

Melton Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique reference number | 124597 |
| Local authority | Suffolk |
| Inspection number | 380929 |
| Inspection dates | 23–24 February 2012 |
| Lead inspector | David Edwards HMI |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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|--|-----------------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 109 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Rob Cutts |
| Headteacher | Greg Sadler (Acting) |
| Date of previous school inspection | 17 January 2011 |
| School address | Melton Road Melton IP12 1PG |
| Telephone number | 01394 382506 |
| Fax number | 01394 380404 |
| Email address | ad.melton.p@talk21.com |

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Introduction

Inspection team

David Edwards

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited five class teachers and observed nine lessons. In addition, discussions were held with two groups of pupils, the headteacher, the senior leaders, teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a local authority representative. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' performance, the school development plan, minutes from governing body meetings, school policies, and curriculum planning documents. In addition, questionnaires were scrutinised from 36 parents and carers, 19 staff and 102 pupils.

Information about the school

This smaller-than-average primary school serves a diverse community. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage, while others come from a range of minority ethnic groups. A few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average, as is the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The school has created a 'nurture group' to provide for those pupils whose circumstances potentially make them most vulnerable. The school roll is falling and the number of pupils in each age group varies widely. Each class contains two year groups, except in Year 6.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school was subject to a notice to improve. There has been significant change in staffing since then. Following a period of sustained illness, an acting headteacher took over the leadership of the school in June 2011 until half-term in February 2012. The present acting headteacher took up his post two days before the start of this inspection. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress.

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 | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 3 |

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Melton Primary is a satisfactory school, which has made important improvements in key areas of its work since the last inspection. The school now has an accurate understanding of its effectiveness and what it needs to do to improve further. It is not yet good because teaching is not consistently good enough to secure good achievement in English, particularly in writing, or mathematics.
- Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory and attainment is broadly average and rising steadily. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and older pupils now make satisfactory progress. Pupils with specific learning difficulties lack daily opportunities to practise their core skills. Attainment in writing is a particular weakness, but improving throughout the school, especially for potentially vulnerable groups and boys.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and their attendance rates are above average. Pupils say they feel safe in school because of the effective care and support they receive. Incidents of poor behaviour are managed well and the school works closely with partner agencies to meet the needs of those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable effectively.
- Teaching is typically satisfactory and sometimes good. Improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum have ensured that the majority of pupils are now making better progress in lessons than previously and enjoy school. Some lessons do not take full account of the wide range of pupils’ abilities or interests and pupils do not have regular opportunities to set their own targets for improvement or reflect on their work.
- Despite the unavoidable changes in leadership over the past year, the governing body, along with the deputy headteacher, has worked closely with

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the local authority to strengthen self-evaluation and improve provision and learning outcomes for pupils. The leadership of teaching and management of performance are satisfactory.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing throughout the school to bring pupils' achievements in English at least in line with the national average by:
 - providing daily and highly focused support for those pupils who sometimes find learning a challenge
 - providing regular writing opportunities for pupils that take full account of the wide range of their abilities and interests.

- Raise the quality of teaching so that more is good or outstanding by:
 - ensuring that lesson planning takes account of pupils' interests and gives them frequent opportunities to exercise self-responsibility
 - giving time in lessons for pupils to reflect on their work and their teacher's marking
 - giving pupils more responsibility for setting and reviewing their own targets for improvement in English and mathematics.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most children begin school with knowledge and skills levels that are in line with age-related expectations. They make a strong start in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of good teaching. Secure routines and high-quality care ensure children settle quickly and make good progress. Children's interest and enthusiasm for learning are evident in the way they take turns and play cooperatively together in the well-resourced learning environment. Most parents and carers spoke positively in their questionnaires about the improvements made to their children's achievement.

Observations of pupils' learning in lessons and their work in books confirm that the school has successfully addressed the legacy of underachievement. More pupils now make satisfactory and improving progress in Key Stage 1 and their attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 and when they leave school is average. However, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected levels in writing is not as high because lesson plans do not always take account of pupils' interests or provide regular opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility in lessons for their learning. Pupils' attitudes towards their learning remain positive and they enjoy lessons,

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especially when activities ignite their imagination. For example, following the visit of an astronomer, pupils in a Year 6 class were motivated and keen to write a letter of thanks to explain what they had learnt.

The attainment gaps between groups identified as potentially vulnerable by the school and their peers nationally are now closing. This is particularly the case for boys and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. However, their progress is no better than satisfactory because they do not receive specialised support or intervention on a daily basis.

Quality of teaching

Pupils are making greater progress than in the past because the quality of teaching has improved and is now typically satisfactory or better. The school's investment in staff training and support from the local authority in the past year is reflected in teachers' improved subject knowledge and a curriculum that matches the pupils' needs and interests more closely. This has also strengthened pupils' sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others, and the world around them. As a result, pupils say they appreciate the efforts teachers put into making lessons fun. The majority of responses in parents and carers' questionnaires also acknowledge the improvements the school has made to teaching and pupils' learning. Parents and carers value the school's growing reputation as a community school. For example, one wrote: 'We have been most impressed by both the pastoral care of all staff and the very genuine sense of belonging and community experienced by the children.'

