

Meridian Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100137
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	354803
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Gavin Jones

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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Parkes
Headteacher	Dave Suttle and Jo Graham
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons ensuring that all teachers present during the inspection were seen at least once. Inspectors met with groups of pupils, staff and governors. They observed the school's work, and attended playtimes, lunch and assembly. They looked at planning, evidence of monitoring, assessment data, the school's improvement plan, a range of school policies, details of safeguarding, minutes of the meetings of the governing body and a range of pupils' books. They analysed 115 questionnaires from parents and carers, 53 from pupils and 28 from members of staff.

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

- The attainment and progress of more-able pupils.
- The ways in which the school is continuing to seek improvements to teaching and learning.
- The extent of the school's monitoring of pupils' personal development.
- The extent to which pupils understand ethnic, religious and cultural diversity in British society and on a more global scale.

Information about the school

Meridian School is of average size. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high when compared with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the proportion with statements of special educational needs is twice the national average. The school has designated provision for deaf children, for which there are 18 places. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic heritages and of those who speak English as an additional language are high. The number of pupils who join and leave the school between Years 2 and 6 is higher than average. There is a 37-place Nursery at the school, which includes a very small number of full-time children; the remainder come to either morning or afternoon sessions. Children in Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in Nursery and one Reception Class. The school is an Investor in People organisation and has National Healthy Schools Status and an Activemark award.

The deputy headteacher was acting headteacher at the time of the inspection, sharing this role with the former headteacher who is retiring at the end of this academic year. She will become the full-time headteacher in the autumn.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Meridian is a good school. It has consolidated its previous successes and made further improvements. Senior leaders have taken the school forward with an able team which shares their vision for the school. Improvements have been made in pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and English, particularly in writing. The school's outstanding care is part and parcel of the way that the school deals with all of its pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and is greatly appreciated by parents and carers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with a good start and they continue to make good progress through the school because the quality of teaching and learning remains good throughout. By Year 6, not only have pupils made good gains in their personal development, they have reached above-average levels of attainment. For a significant minority of pupils this illustrates outstanding progress. This has been achieved in spite of a much higher than average proportion of pupils joining the school after Year 2. The school's rigorous assessment and tracking systems help ensure that all pupils make the progress expected of them. However, the assessment data of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those pupils who are deaf, although accurate, are not compared with data for similar pupils nationally.

The new leadership team, led jointly by the retiring and new headteachers, is already in place and known to staff, pupils, parents and carers. It is well placed to make further improvements. For example, good teaching has been consolidated and examples of outstanding teaching are already being observed. All of this, together with the team's clear picture of the next stage of the school's development, indicates that the school has good capacity for continuing improvement. Although the school conducts regular, accurate self-evaluation, the results are not drawn together well enough on a termly and annual basis to show the impact of school improvement and the process does not involve a sufficiently wide range of stakeholders.

The school has a positive relationship with parents and carers and this has helped pupils' improved attendance. Parents and carers are involved in their children's learning and supported very well by consultations, workshops, targets sent home, homework and good quality reports. The friends of the school give good financial support and organise social events. Pupils enjoy the cultural diversity in the school, behave very sensibly and relate well to each other. They are keen to be part of the school's day-to-day life and this extends to their contact with the local community. However, this enthusiasm does not extend much beyond their immediate vicinity to the rest of the United Kingdom and the wider world.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' understanding and awareness of the diversity of the world beyond their local community, building on the school's strong contribution to its own community, by:
 - providing clearer opportunities for pupils to compare their lives with others in another part of the United Kingdom
 - giving pupils a more detailed understanding of the global community
 - adapting the school's good curriculum so that topics reflect this wider cultural perspective
 - evaluating the outcomes for pupils of these developments at the end of the next academic year.
- Improve self-evaluation by:
 - establishing the termly review of self-evaluation by governors and staff to show the impact of school improvement strategies and highlight areas for development to link with the school improvement plan
 - measuring pupils' attainment and progress, including those of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, against national benchmarks.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy school and make good progress, which has improved since the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including deaf pupils, and those from minority ethnic groups make the same good progress as their peers because their needs are assessed accurately and they are given good support. Lessons seen during the inspection confirm that attainment is above the national average in English and mathematics. In a Year 2 poetry lesson, pupils were exhilarated using a wide range of vocabulary to make their poems funny. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were gaining a good understanding of money in a very practical way, doing their shopping and understanding what change should be given.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and sometimes exemplary. Pupils say they feel exceptionally safe in school and recognise that there is always an adult they can turn to for advice. Pupils are proud of their school and take on a range of responsibilities; the oldest pupils look after the youngest children at times and read stories to them. A Year 6 lesson provided a good example of this. Pupils were looking at the written concerns of Year 2 pupils about to go to camp, and were discussing in a mature way how they might help them overcome their fears. The school's Healthy Schools Status and its Activemark award reflect the extent to which pupils understand how to lead healthy lives. They take part in a wide range of activities after school, many of which are related to sport.

The school has made good progress in raising attendance levels and they are now above the national average. This, together with pupils' use of their good basic skills to work in and lead groups, indicates that they are well prepared for their next stage of education. Pupils show respect for each other and clearly understand the difference between right and wrong.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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

How effective is the provision?

