

Melton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124597
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	359717
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Katherine Beck

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	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Cutts
Headteacher	Andrew Rowe
Date of previous school inspection	10 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons taught by five teachers were observed. Meetings were held with parents, carers, groups of pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the procedures for safeguarding pupils, the school's self-evaluation form and the school development plans. In addition inspectors looked at the report from the school improvement partner, pupils' work, records of pupils' progress, attendance records and the results of 55 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas:

- the effectiveness of action the school is taking to raise standards
- the quality of teaching, especially in mixed-age classes and its impact on pupils' progress as they move through the school
- the effectiveness of leadership in managing the falling roll and ensuring that recent improvements in pupils' progress and attainment are sustained.

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, especially White and Black African and mixed backgrounds. Few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly similar to that found in schools nationally. The proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The needs relate mainly to learning and behavioural difficulties. The school roll is falling and the number of children in each age group varies widely. Except in Year 6, children are taught in classes containing two year groups. Pupils start at the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage class in the September of the year in which they become five. They have the option to attend part-time until the term they are due to celebrate their fifth birthday, when they attend full-time. Two members of staff have been at the school for just over a year, while most are long serving. A privately run holiday club operates on the school site. In term time children are collected to attend an after school club at a nearby location.

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 significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to leadership and management to secure recent improvements in pupils' attainment and increase the school's capacity to improve.

Overall the school is currently providing an adequate quality of education, with strengths in the creative arts and provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage, but it lacks the capacity to sustain and build on recent improvements. The school is undergoing a period of substantial change. The number of pupils on roll has fallen from 167 to 128 in the last three years and it is anticipated that it will fall further by 2012. To adapt to this, the number of senior leaders and teaching staff has been reduced so that more pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.

In 2008 standards in Year 6 fell and were well below average. The school was provided with additional support for a year. It took action to improve the situation and since then there has been a rising trend in attainment for this age group so that in 2010 standards in Year 6 were broadly average. This rising trend is fragile. The picture is less positive in Year 2 where standards have been below average, especially in writing, for the past two years. In September 2010 the number of teachers was reduced further and three of the five remaining staff are currently teaching year groups they have not taught before. Overall teaching is satisfactory, but pupils' progress is inconsistent. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 6 make good progress, but in other year groups progress is only satisfactory and, at times, inadequate. This is because work is not matched consistently to pupils' abilities. Teaching assistants provide appropriate support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they make satisfactory progress. Pupils are sometimes confused about what they are to learn or how they can improve as the information is not provided in child-friendly language. In a minority of lessons the pace of learning slows when inappropriate behaviour is not tackled quickly enough. Consequently, pupils in the older age groups have a lot of ground to make up to reach expected standards before they leave the school.

The governing body is determined to bring about improvements. It has worked closely with senior leaders to manage a smaller budget, to try to limit a negative impact on provision, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The governing body made the decision to put off the implementation of statutory requirements to promote of community cohesion to allow staff to focus on raising pupils' achievements. This means statutory requirements are not met.

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With the reduction in the number of pupils, some senior leaders and temporary staff who also contributed to improvements in standards have left the school. Staff, recently promoted to leadership roles, have not undergone sufficient training relevant to a post of significant responsibility. This means that skills across the senior leadership team are insufficient to monitor the quality of teaching rigorously enough and raise it to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress over their time in school. Leadership and management skills are also insufficient to ensure that school self-evaluation is accurate as leaders are too reliant on the views of outside consultants. School development planning is also weak as key priorities lack clarity with regard to intended outcomes. The impact of actions being taken to bring about improvements is not evaluated rigorously enough. These factors demonstrate an inadequate capacity to sustain current strengths or bring about further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build the school's capacity to improve by developing the skills of those with leadership and management responsibilities in:
 - ensuring self-evaluation provides the school with an accurate appraisal of its effectiveness
 - raising the quality of school development planning so that it reflects precisely what needs to be done to consolidate success and secure further improvement
 - judging effectively the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- By December 2011 raise the quality of teaching so that it becomes consistently good. In particular ensure all staff:
 - manage the behaviour of pupils effectively
 - match work to pupils' individual needs
 - enable pupils to understand easily what they are learning and what they need to do to improve.
- Meet statutory requirements with regard to the promotion of community cohesion by:
 - carrying out an audit of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of the school community within a local, national and global context
 - developing an action plan to extend the school's links nationally and further afield
 - implementing evaluation procedures to review the impact of this provision.

