

Medway Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120108
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	339600
Inspection dates	22–23 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Wilson
Headteacher	Mrs Annie Cordner-Webster
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 20 lessons and 16 different teachers and during visits to the three classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they looked at teaching and learning, health and safety and children's work. They also made short visits to classes in Key Stage 2 with the headteacher to look at progress and standards in writing. Inspectors held meetings with parents, groups of pupils, governors, staff, the school's local authority advisor and representatives from partners who work with the school. They looked at a range of documentation, including assessment information, school policies, case studies of several pupils whose circumstances made them potentially vulnerable, teachers' lesson plans and school improvement plans. Inspectors analysed completed questionnaires from 159 parents and carers, and took account of 98 pupils and 25 staff questionnaires.

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

- the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of strategies to improve attendance
- the impact of the curriculum on pupils' achievement
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers, including governors, in promoting school improvement.

Information about the school

Medway Community is a larger than average primary school, situated in a residential area near the centre of Leicester. A third of the pupils are of Bangladeshi origin and the remainder are from a range of other ethnic groups, including White British, other White backgrounds, Indian and African. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is spoken as an additional language is high. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at other than the expected times is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is 30%, which is very high.

The school's Early Years Foundation Stage comprises part-time Nursery provision and two Reception classes. A privately run pre-school Nursery on the school site is inspected separately. The school has achieved National Healthy School status.

Since the last inspection there have been a number of staffing changes. The headteacher resigned in February 2010. At the same time the governing body appointed a new headteacher as an interim measure to July 2010.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The school has not made sufficient progress since it was last inspected and it does not have the capacity to move forward. Since the previous inspection, attainment in science has remained significantly below average at the end of Year 6. Although attainment in English and mathematics improved in 2009 and was broadly average, this improvement has not been sustained. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has declined and is low. For instance, in Years 1 to 6, fewer than half the pupils are working at the levels expected for their age in writing.

There are a number of reasons why attainment is declining. Whilst some teaching is good, there is not enough to raise pupils' achievement significantly. Teachers' assessments of the levels that pupils are working at are not always accurate. As a result, the activities set for pupils are either too easy or, occasionally, too difficult. In too many lessons, more-able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable because teachers' planning does not take adequate account of their learning needs. Teachers' expectations of pupils are sometimes too low, so work is not sufficiently challenging. This is especially the case for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teachers' marking does not give pupils the advice they need to improve. The curriculum is not planned well enough to provide the opportunities pupils need to make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

By contrast, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress. This is because of the high levels of targeted support they receive from teaching assistants. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make at least satisfactory progress overall and good progress in physical and creative development because these aspects are well promoted.

The newly appointed interim headteacher has accurately identified the aspects of the school that need improving. She has introduced a number of important changes to the way staff and the governing body work. However, there has been insufficient time for these changes to have a significant impact on pupils' achievement. Senior and middle leaders, and governors do not rigorously monitor and evaluate the school's work. Consequently, the school's evaluation of its performance is generous. The approach to

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monitoring the quality of teaching and providing staff with feedback is not systematic, so weaknesses in teaching are not identified or tackled quickly enough.

The school is a welcoming community. The school successfully enables individual pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and those who join the school part way through the year to settle quickly and make good gains in their personal development. The pastoral care of pupils is given a high priority. Attendance is improving and the number of persistent absentees has reduced. However, despite the school's best efforts, attendance remains well below average. A number of parents continue to take their children on holiday during term time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and science by:
 - improving the accuracy of teachers' assessments
 - making sure teachers use assessment information effectively to plan work that matches the learning needs of different groups of pupils, especially the more-able
 - ensuring the curriculum has sufficient opportunities for pupils of different abilities to develop their literacy, and mathematical and science skills.
 - Improve the quality of teaching throughout the school so that it is mostly good or better by:
 - using marking that helps pupils understand what they need to do next in order to make progress towards their targets
 - ensuring lessons move at a quick enough pace, especially at the start
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' capabilities and ensuring the level of challenge they provide for pupils is sufficiently high, especially those who speak English as an additional language.
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels, and governors, rigorously evaluate and monitor the school's work to bring about rapid improvement by:
 - making effective use of the school's data to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress across cohorts, groups and subjects to inform decisions about how pupils' achievement can be improved
 - holding staff to account for pupils' learning and progress
 - providing teachers with systematic feedback on what they need to do to improve their practice.
- Improve attendance so that it is in line with the national average.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Achievement is inadequate because rates of progress are not fast enough to raise pupils' low attainment. Lesson observations and pupils' work show that progress ranges from