Overall teaching is good with several examples of outstanding practice seen during the inspection. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and teachers have established a culture where pupils want to do well and enjoy what they are doing, from literacy and numeracy to exciting music and dance lessons. As a result, teachers are able to manage behaviour with a light touch. Planning is detailed and activities are designed to challenge all abilities in the classes. Although learning objectives are shared with pupils, not enough emphasis is placed on helping them to judge how successful they have been in their work. Marking is regular and in many cases the teachers describe how pupils might improve. Detailed checks are made on the progress of individual pupils, especially any who may be in danger of underachieving, at regular pupil progress meetings between class teachers and senior leaders.

The well-organised curriculum focuses on themes in order to draw together several subjects within a topic. This cross-curricular approach is enjoyed by pupils who find it easy to relate to many of the real-life starting points. The school makes very good use of its geographical position and pupils regularly visit heritage sites, museums and galleries. A lesson in Year 3 saw pupils discussing objects they had found following a visit to the River Thames; they were using appropriate vocabulary to describe the objects and were trying to date them. The use of specialist teachers, such as those from Greenwich Dance and

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Greenwich Music Services, has a positive effect on pupils' progress and supports the development of class teachers' skills, and in the same way the school's numeracy specialist provides support in all classes. Work to promote community cohesion, however, remains underdeveloped.

Pastoral care is exceptionally effective because it is well targeted and has supported, in particular, a range of vulnerable pupils. Excellent support is given to pupils who are deaf. Breakfast and after-school clubs cater for a small group of pupils who benefit from the good start to the day and after-school care. They are both well run by members of the school team, who know the pupils well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are effective at all levels and underpinned by the ambition, drive and commitment of the retiring headteacher and his successor who, as deputy headteacher, has been a member of the leadership team for several years. The very well-conceived and well-managed succession plan has been very important for the school.

The school has an effective range of partnerships, not least those with parents and carers, which it uses well to support learning and improve progress. Parents and carers are universally pleased with the good quality of the school's safeguarding. Child protection systems are of good quality and training in all aspects is up to date. The governing body is well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development and is now increasingly able to use performance information to support improvement and question progress, although a timetabled termly review of progress towards targets and linked with the school development plan is currently not in place. Because the tracking of pupils' progress is carried out effectively, it allows the school to note the performance of a wide range of vulnerable pupils and to ensure that no pupils are discriminated against and that all are treated fairly. The school is a strong, cohesive community but pupils' interest in and understanding of the world beyond their immediate vicinity is insufficiently well developed.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the Nursery and are made to feel welcome by the caring staff. They enjoy a rich range of experiences in a stimulating and colourful learning environment, both inside and outside the classroom. Some of the activities are inspired by children's own interests, while others are carefully directed in order to check children's progress and introduce skills. Children also quickly settle into the Reception class as routines are already known. They become confident and eager learners, making good progress, so that by the time they enter Year 1, they are working at levels that are broadly average. However, their speaking and listening skills, noted as being weak in Nursery, are still not as good as they should be by this time.

Children play together and learn together well. However, the lack of a dedicated outdoor area for Reception children does cause some timetabling problems, although the school manages to set aside time in the nursery play area, the main playground and the outdoor trail. Children are allocated to specific adults and receive individual support for their needs. Teaching is good overall and sometimes outstanding and the curriculum promotes skills and independence. Children were cutting out circles with great care in a science investigation and were discussing cylinders and cuboids in a mathematics lesson. Children's progress is regularly checked and tracked, so that staff have a clear picture of what to plan next. However, the different formats for recording attainment mean that it is sometimes difficult to get an overview of the impact of teaching on different children. Relationships with parents and carers are exceptional. Parents and carers visit every day to share learning experiences with their children, helping to ensure that the care given is of the highest level. The leadership of this part of the school is good and sensitive Year 1 transition arrangements are handled well.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

The views of parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive, as reflected in the questionnaires. Every parent who responded said that they were happy with the school and almost all said their children enjoy school, are safe there and make enough progress. They also said that teaching is good and that their children understand about healthy lifestyles. They felt the school takes account of their suggestions and that it is well led. The inspection confirms these positive statements. Three parents felt that they are not informed about the progress their children are making at school. The inspection found that the school provides detailed annual reports together with regular opportunities for parents and carers to meet teachers and discuss progress. In addition it now shares pupils' targets with parents so that they have a clear idea about what their children need to do next.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meridian 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 115 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 237 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	84	73	29	25	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	86	75	28	24	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	72	63	40	35	2	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	67	58	44	38	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	75	65	39	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	61	53	50	43	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	43	62	54	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)	51	44	59	51	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	60	52	48	42	5	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	59	51	48	42	5	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	50	54	47	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	70	61	43	37	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	91	79	24	21	0	0	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



26 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meridian Primary School, Greenwich, London SE10 9NY

Thank you for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. You are justly proud of your school. Here are the highlights of what we saw on our visit.

- Your attainment and progress are good and you thoroughly enjoy school.
- Adults take exceptional care of you at school and you all feel extremely safe as a result.
- Teaching and learning are good and sometimes outstanding.
- Those of you who are deaf are taught and supported exceptionally well.
- Your respect for each other and the way you all work and play together are excellent.
- The way you take on responsibilities and your links with the local community are good.

Your teachers should now help you to gain a clearer picture of what life is like for children in other parts of our country and further afield. The school also should reorganise its self-evaluation to get a clearer idea about the things that need to be done next.

I know that you will continue to do your best to do as well as you can and to come to school regularly now that attendance has improved.

Best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Gavin Jones

Lead inspector

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