

Medway Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120108
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	366820
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Ceri Morgan 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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Wilson
Headteacher	Kath Falconer
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2010
School address	St Stephens Road Highfields, Leicester LE2 1GH
Telephone number	01162 544811
Fax number	01162 543738
Email address	kfalconer@medway.leicester.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed every teacher and 20 lessons were seen, along with the full extent of the school's work. Meetings were held with senior leaders and managers and a group of pupils. Other meetings were also held with governors from Medway and the partner school and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also conducted an extensive work scrutiny and read through key school documentation, including the draft school improvement plan, safeguarding checks and various minutes and records of meetings. This visit was conducted under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and, as a consequence, no Ofsted parental questionnaires were issued prior to the visit.

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

- The team checked the progress that has been made in improving pupils' achievement.
- They looked at the impact that recent changes in leadership, governance and teaching are having on school improvement.
- Inspectors inquired whether pupils from Roma heritage backgrounds are making sufficient progress.
- They analysed whether recent improvements in attendance have been sustained.

Information about the school

Medway is larger than most primary schools and serves an urban residential area with many different faiths and cultures. Around a third of the pupils are of Bangladeshi heritage while the remainder come from a wide range of backgrounds. These include Indian, African and White British. Increasingly the school takes pupils from Eastern European backgrounds and Roma heritage. The proportions of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English or who speak English as an additional language are high. The school has an above-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is very high and the proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school during the school year is above average. There is a separate, independent nursery on site which was not inspected but the Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two additional Nursery classes and a Reception class. The school has several awards, including National Healthy School Status and Investors in People. Since September 2010, the school has been led and managed by an interim executive headteacher who is also headteacher at Sparkenhoe School. This is an outstanding school nearby and the relationship between the schools is expected to continue for the long term. There are several joint appointments between the schools including community and family liaison workers. The schools share resources including some joint governance and professional development activities. When the school was inspected in April 2010 it was judged to require special measures. Since that time it has been monitored by HMI.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires special measures.

Medway is a satisfactory school which is improving rapidly thanks largely to the inspirational leadership of the executive headteacher and the strong team ethos and commitment to change she has managed to secure. Pupils themselves recognise the rapid improvement. They now speak proudly of the good behaviour, new opportunities to help others and improve their school and how lessons are 'interesting and fun'.

During the inspection around two thirds of the teaching seen was judged to be good and there is a growing momentum for improvement that is resulting in pupils' good progress. These factors, together with the accurate self-evaluation, exceptionally rapid improvement and accurate use of data, provide evidence that the capacity to sustain the improvements now being made is good. The partnership established with Sparkenhoe School is helping provide better capacity across both schools and increased opportunities for teachers to work alongside each other. This is beneficial to both schools. A close relationship with the local communities and some very thoughtful appointments of additional support workers, have helped improve attendance levels to at least average and occasionally above. The most telling success, however, is the sense of high ambition threading throughout the school.

There are some aspects which remain satisfactory, but which are also improving rapidly. Attainment remains low but is improving quickly. There are some changes, particularly at deputy headteacher level, yet to come and all middle managers are ambitious for their new roles and show increasing awareness of the levels of expectation required. There are some gaps emerging in the relative performance of some groups of pupils, although all are now improving, some more rapidly than others. For example, boys' literacy skills, and their writing in particular, are not as good as those of the girls. The youngest pupils have poor mathematical skills. The quality of teaching has much that is good but some remaining variation. As such, it is judged satisfactory despite the good progress now being made by the majority of pupils. It occasionally focuses too much on the teacher rather than on the pupils' learning, although higher expectation and challenge is commonplace. Attendance rates, historically problematic, are rapidly improving, although the attendance of Roma heritage pupils remains problematic. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory compared to that of their peers, despite some good additional classroom support, but this too is improving rapidly. Reassuringly, school leaders and managers are fully aware of these weaker aspects and they have already developed detailed plans or implemented recent changes to improve them. Progress is judged as good due to the highly precise use of data and a robust monitoring system now in place.

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Other key strengths include good provision for the youngest pupils, a powerful appreciation of each other's faiths and cultures and a keen appreciation of how to keep pupils safe and healthy, including high levels of adult supervision at break times in this urban street corner site. The school is becoming a local community hub and, although there are some gaps emerging in the relative performance of some groups, the school takes equality of opportunity very seriously. Pupils mix happily with each other irrespective of background and cultures and, although satisfactory, the school has generated a strong momentum to improve yet further.