Teachers use assessment information appropriately when planning lessons to provide for the variety of pupils' learning needs. Teachers' marking in books is supportive and sometimes provides pupils with guidance on how to improve their work, but this is not consistent across the school. Attainment in mathematics is higher than in English because teachers plan activities that encourage pupils to use a variety of strategies when solving problems. For example, towards the end of a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson, some pupils were encouraged to consolidate their mathematical knowledge by setting problem-solving challenges for their peers. Also, actions taken to improve pupils' writing have been introduced only recently and so have not had time to become fully embedded. Literacy and numeracy targets are provided for each pupil and lessons contain success criteria to help pupils evaluate their learning. However, pupils lack regular opportunities to work closely with their teachers in creating targets for themselves that will address their individual areas for improvement. Consequently, opportunities for pupils to develop a growing responsibility for their learning are missed.

In the Reception class, adults are confident in the delivery of daily phonics sessions (linking letters with the sounds they make) that provide children with regular opportunities to develop secure reading and writing skills. In a mathematics session the teacher made good use of modern technology to support children in counting the spots on a ladybird's back, which further secured their enthusiasm and engagement

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in learning. Effective systems, such as regularly updated personal learning profiles, keep parents and carers informed about their children's progress in school. Transition arrangements into and out of the setting provide valuable information to teachers and this information is used well to inform planning and further provision.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour of pupils in class and around the school is good. A scrutiny of behavioural records, discussions with pupils, and responses by parents and carers show that this is also the case over time. The inclusive culture within the school is evidenced through its effective commitment to pupils' spiritual, social, and moral development. The school has made particularly good progress in the past year to strengthen the curriculum and develop pupils' cultural awareness and their involvement in the community. Pupils' positive attitudes make a significant contribution not only to their good learning and progress, but also to the calm and orderly atmosphere evident within the school. For example, pupils sat in family groups while in assembly, listened attentively, reflected on the thought for the day and left in an orderly manner, thereby respecting assembly as a special occasion.

Pupils report that bullying in any form is rare and say that adults take any reported incidents very seriously. They are confident that the school keeps them safe and ensures that they understand what constitutes unsafe situations. The school has worked successfully with other agencies to address the few significant behavioural issues that have arisen in the recent past and has maintained the full confidence of staff, pupils, and most of the parents and carers. A very large majority of parents and carers reported that standards of behaviour are typically good in the school and believe that all reasonable steps are taken to keep their children safe.

Adults work effectively together in the Reception class to provide a stimulating learning environment for children, both indoors and outside, so that children develop their skills successfully across all areas of learning. Throughout the day, staff are vigilant for the safety and well-being of pupils and take every opportunity to support and reinforce expectations of good play and behaviour. Similarly, in lessons, teachers plan creative activities that grasp and maintain pupils' good concentration.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders have worked successfully, despite a lack of continuity in the leadership of the school, to address the areas of weakness identified at the time of the previous inspection. They have made good use of support from the local authority in providing professional development for the staff and have raised the expectations of staff and pupils, while maintaining the confidence of the wider school community.

Consequently, parents and carers talk positively about the improvements in pupils' achievements, although they are also anxious to see a permanent headteacher appointed as soon as possible. Self-evaluation is now accurate and this has enabled the school to channel its energies strategically and with growing success towards providing pupils with an improved curriculum that better meets their needs and

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develops their strengthening spiritual, moral, social, and cultural awareness. The school has been particularly successful in providing increased opportunities for pupils to participate in community events and in strengthening their understanding of the diversity of British culture. The improved provision has led to raised levels of attainment throughout the school since the previous inspection and demonstrates that the capacity for improvement is now secure.

The school's commitment to equality is evident, for example in the successful actions taken to reduce the achievement gaps between different groups of pupils. The school works closely with external partners to ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are monitored carefully. The governing body is kept well informed about the work of the school and possesses an accurate understanding of its strengths and weakness. As a result, it holds the school effectively to account. Most parents and carers' questionnaire responses confirm that they hold positive views on the school. For example, 'The school has noticeably improved in the last six months' was a typical comment.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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 | 46 | 46 | 8 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 47 | 40 | 5 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 38 | 40 | 8 |
| Special schools | 28 | 48 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 15 | 50 | 29 | 5 |
| All schools | 11 | 46 | 38 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Attendance | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| Behaviour | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| 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. |
| Safety | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

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.



27 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Melton Primary School, Melton, IP12 1PG

Thank you for making me welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. In particular, thank you to those of you who completed the questionnaire, shared your work with me, and spoke with me about what you think about your school. It was all very helpful. I have decided your school has improved since the previous inspection and is now a satisfactory and improving school.

Here are some of the best things about the school. Teachers monitor the progress you all make in your lessons carefully now. This helps them to plan lessons that are interesting and better suited to your learning needs. Children in Reception Year settle quickly to learning and make good progress because adults help them to learn while playing. You show a positive attitude to learning and your behaviour around school is good. Also, your attendance is good. Well done and keep it up!

There are some things I would like the school to improve so that you reach higher standards in your work. I have asked your headteacher to make sure lessons take full account of your interests and provide regular opportunities for you to reflect on your work and the comments that teachers write in your books. I would like you to have regular opportunities to work more closely with your teachers in reviewing your work and creating targets that will help you to improve further.

I would especially like you to get better at writing, so that by the end of Year 6 your achievements will be at least in line with other pupils nationally. Therefore, I would like those of you who sometimes find learning difficult to have daily opportunities to practise your reading and writing skills as well as improved opportunities for all of you to write about the things that capture your imagination and interests. In this way, you will develop and take on a growing responsibility for your learning that will lead to you becoming more successful writers. I wish you every success.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector

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