

Mesne Lea Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105911
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	336580
Inspection dates	20–21 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

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 of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Iain Lindley
Headteacher	Miss Gillian Smith
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2007
School address	Walkden Road Worsley Manchester M28 7FG
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 17 lessons. All eight teachers were seen teaching, the majority of them twice. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at work in pupils' books, the school development plan, minutes of the governing body's meetings and reports from the School Improvement Partner. Responses from 70 parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire were analysed and considered, along with questionnaires completed by staff, and pupils in Key Stage 2.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the rate of pupils' progress and the reasons why the school judges itself to be less effective than it was at the time of the last inspection
- the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- whether the current leadership team has enough capacity to improve standards.

Information about the school

This average-sized school serves the area of Worsley in Salford. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average, as is the proportion of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average but rising, as is the proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The school holds the Sportsmark and Activemark awards. The school operates a daily breakfast club and an after-school childcare club for its pupils. An acting headteacher has been in post for two terms.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Mesne Lea is a satisfactory school. It has strengths in the good care, guidance and support it provides for pupils and the long-established and very wide curriculum it has developed. Pupils are safe and make good progress in their personal development. They gain a good understanding of the world in which they live, through creative, sporting and cultural as well as academic work. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A strong and long-standing ethos of respect and mutual understanding pervades the school. Pupils behave well and work together in harmony. There is no discrimination here. Pupils are expected and trusted to take on responsibilities and they do this co-operatively and sensibly.

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. A declining trend of academic progress over several years has been stopped and pupils make satisfactory progress. The school has reliable systems for collecting and collating information on the performance of pupils. Inspection evidence shows that some pupils are now learning well and making good progress, though this is inconsistent across the school.

Teaching is satisfactory. Some is outstanding and helps pupils to make rapid progress and none is inadequate. Teachers regularly and accurately measure what pupils know and can do. This information is not always used well enough in lessons to set work which helps each individual pupil to make the best possible progress, particularly in mathematics and science, nor is it used consistently when marking work to guide pupils on what they need to do next to improve. In several lessons, imprecise planning caused the pace of learning to slow unnecessarily.

Members of the acting leadership team have done sterling work over two terms in helping the school to turn an important corner. Their largely accurate and very frank self-evaluation has helped to generate a team spirit which is fully committed to improving and developing the school further. Leaders do not yet check closely enough on the quality of learning taking place in their areas of responsibility. All leaders and governors now have a clear picture of areas requiring improvement. Staff's morale is good, and with a permanent headteacher appointed to take up post, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement and raise attainment, particularly in science and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that work set in lessons matches more closely the different learning

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needs of each individual pupil

- ensuring that, when marking pupils' work, guidance of consistently good quality on what needs to be done to improve is made explicit
 - making certain that leaders at all levels take full accountability for the quality of learning taking place in those areas for which they hold responsibility.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' learning in lessons is satisfactory. Though some is good or even better, it is inconsistent from class to class and also sometimes from subject to subject within the same class. Pupils have good attitudes to work, listen carefully to instructions given by the teacher, enjoy learning and are keen and well motivated. They get on well together and collaborate enthusiastically when given the opportunity to work independently. They sometimes become restless when work is either too easy or too hard.

Pupils say they are happy and feel safe in school and that they can approach adults for help with confidence should they need to. This is readily apparent in their above average attendance, polite good manners and good behaviour. They speak with certainty that bullying is not an issue for them, and they are well aware of what to do if it does arise. They know how to take care of themselves by avoiding the dangers they may come across. They understand the value of regular exercise and many pupils of all ages and both genders take part enthusiastically in sporting activities, proudly representing their school at cross-country running, football, rounders and several other games.

Pupils willingly take on responsibilities around the school. School councillors have been involved in the appointment process of the new headteacher. Each class chooses its own charity to support and pupils' research in making the choice increases their understanding of the regional and world-wide communities in which they live. The impressively positive attributes of respect, tolerance and understanding that pupils have, and their good attendance, indicate that they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some examples of outstanding lessons were seen. All lessons are characterised by the good relationships between pupils and adults. The very best lessons move forward at a fast pace and pupils quickly become engrossed in the challenging work they have been set. Even the very youngest children in the Reception class become oblivious to distractions as they concentrate hard on recalling and telling what they have learned. Teachers complete regular and accurate assessments of the attainment of pupils. In some lessons learning slows because teachers do not use this information effectively. In setting a single task, work is not always matched accurately to the different learning needs of individual pupils. The marking of pupils' work does not always provide helpful guidance on how to improve. The curriculum is much broader than normally expected and a strength of the school. Visiting language specialists, artists, musicians and others provide pupils with valuable new experiences which widen their horizons. Visits Inscape House, and residential visits to Lledr Hall in Year 5 and Prestatyn in Year 6, contribute strongly to pupils' personal development and independence. A small number of pupils attend a well-run after-school childcare club where they participate in sporting and other activities, or complete homework if they so wish. The effectiveness of the curriculum is diluted at times, however, because it does not always meet the needs of pupils well enough, especially in mathematics and science.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Each pupil is treated as an individual at this school and this is shown in the well-placed support that pupils receive. Around 40 pupils attend the daily breakfast club, supervised by school staff, which gets the day off