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

Overall pupils' achievements are satisfactory by the time they leave the school. This is not the case in all year groups as teaching is not consistently good enough to raise and sustain the improvement in standards and accelerate progress. Most pupils enjoy school, attend regularly and behave satisfactorily. At break and lunch times and in the public areas of the school pupils usually behave well and show good manners. That said, behaviour in assembly and occasionally in lessons interrupts learning. A small number of days were lost to fixed term exclusions last year.

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While pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the picture across the school is uneven. In a successful literacy lesson in Key Stage 2 pupils made good progress. They developed a clear understanding of how to write in a persuasive manner, by writing a guide book on the locality. Pupils drew on literacy skills learned in previous lessons, took their ideas from real examples of guide books and worked well together in pairs or as a group. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities were supported effectively by a teaching assistant to ensure they played a full part in the lesson. Such good progress is not consistent, especially when all pupils, regardless of their abilities, are asked to complete the same work. For example, in a lesson about the water cycle too little account was taken of what pupils already knew and it held little challenge for them.

Pupils know how to stay safe and are confident that problems will be sorted out by staff. They enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being a school councillor or lunch time monitor during wet play times. The recent award of Healthy School status has deepened their understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils develop a sound understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. Their knowledge of famous artists is a particular strength, but their awareness of the diversity of life nationally and globally is limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that pupils build up their knowledge, skills and understanding year-on-year. There are some good features in lessons where teachers choose activities that make learning relevant to pupils' ages and interests. Good use of new technology focuses pupils' attention, supports teachers' explanations and deepens pupils' understanding. Teachers' use of a variety of strategies, such as talk partners or group work, that enable pupils to think through their ideas before writing them down is helping to raise standards in writing. In the weaker lessons pupils spend too much time listening to their teacher, tasks set do not meet their needs and teachers do not adjust their plans accordingly to support learning. Consequently pupils lose interest, their behaviour deteriorates and learning slows. Teachers' comments about what pupils are to learn at the beginning of lessons, in their marking, and in setting pupils' individual targets are not written consistently in a way that pupils can easily understand. Consequently, pupils feel confused about what they have to do and how to improve.

The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of experiences for pupils. Often subjects are taught separately, although staff point out links between them. The curriculum is enriched by out of school clubs, visits to places of interest and opportunities for pupils to express their individuality through good quality art work. All Year 4 and Year 5 pupils learn to play a brass instrument. When appropriate, pupils receive one-to-one attention and the newly established nurture group is supporting pupils in the younger age group with social and emotional difficulties to develop positive attitudes towards learning.

Satisfactory care, guidance and support help to keep pupils safe. The school is working effectively with professionals to enable families to access support and to meet the needs of children whose circumstances have made them vulnerable, especially those with behavioural difficulties.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are inadequate. Senior leaders and governors share the ambition for the pupils to make good progress and reach high standards regardless of their abilities. However, weak development planning and self-evaluation procedures mean that steps to embed their ambitions are not effective in driving and securing improvement at a good rate. Teaching is monitored formally but the focus is often on what the teacher is doing rather than on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Feedback to staff is ineffective and insufficient to help them to raise the quality of their teaching and enhance

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pupils' progress throughout the school. Consequently, teaching remains satisfactory and has not improved since the last inspection.

The school is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and monitors the progress of different groups carefully. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is tracked closely and amendments made to their provision to enhance their progress. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities, as well as those who are more able, appropriately.

