

Meath Green Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125012
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340697
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Linda Kelsey HMI

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 of pupils on the school roll	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Ledwich
Headteacher	Alison Hilton-Childs
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons or part lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, the school improvement partner and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at books, displays, project folders, school policies, teachers' plans, and assessment information. They scrutinised other documentation such as governors' minutes and the school improvement partner's reports and analysed 154 parental questionnaires. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work.

It looked in detail at the following:

- whether the school has rigorously assessed itself against national expectations and evaluated its effectiveness robustly enough, taking full account of pupils' achievement and its continuing poor performance
- whether teaching is sufficiently challenging to raise the pupils' standards of attainment, their quality of learning and their rate of progress throughout the school
- the impact the curriculum has on raising achievement, particularly in core skills through the school
- the extent of rigorous monitoring and searching analysis at all levels of management to ensure that key priorities such as pupils' performance are central to the school's plans for improvement.

Information about the school

This large junior school takes most of its pupils from the local infant school. Most pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. These needs generally relate to specific learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals 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

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's overall effectiveness and its capacity for sustained improvement are inadequate because the leadership and management of the school, including the governors, have failed to recognise that the school is not performing as well as it should. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in the school are not strong enough and there is no rigorous self-evaluation in place to gauge how well the school is doing. Leaders therefore come to inaccurate conclusions about the school's performance and their planning does not focus strongly enough on the school's critical weaknesses.

The last school inspection report judged the school as good with standards as average by the end of Year 6. One area of development related to the use of assessment to provide more challenging targets to the pupils. Standards have deteriorated since the last inspection and the school has failed to provide more challenging targets for its pupils. Achievement is inadequate because attainment is low when compared to national averages, and progress and learning are inadequate. Attainment has been significantly below average for the last three years in all key subjects and shows little sign of improving this year. The quality of pupils' learning and their progress, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are inadequate overall. This is because pupils make too little progress in their academic studies over time after entering the school with at least average attainment.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they listen attentively in class and complete work with little fuss when asked. Care, guidance and support for pupils is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school because the curriculum offers them a satisfactorily broad and balanced experience of subjects, including French, which are taught in an interesting way through topics. These enthuse and engage the pupils but do not take enough account of developing skills in literacy and numeracy.

The quality of teaching is inadequate because the significant weaknesses in assessment mean that teachers are ill-informed about where pupils are with their learning. Consequently, teaching does not challenge pupils well enough and time is wasted in class with mundane tasks. For example, in a Year 3 English lesson, pupils were offered insufficient challenge in the writing task following their clear understanding of the use of adverbs and adjectives within the oral part of the lesson. Pupils spoke often about

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having done things before and how they were repeating work. An illustration of this was where Year 6 pupils were being taught how to thread a needle and straight stitch, when many of them had sewn in a previous year group. Pupils' books showed that little progress had been made in English and mathematics since September and, despite the organisation into ability sets for mathematics, work is similar for all pupils. Assessment and tracking of pupils' performance are inadequate. The school is unclear about the progress pupils are making and what they have learnt before; consequently, targets set for improvement in performance are unrealistic.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science by:
 - putting in place, by April 2010, an effective and consistent system for assessing pupils' progress
 - ensuring teaching improves by summer 2010 so that all is at least satisfactory, and much good, and that pupils' learning is appropriately challenging and based on good assessment information
 - monitoring the quality of teaching more rigorously so good practice can be identified and weaknesses eliminated by summer 2010.
- Improve leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring there is rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school by senior leaders and governors so that ambition to improve pupils' attainment is evident in higher pupils' achievement by summer 2010
 - urgently developing a school improvement plan, based on rigorous and accurate self-evaluation, to tackle the weaknesses in pupils' outcomes which are evident from poor performance through Key Stage 2.

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

Pupils' outcomes are inadequate overall because attainment is low and achievement over time is inadequate. School data show that all pupils, including the most able, are failing to make the progress they should. Consequently, they fall behind their peers nationally year by year and the main reason for this is that teaching is not challenging enough. These low standards are confirmed in national test results for the last four years and in the work seen in pupils' books and during lessons. Girls underperform compared to girls nationally even though their performance is better than the boys'. Pupils identified as needing additional support because of their special educational needs and/or disabilities are also underperforming when compared to their peers nationally. At the end of Year 6, the number of higher attainers at the school is below the national average in all subjects. Too few achieve the higher levels based on their starting points when they begin the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils study the faiths and cultures of the wider world through their topic work and religious education.

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Cultural awareness is developed through art and music, their work within the local community and their appreciation of others less fortunate than themselves.

