficulties, to make good progress as they move through the school. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for these pupils as well as others in the class. A strong feature of teaching is the positive relationships which exist between pupils and staff. Teachers use appropriate rewards to encourage pupils to do their best. Lessons are challenging and teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement. Good use is made of questioning to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject being taught.

Assessment systems are good throughout the school and effective use is made of the information to set appropriate targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy. Most pupils sit the Eleven Plus examinations. Teachers keep good records of pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics using tests devised by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). These NFER test results are used effectively to track pupils' progress as they move through both key stages. The school is also building up a portfolio of pupils' work which they have graded against the National Curriculum attainment target levels for writing. Assessment in other subjects is at a very early stage of development and the school is only just beginning to think about assessing pupils' progress in science and ICT.

As a result of the interesting curriculum and good teaching pupils achieve good standards at both key stages. They make good progress in reading, writing and numeracy throughout the school. However, pupils' opportunities to use ICT to support their learning are limited.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is an appropriate emphasis on consideration for others, which is demonstrated by pupils as they go about the school. Pupils pray and take part in assemblies, for example by demonstrating Irish dancing on St Patrick's Day. Pupils are polite, well behaved and take their work seriously. Pupils' contribution to the life of the school is good. Older pupils undertake a range of responsibilities around the school, such as helping younger children in playground and being school captains. They take these responsibilities seriously and conscientiously. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, and explore a wide range of moral and social issues in Christian education and 'Life Skills' lessons. They are well aware of health issues and care for the environment. Pupils clearly enjoy their school and are keen to be there. As a consequence, attendance is good.

Pupils have a good understanding of the main institutions and services in England, and are developing their role as future citizens through the 'Life Skills' programme. Pupils feel well prepared for the next phase of their education and future life. Provision for pupils' cultural development is not as strong as other areas of the curriculum. The Christian education programme only covers Christianity and pupils' understanding of other religions is limited. Although pupils have studied the Chinese New Year and Divali, their recollections of the meaning of these festivals is imprecise. Little use is made of the minority ethnic traditions represented in the school. However, pupils respect each other and there are good levels of harmony and racial tolerance within the school.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. Their personal needs and welfare are well supported by all staff and by effective policies. One parent summed it up when they wrote, 'I have been very pleased with the school. It really is a jewel in Medway's crown.' Teachers and staff are readily available to discuss any concerns with parents. This means that pupils settle quickly into school life whether they start in the Reception class or any other year group. Pupils' attendance is monitored carefully. They are encouraged astutely to lead healthy lives. They enjoy a balanced diet because the school encourages them to eat healthy foods. For example, pupils bring in fruit everyday, have taught physical exercise sessions for at least an hour a week and play outside every day.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. All the pupils interviewed said they felt safe. They say bullying is not an issue. Pupils handle equipment carefully and move around the school in a responsible way. They know what to do in an emergency because practices occur regularly. Health and safety issues are checked carefully and are put right effectively. Risk assessments are carried out successfully. Pupils are safeguarded suitably because staff have a clear understanding of how to handle any incidents. In January this year, the designated member of staff underwent children protection training. The school complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and has a three-year accessibility plan but it does not contain any objectives which would enhance staff knowledge of how to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school has robust procedures for safe recruitment of staff. There is a suitable single central record of checks made on staff, which meets requirements. The school takes great pains to ensure that all persons who come in contact with pupils are suitable to work with children.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is located in a well-maintained Edwardian school building, which it shares with a separate nursery and the administration offices of the Kinder Group. The site and buildings are secure and provide a stimulating environment to learn. There is a large hall, which provides ample space for physical education, assemblies and school productions. The classrooms are well-equipped and displays are used effectively to show off pupils' work and provide information, such as timelines for history. There is an ICT suite and library, but this is not used as much as it could be. There are other spaces for after school activities and administration. Outside, there is a suitable playing area, which is partly grassed. It contains some climbing equipment and playground equipment, which is now reaching the end of its useful life. The school has access to a playing field which is owned by the local authority and it is used for sports.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The provision of information for parents and other interested people meets all regulations. The school has an attractive prospectus. It includes loose-leaf inserts with additional information which ensures the prospectus is up to date. The prospectus is supplemented by further detail in a welcome pack which is available for parents once pupils join the school. Inspection questionnaire returns show that parents are happy with the information provided about their child's progress. They receive this in various review and informal meetings, and in written reports.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a simple, clear and fair complaints policy and procedure. It fully meets regulations.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Reception class. Children enter the school with broadly expected levels of expertise in literacy and calculation. They make effective progress. This means that standards are above average by the start of Year 1 except in writing and knowledge and understanding of the world, where they are average. The children develop their basic skills well because staff use effective teaching methods successfully. Children learn to subtract numbers from a group of animals because effective use is made of practical methods. Occasionally, activities are not used well to challenge the more able. Children learn successfully to recognise and say letter sounds because a highly structured approach to teaching is in use. This means that children learn to use their knowledge of letter sounds effectively when they develop their reading skills. Staff assessments regularly highlight what children can do and record effectively the next steps they could take to improve. Children can see how close they are to meeting their personal targets because displays are used

effectively. The starting point of each child is assessed carefully and their achievement is beginning to be tracked more rigorously.

The children's personal development and behaviour are good because all adults ensure that the welfare of each individual is supported well. For instance, all members of staff have completed training in first aid for children in their early years. Children who have allergies are thoughtfully provided for because staff are very aware of their needs. The children look after each other, happily share equipment and work co-operatively due to the thoughtful way that staff have organised the resources and manage them. For example, children can extend their numeracy skills effectively because part of the classroom is set up as a pretend shop where they are encouraged to buy priced items. The leadership of this stage of education is good. Effective management has improved significantly the use of assessment and opportunities for children to explore ideas on their own. The school recognises that resources and use of the outside area are not fully developed and so children do not have extensive opportunities to develop their skills in writing and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Improve pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own and increase their knowledge of religions represented in the UK other than Christianity.
- Improve lesson planning in subjects other than English and mathematics to ensure that tasks are well matched to the needs of pupils.
- Improve systems for assessing and measuring pupils' progress in science and ICT.
- Develop resources and the use of the outside area for children in the Reception class so that standards of writing and knowledge and understanding of the world are raised.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		√		
The behaviour of pupils		√		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		√		
--	--	---	--	--

The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?		√		
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?		√		
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		√		
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		√		
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?		√		
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?		√		

School details

Name of school	Meredale Independent Primary School		
DCSF number	887/6007		
Unique reference number	134858		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	January 2005		
Age range of pupils	4–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 39	Girls: 18	Total: 57
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 5,100		
Address of school	Soloman Road Rainham Kent ME8 8EB		
Telephone number	01634 231405		
Fax number	01634 364340		
Email address	headteacher@meredaleindependent.com		
Headteacher	Ms Michelle Ingledew		
Proprietor	Mr Stewart Hagerty		
Reporting inspector	Stephen Dennett		
Dates of inspection	17–18 March 2009		