The governing body has many strengths. It holds the school to account for its overall effectiveness and ensures that pupils and staff are safe. Training in safer recruitment, child protection and first aid is up-to-date and provision for safeguarding is monitored. The governing body is aware of the challenges the school faces, particularly in the light of a falling roll and decreasing budget. It has been instrumental in determining the focus to improve the quality of provision and raise pupils' attainment and progress.

Although members of the governing body have a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through their constructive relationships with staff and good systems to seek the views of parents, carers and pupils, governance is inadequate. This is because the governing body has not ensured that the school meets the statutory requirements to promote community cohesion. The governing body, together with senior leaders, has not conducted a full audit, established a plan to promote community cohesion within a national and global context, or established procedures to evaluate the impact of the school's work. The school has taken part in a local community project with other schools, but this has not helped pupils to know enough about other communities nationally and abroad.

Partnerships with parents, carers, other schools and professionals support and enhance pupils' learning and personal development, especially in improving outcomes for pupils with significant special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

A stimulating and welcoming environment offers children many rich, varied and imaginative experiences that meet their interests. Children's enthusiasm and curiosity is captured effectively and directed into developing good levels of achievement, excellent behaviour, independence and decision-making. This enables staff to work with small groups and take their learning forward without interruption. Good partnerships with pre-school playgroups, parents and carers ensure that children settle quickly. There is a good balance of captivating activities indoors and outdoors that children enjoy whatever the weather.

Staff use information gathered from effective arrangements for assessment to track children's progress well and to match work to precise needs. They also analyse data to find out where changes need to be made to enhance progress. For example, recent analysis showed the need for more attention to be given to helping children to calculate and solve problems. Planning has been adapted to include more activities to help children progress faster in these areas. As a result of these good features, from below expected attainment on entry, especially in communication, counting and social and emotional development, attainment is broadly in line with the national average when children move into Year 1.

The headteacher, who has overall responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage recognises, the skills of the staff and encourages them to take decisions and show initiative in their work.

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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	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The number of responses is similar to that found in most schools. Parents and carers have very mixed views about the school. The majority say that their child enjoys school; it keeps children safe and helps them to maintain a healthy lifestyle. A number of parents and carers are concerned about the progress their child is making, the manner in which the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, and its leadership and management. A few parents and carers added comments that praised the school for its warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Melton 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 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 128 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	60	17	31	5	9	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	55	22	40	3	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	40	27	49	3	5	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	31	29	53	3	5	3	5
The teaching is good at this school	20	36	27	49	5	9	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	36	29	53	5	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	35	32	58	3	5	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)	21	38	23	42	6	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	40	25	45	6	11	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	18	32	58	4	7	6	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	25	32	58	5	9	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	19	35	27	49	3	5	5	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	38	27	49	5	9	2	4

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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



19 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Melton Primary School, Woodbridge, IP12 1PG

You will recall that I visited your school with a colleague recently. I am writing to thank you for making us feel welcome and answering all our questions. We enjoyed listening to what you had to say. You told us you enjoyed coming to school and you know how to stay safe and develop a healthy lifestyle. Some of you said that you are concerned about the behaviour of other pupils. We found that while most of you behave well and show good manners, a few of you let yourselves down by thoughtless behaviour that interrupts your learning.

We noticed that the youngest children make a good start to school life and that those of you in Year 6 are making good progress. We believe that pupils in other classes do not do as well as they might. We were pleased to learn about the interesting work you did with other schools about the local community. However the school does not do enough to help you learn about other communities at home and abroad.

There are important things in your school that need significant improvement and we have asked the headteacher, governors and staff to:

- plan carefully the improvements they want to make to help you do as well as you can and to check that these plans are successful
- improve the lessons your teachers provide so that you learn more and your behaviour is better
- help you to understand more about the lives of other children in different parts of the country and the world.

You can all help by continuing to attend regularly, doing your best and behaving as well as you can all the time.

Yours sincerely

Katherine Beck

Lead inspector

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