Up to 40% of the 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 across all subjects to national averages by:
 - improving the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and by those of Roma heritage
 - improving standards of boys' writing
 - securing better understanding of number by younger pupils and girls.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - developing better questioning skills by all teachers to resolve misunderstandings more effectively and assess pupils' understanding
 - ironing out the variation in teaching in some year groups, such as Year 5
 - making sure pupils' learning remains the focus for all lessons.
- Further develop the skills of subject and middle leaders and governors by increasing the frequency of monitoring at this level and using the newly generated school performance data to secure full accountability for pupils' progress in each class.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

When starting school, pupils' standards are very low in their language and communication skills. The school rightly has a strong focus on developing speaking and listening skills in the first two years. Many pupils start school having no English at all. As a consequence, much time is devoted to talking, playing and communicating in English in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This helps the youngest children to make good and accelerating progress. Despite this, attainment remains low in communication, language and literacy. An emphasis on reading has enabled pupils to make good progress throughout the school and pupils have an enthusiasm for reading and books. They enjoy reading aloud to their friends.

Older pupils make good progress in some classes but not all. Although attainment is low, it is improving rapidly in core skills. For example, the school has invested much time and effort recently in raising standards in mathematics; the progress made by pupils is good and standards are close to the national average despite some specific limitations. Pupils in Year 6 can manipulate fractions, decimals and solve number problems, including using simple algebra. These good mathematical skills are less secure in other year groups, particularly within Key Stage 1 where the understanding of place value and basic number

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are weak. This means problem-solving skills are underdeveloped, especially by girls. In literacy the picture is reversed and girls significantly outperform boys. Here reading standards are now average but writing is less secure with fragile sentence construction, spelling and grammar. The amount of work produced is now satisfactory but it remains poorly presented in some workbooks and only around half of all pupils are at the expected levels.

The overall improvement has started to generate bumpy progress for some pupils despite good progress for many. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as do pupils from Roma and Eastern European backgrounds. This is lower than their peers. However, good additional support, particularly from a strong team of teaching assistants, means the gap is closing rapidly for both groups. Recent data show that from very low starting points a majority of pupils leave in line with national averages, representing good progress.

Pupils say they feel safe and know to ask for help when needed. It is always forthcoming and adults are diligent in reminding pupils about how to stay safe when, as examples, little feet are climbing big stairs or when pupils are using the internet. Behaviour is good despite some bubble generated by over enthusiasm. Attitudes to learning are good. There have been no incidents recently of racism or bullying and no exclusions. Pupils get regular reminders about leading healthy lifestyles and a good range of sporting activities is available, although take-up is low amongst girls. A popular residential visit to an activity centre builds self-confidence. Healthy diets and lifestyles are encouraged and almost everyone knows the risks associated with smoking. The attendance of Roma heritage pupils is improving but remains problematic.

Pupils take their various responsibilities very seriously and contribute well to their school. They take real pride in the way they can suggest premises developments and how prefects encourage others to stop playing football and get to class on time after break-times. The 'chocolate fountain' incentive to attend is hugely popular with pupils and adults. These attitudes, alongside improving literacy, numeracy and skills in using new technologies mean the development of work place skills is satisfactory. The respect pupils and adults show the wide variety of faiths and cultures in school, alongside a strong moral education and a highly valued sense of spirituality is good.

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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	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
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?

Teaching is judged as satisfactory as a result of some variation in quality in some classes, but increasingly good, particularly in Year 6 which is helping to secure good progress by the time pupils leave school. Of lessons observed during the inspection around two thirds were judged good. Common strengths include very good relationships between adults and pupils, good use of lesson timings and resources and increased expectation. Planning is detailed and teachers increasingly base lessons on an accurate analysis of what pupils have understood in previous lessons. Introductions to lessons are now brisk. Questioning is occasionally used to seek out the right answer rather than resolve misconceptions. As a consequence, progress is limited for a few pupils but good for the majority. Particularly strong teaching in Key Stage 2 is leading to this good progress.

The school responds well to their analysis of strengths and weakness in pupils' progress and revises the curriculum continuously. It has, for example, recently implemented boy-friendly literacy resources to improve their writing. The curriculum is balanced and implemented well, but occasionally lacks challenge for the more able.