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to a good start. Staff know pupils and families well and are trusted by them. This enables prompt and effective support to be given sympathetically as and when issues arise. The work undertaken by adults to develop confidence and raise self-esteem, particularly with those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is consistent and successful. This has a positive impact on pupils' personal development and fosters a genuine desire to learn

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has coped with its recent leadership difficulties well. The acting headteacher and acting senior leadership team have recouped staff's morale and refocused attention on learning. This has enabled the school as a whole to stop the slide in pupils' progress. There is a satisfactory focus on the achievement of individuals and groups of pupils. The school has good links with parents and carers through regular letters home or the school texting facility. The monitoring of teaching is undertaken regularly, but does not yet focus sharply enough on pupils' learning to be of maximum benefit. Subject leaders are beginning to monitor the effectiveness of work in their particular areas, but presently lack the rigour necessary to improve standards in mathematics and science. Governance is satisfactory. Members of the governing body have undertaken a very honest reappraisal of the effectiveness of the support and challenge they give to the school. They are now in a satisfactory position to help the school move forward. Provision for community cohesion is good. The school evaluates its work against a national framework and underpins this through its good links with parents and carers and outside partners, and through its fundraising for British and international charities.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good. They are high profile and rigorous. All adults are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe and secure. The vast majority of parents and carers agree that their children are safe in school. The school works diligently to ensure that all types of inequality are addressed robustly, including using its links with schools with a different population profile. There is no discrimination or harassment in this harmonious school. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception class from a variety of settings with skills that are broadly as expected for their age, though some of their social skills and mathematical skills are lower than usual. They make a positive start; settling quickly and easily into a welcoming and improving learning environment. They benefit from good teaching and care from recently appointed staff. Welfare requirements are met. Links with parents and carers are good. Information flows readily back and forth and ensures that parents and carers are active in helping their children to learn. There is a calm yet purposeful approach, with staff responding flexibly to children's interests, and making playing and learning fun. Warm and positive relationships ensure that children are safe, happy and ready to learn. Behaviour is consistently good as children share, play and learn together well. Teamworking between adults in the Reception class is good, with staff moving fluently between roles as necessary.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders are not fully involved in monitoring and evaluation. Assessment procedures do not take sufficient account of learning in child-initiated independent activities. Long-standing routines with frequent breaks for specified activities do not encourage seamless learning. These lead directly to satisfactory outcomes for children.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that their children are well prepared for the future. Most reported that their children enjoy school and are happy with their children's experience at the school. A very few parents and carers raised concerns about the school keeping their children safe. Inspectors looked into these issues closely and could find no evidence of any significance which would support these concerns. A few parents and carers raised some concerns about aspects of the leadership and management of the school. Inspectors recognise the school's difficulties in recent times in this area, but are confident that these issues are being resolved. A small number of parents and carers raised questions about bullying or how behavioural incidents were dealt with. Inspectors looked at this mainly through talking, both in meetings and at random, to pupils and through looking at the school's own records. The pupils did not express any concerns and reported that when these incidents do rarely arise, they do not interfere with their learning. The school's records are detailed and meticulously maintained. The school has very clear policies and actions in place to deal with any incidents of bullying or misbehaviour and pupils fully accept them. Pupils were also very clear about what to do if they were being bullied themselves or saw others being bullied.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mesne Lea Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 225 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	56	28	40	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	61	25	36	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	41	36	51	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	46	30	43	4	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	34	49	33	47	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	39	36	51	5	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	51	29	41	4	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	29	41	36	51	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	43	33	47	5	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	37	36	51	5	7	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	36	34	49	7	10	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	24	34	37	53	7	10	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	53	28	40	5	7	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mesne Lea Primary School, Manchester, M28 7FG

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you very much for being so well mannered and friendly to us when we inspected your school recently. It was really nice to be with happy and confident young people, who are polite and well behaved, who are proud of being part of their school community and who come to school regularly.

We found that Mesne Lea is a satisfactory school. All the adults are really serious about their work in the school and work hard to make sure you are safe, happy and well looked after from the time you join the Reception class to the time you leave Year 6.

The school also provides you with a good and very interesting curriculum which helps to widen your horizons by giving you lots of different experiences.

We also found some things the school could do better, and which would ensure that you reach higher standards and make better progress in science and mathematics than you do now. So teachers in school are going to make sure that:

- they set work in lessons which is neither too hard nor too easy and which challenges all of you to make good progress
- when marking your work they always let you know what you need to do to get better
- they check closely that you are learning well in the different subjects you study.

You can help the school to improve by keeping your attendance at least as high as it already is, and by continuing to be as keen to learn as you are now.

Good luck to you all for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott

Lead inspector

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