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occasionally good to inadequate in too many lessons. The pace of learning slows when pupils have limited opportunities to actively practise new skills. The more-able pupils and many of those who speak English as an additional language do not always make the progress they should. More-able pupils are often expected to complete the tasks set for other groups before moving on to more challenging work. Occasionally, pupils make good progress and work at an effective pace; for example, in Year 1, where the study of real plants captured their interest. Pupils of different abilities worked with enthusiasm while writing sentences to describe the plants.

The overwhelming majority of pupils behave well because of their good attitudes. Some pupils lose concentration when lessons do not capture their interest. In response to pupils' concerns about the boisterous behaviour of a minority during lunch time, the school reviewed the activities available and improved supervision arrangements. These actions are encouraging all pupils to behave increasingly well. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. They told inspectors that they feel very safe because any concerns they have are effectively dealt with by staff. Pupils also have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and make healthy choices. They know the difference between right and wrong and have a sound understanding of other cultures. They enjoy taking on responsibilities within the school. Pupils are particularly pleased with the contribution they make to the school newsletter, 'The Medway Messenger'. Opportunities for pupils to help contribute to the wider community are less well developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3

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

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	
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4 4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is inadequate because it is too weak to accelerate progress and raise attainment. Teachers' expectations of pupils' academic performance are often too low, as reflected in the activities set for pupils. For instance, pupils who speak English as an additional language are not given sufficient opportunities to apply and extend their basic skills to enable them to move forward in their learning. This inhibits the progress they make.

Often teachers spend too long introducing lessons. This reduces the amount of time pupils have to work independently and slows their progress. In addition, activities set for pupils of different abilities do not build on what pupils already know and can do. There is some good practice. In a small number of lessons, progress accelerates because activities are well matched to different abilities and pupils are given the opportunity to share and develop ideas. In these better lessons, they are encouraged to evaluate how well they are doing against the lesson criteria and identify what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum does not sufficiently meet the academic needs of pupils, particularly those of the more-able. Opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and mathematical skills across subjects are limited. The curriculum is, however, effectively enriched by a wide range of clubs, educational visits and visitors. These make a good contribution to pupils' well-being and development.

The care, support and guidance offered to pupils, and especially potentially vulnerable groups and individuals is good. This is because staff look after the social and emotional needs of pupils effectively. The support aimed at improving attendance has had a strong impact on those in danger of becoming disaffected with school, although attendance more generally is taking longer to improve. Teaching assistants are particularly well deployed to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The strength of the school's support for these pupils compensates for more general weaknesses in provision and The strength of the school ensures that they make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4 4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support

2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders, middle leaders and governors have not taken effective action to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The interim headteacher has started to give senior and middle leaders greater responsibility for leading their areas. Some staff have responded positively to these changes and are showing determination to address the school's weaknesses.

Teachers are not sufficiently held to account for the progress made by their pupils because the school does not have rigorous systems in place to monitor and evaluate the academic performance of pupils. Senior leaders regularly track the progress of individual pupils. However, they do not analyse the progress made by different groups. Therefore, they do not know which groups perform less well than others or if the intervention strategies in place are helping to close the achievement gap between different groups. School improvement planning lacks strategic direction. As a result, action plans place insufficient emphasis on the most pressing priorities.

The governing body is keen and supportive, but has not developed the skills required to hold the school to account. Following recent training, the governing body has a better understanding of its role and responsibilities. Staff and governors are committed to equal opportunities and ensuring value for money. Nevertheless, the governing body acknowledges that it has had too little impact on the school's work to arrest declining attainment.