There are good links with other agencies. The school has regular contacts with social services, for example, and has taken some innovative steps to improve outcomes. This includes the appointment of community workers, who act as both interpreters and liaison officers, supporting pupils and families who find engagement with education difficult.

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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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership shown by the executive headteacher is outstanding. She has secured the support of the local community and generated enthusiasm for change and high aspiration within school. She has the full support of adults and pupils for her vision for the future. This ambition is allied to a crisp analysis of performance and an honest and accurate self-evaluation of what works and what does not. As a result of this approach, the school now generates accurate data which allow, for example, governors, parents and carers to ask pertinent and challenging questions. The headteacher is supported by an ambitious leadership team.

Governors, always supportive and encouraging, but newly enabled to challenge, are growing in their role but as yet have not secured high pupil outcomes. There are good links with Sparkenhoe School governors. Appropriate procedures to secure satisfactory safeguarding and engagement with parents and carers are in place. The school promotes equality of opportunity well, despite some achievement variation in some groups.

There is, however, variation in the quality of leadership at phase and subject level and many are new to the high expectations required of them. The school also has some additional change yet to come at some leadership levels and this, together with satisfactory pupils' outcomes, means the effectiveness of leadership in embedding ambition and driving improvement is satisfactory, despite the obvious strengths of the headteacher and senior leadership team. Self-evaluation, carried out by senior leaders is accurate. The focus on ensuring equality of opportunity is a key lever for improvement despite some gaps in the relative performance of some pupils. Leaders are ensuring that these gaps are closing rapidly, however, as a result of their clear focus on equalities. Monthly and termly monitoring is moderated for every pupil leading to a clear shared understanding by staff of standards of attainment and assessment. Teachers are now held to account for the progress of their pupils and are able to articulate reasons for good or inadequate progress. Teachers are now expected to write an action plan for every pupil whose progress is less than expected.

The school promotes community cohesion particularly well at local and international levels and is a very cohesive community itself. It has yet to fully measure the impact of its work on pupils' attitudes. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Pupils start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with a range of ability but many speak minimal English and many also have lower readiness for school than may be expected. As a consequence, the school places an appropriate emphasis on speaking and communicating activities. This includes plenty of opportunities to enjoy a mix of structured activity and free play both inside and in a stimulating outdoor area. Children enjoy this and happily take responsibility for their own activities, thus developing independence. They mix well and get the chance to cook, sing and play together. This has resulted in good progress, although it is better in developing self-confidence and better language than in more formal outcomes such as phonics, the linking of sounds and letters, and reading. Behaviour is good and children are delighted to explain to visitors what they are doing and why. Progress is thus good. This is well managed by adults and relationships are good. Good leadership shows a capacity for more rapid development.

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

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Views of parents and carers

This inspection was conducted as part of a monitoring visit and no formal Ofsted parental questionnaire was issued. However, informal interviews and an analysis of the school's own survey shows high levels of satisfaction with the information parents and carers receive and the progress their children make. Although the response rate was low, they are especially positive about the quality of the current senior leadership and the improvements being made.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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.



17 June 2011

Dear Pupils

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

As you know, we have made regular visits to check on the progress your school has been making over the last year. We are delighted to say that it no longer requires special measures as it is satisfactory now and continues to make rapid improvement. Many of you told us that you can see better behaviour and more interesting lessons and that you are much more proud of your school. You have every right to be proud of it.

Much of this improvement is down to better teaching and much higher expectations by your teachers. You have all contributed by your good behaviour, politeness to visitors, better attendance and attitudes to learning. Although the school has several awards of its own, they are even more proud of your awards such as the junior road safety officer and the anti-bullying awards you regularly win. As a result of all this, most of you make good progress and achieve well. We have asked your teachers to ask more questions of you to help improve standards in mathematics and English. We have also asked leaders in school to check this is happening regularly.

Behind this improvement is the outstanding leadership of your new headteacher. She knows exactly what is required to continue to improve. Your teachers keep you safe, know your community and care about how well you do.

All of this is why your school no longer requires special measures. We would like to wish you well in the future and congratulate you on what you have achieved already.

Yours sincerely

Ceri Morgan

Her Majesty's Inspector

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