Preparation for pupils' future well-being is satisfactory overall and pupils have moral values and good social skills. While skills in literacy and numeracy are not as well developed, pupils are enthusiastic learners and have high attendance, good attitudes to school and good information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They are fast and adept at using the internet to research the topics they are studying and good progress is made in the skills in text and data handling. When working either in the computer suite or class, they are diligent, hard working and eager to please. Pupils' writing is immature in style, untidy and poorly formed. The school is addressing this issue through a focus on handwriting but there is still too little time devoted to extended writing, correct grammar and punctuation. Pupils say they feel exceptionally safe at school because adults care about them. They are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles and have an excellent understanding of what constitutes good food and exercise; many participate in sports activities and eat a hot school lunch because it is nutritious and freshly cooked each day. The inspection team was delighted to taste the cakes made using equivalent ingredients to those available during the Second World War!

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	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

In the main, teachers have good subject knowledge and make sure, through a satisfactory curriculum, that lessons are based on first-hand experience. They plan lessons based around interesting topic work and use ICT well to develop skills in this subject and make learning fun. Nevertheless, teaching is inadequate overall because there is a lack of high enough expectation in many lessons. Assessment information, which the school keeps about pupils' attainment, is not used well enough to set sufficiently challenging work for pupils, particularly in developing their skills in English and mathematics. In the weakest lessons there is little evidence of target setting and learning is very teacher-directed. Targets for pupils are not clear and small steps are not identified which would enable them to make better progress. Teachers' questioning, while based on thorough knowledge of the subject, provides little challenge to the most able. There is no sense of urgency when pupils change over lessons and too much time is wasted on inappropriate activities and repeating work already covered. Pupils are satisfactorily cared for, guided and supported; they know who to ask for help if they have worries or concerns.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Monitoring and evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses by governors, senior leaders and subject leaders are inaccurate. While leaders and managers are motivated to improve the school, their priorities and ambitions for improvement do not put enough emphasis on raising pupils' basic skills in English, mathematics and science. This is primarily due to leaders not placing sufficient importance on the results of national tests and inadequate monitoring of teaching and learning. Hence, expectations and future proposals for school improvement are unrealistic.

The school uses local partnerships, which include support from the local authority, and there is a strong sense of community cohesion within the school and further afield, with links to Africa and fund raising for charities. However, partnership with the local authority has not had the desired impact of promoting effective learning. While all pupils access the opportunities available, there is an inequality in how well the girls, the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the higher-attaining pupils are performing when compared to their peers nationally.

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The governing body satisfactorily ensures that pupils' welfare and safeguarding procedures are in place, but governors are not sufficiently involved in ensuring that strategies for whole-school improvement are developed, implemented and monitored. Although the school maintains a satisfactory engagement with parents and carers, it has not made it exactly clear to them how well their children progress academically.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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	4
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

Views of parents and carers

Most parents are happy with their children's experience and happiness at the school. Most feel that the school is well led and managed and that their children are safe while at school. A few do not feel that the school informs them about their children's progress, that their children make enough progress or that their views are taken into account. While inspectors feel that the school keeps parents well informed about activities, they have judged during this inspection that it is not well led and managed, as it does not take full account of pupils' needs, and does not give parents a clear enough view about how well their children are achieving academically.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meath Green Junior 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 154 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 348 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	100	65	52	34	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	103	67	49	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	66	43	77	50	8	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	74	48	68	44	9	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	86	56	64	42	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	75	49	71	46	5	3	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	90	58	62	40	1	1	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)	76	49	68	44	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	78	51	64	42	6	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	68	44	76	49	6	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	73	47	68	44	7	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	103	67	44	29	6	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	100	65	49	32	2	1	1	1

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



4 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meath Green Junior School, Horley RH6 8HW

Thank you for making the inspectors welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting some of you in class and at lunch time. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour, how much you care for each other and the hard work and diligence with which you get on with your work. You told us about how safe you feel at the school, how you are able to keep yourself fit and healthy and how the school involves you in local activities and the community, and we agree.

You told us how much you enjoyed school and you appear to be having a lot of fun learning about the various topics around the school; your school environment is welcoming. Your teachers are good at making sure your lessons are interesting through the various topics they teach you. As a result, most of you are keen and enthusiastic learners ready for the next stage of schooling.

However, we found that the senior leaders and governors in the school are not taking enough notice of your academic performance, which is not as good as it should be. They are not using the information they have about you to make sure work is challenging enough in class. As a consequence, many of you do not do as well as you should and we have decided that your school requires special measures to help things improve quickly.

We have asked the school to make sure that teaching improves, that lessons are harder and that the managers and governors check on this regularly. We want them to let you and your parents know how well you are doing and what you need to do next so that your standards of work improve. You can all help here by maintaining your keen enthusiasm for work and continuing your excellent behaviour in class and around the school. Inspectors will return to your school again to check up on how you are doing.

We wish you every success for your future.

Yours sincerely

Linda Kelsey

Her Majesty's Inspector

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