Partnerships with external agencies are enabling the school to successfully promote pupils' well-being and improve their behaviour and attendance. Through links with local agencies, the school offers classes for adults. A group of parents told inspectors how much they appreciated the classes which help them to learn new skills and develop strategies for supporting their children's learning. The interim headteacher is developing links with the services provided by the local authority in order to raise the achievement of all groups of pupils. The school is aware of the need to continue strengthening links with parents and carers, and particularly with those who may be reluctant to approach the school.

Senior leaders pay good attention to the safety and care of pupils. Staff are well trained and successfully help pupils to keep themselves safe. With good support from the interim headteacher, the governing body has recently established systems to ensure policies are regularly reviewed and evaluated. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. The school itself is close-knit, it reaches out locally and links with wider national and global communities are sound.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Through strong relationships with parents and carers, staff gain a good understanding of children's developmental needs. As a result, children settle quickly and feel safe. Relationships between children and adults are good. Children are polite and well behaved, and enjoy taking part in a suitable range of activities.

Children start school with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age. Although standards in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development remain well below average, by the time children start Year 1, they are improving. Children who are learning to speak English as an additional language are well supported by staff so that they quickly develop their English language skills. In lessons, children particularly enjoy learning through creative and practical experiences. An effective example of this was seen during a language based session, when children welcomed the inspector into the 'garden centre' and asked the inspector to fill out an order form before purchasing a bouquet of flowers. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to develop children's language and mathematical skills during adult led activities. The outdoor area is underdeveloped and not always used effectively.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a generally sound understanding of strengths and weaknesses. The interim headteacher is aware that, as with the rest of the school, procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision and outcomes are not sufficiently systematic to ensure accelerated progress for the children.

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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

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire hold positive views about the work of the school. For instance, most say that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and the school helps their children adopt healthy lifestyles. Inspection evidence supports these views, but inspectors judged that pupils could make better progress and attain higher levels. A small number of parents are less satisfied with the extent to which the school helps them to support their child's learning and takes account of their suggestions and concerns. The interim headteacher is considering extending the ways in which views are gathered and how parents and carers can support their children's learning at home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Medway Community 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 159 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 470 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	86	54	71	45	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	103	65	54	34	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	74	47	81	51	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	40	82	52	8	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	72	45	77	48	3	2	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	39	75	47	13	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	39	91	57	3	2	1	1
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)	63	40	71	45	9	6	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	64	40	77	48	8	5	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	67	42	78	49	9	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	34	83	52	10	6	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	64	40	81	51	4	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	86	54	62	39	4	3	3	2

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.



Monday 26 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Medway Community Primary School, Leicester, LE2 1GH

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, talking with you and looking at your work. Thank you to the pupils who met with us and to the pupils in Years 3 to 6 who completed the inspection questionnaire. We also enjoyed reading your articles in the 'Medway Messenger'. Here are some of the best things we found about your school.

You are polite and have good attitudes to learning.

Your teachers and the adults that work with you care a great deal about you.

You feel safe and told us that adults listen carefully to any concerns you may have.

You told us how much you enjoy the school clubs because they encourage you to be healthy.

The children in the Nursery and Reception classes make satisfactory progress, and in some things make good progress. We enjoyed visiting the Medway 'Garden Centre.' I really liked the bouquet of flowers.

However, too many of you do not achieve as well as you could. For this reason, we have decided that your school needs 'special measures'. This means your school will get extra help to improve. We have asked the school to do the following things.

Help you all make better progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science, so you are able to reach higher levels.

Make sure that teachers give you work that better meets your needs and tell you exactly what you need to do to improve your work.

Make sure that school leaders and governors carefully check how well you are doing in order to make sure you are making as much progress as possible.

Improve your attendance, because this will help you to make better progress.

You can all help by continuing to work hard in lessons, attending school regularly and behaving well. Inspectors will visit again to check on progress. We wish you, staff and governors the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi

Her Majesty's Inspector

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