

Melton Primary School

Melton Road, Melton, Woodbridge, IP12 1PG

Inspection dates 10–11 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching has varied over time. It has not been consistently effective enough across the school to secure pupils' good achievement, and to ensure that they regularly attain or exceed expected standards by the end of Year 6.
- Reading and writing are not yet taught sufficiently well across the school, particularly for younger pupils.
- Teachers do not always ask hard enough questions or expect pupils to think deeply enough when giving their answers.
- The tasks pupils are given in lessons do not always match their abilities, so sometimes they do not learn rapidly.
- Marking does not consistently give pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work and pupils do not always follow up on the advice given.
- Pupils do not do enough writing of long pieces of work to help them develop more complex ways of expressing themselves.
- Targets for pupils have not always been high enough to help them catch up.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has acted very effectively to improve the school. One key change is the new system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress, which provides more accurate information about pupils' progress.
- The new team of senior leaders has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Recent improvements are helping to improve teaching quickly.
- Governors are helping to improve the school and fulfil their legal responsibilities well.
- Actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and additional support given to pupils are overcoming weaknesses in pupils' previous learning.
- The increasing amount of good teaching means the proportion of pupils making good progress is growing rapidly.
- Pupils feel safe, attend regularly and behave well. They are polite to each other and to adults because that is how adults treat them.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and with groups of pupils. The inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority by telephone.
- The inspector observed pupils during lunch and break times, and examined pupils' work in their exercise books and in displays around the school. He listened to pupils from Years 1 and 2 read.
- He also looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, records of the school's checks on teaching, information on pupils' current progress, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and took note of the responses of staff who returned inspection questionnaires.
- During this inspection the inspector asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Melton Primary is smaller than average in size.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for groups of pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2012 after two temporary headteachers. The acting deputy headteacher commenced her duties at the school in September 2013 because the substantive post holder is supporting another school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to good or better by ensuring:
 - teachers match the level of work to pupils' differing needs and abilities
 - marking gives pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work and teachers make sure that pupils act on the advice given
 - improvements are made to the quality and use of teachers' questions.
- Raise standards and quicken progress, especially in English by:
 - strengthening further the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make)
 - ensuring pupils have more opportunities to write extended pieces of work
 - the school sets challenging targets that will help all pupils to catch up with their peers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are usually in line with, or slightly below, those typically expected. Throughout the school not enough teaching is consistently good for pupils, including for the youngest children, to maintain good rates of progress, especially in reading and writing. In 2012 the Year 1 test of pupils' understanding of phonics, results were significantly below average. Results improved considerably in 2013 due to important training from the local authority. This has developed teachers' understanding of early reading skills but further improvement is still needed.
- School leaders have tackled these weaknesses effectively and pupils' attainment and progress is improving, including that of the youngest children. Inspection evidence confirms that, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are reaching broadly average and in some cases above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, although pupils' progress speeds up in some classes, weaker teaching in others slows the pace of learning overall. There remain too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and so practice using effective features such as the use of more adventurous words and stylistic features. This limits the development of high calibre writing skills.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is average in mathematics because of better teaching in this subject but, while still broadly average, it is lower in English. This is because the teaching has been weaker in English until recently and pupils have not made enough progress year on year. The school is now successfully focusing its efforts on improving the teaching of English and pupils' progress is picking up quickly.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those arriving from other schools make good progress in developing self-esteem and in extending their ability to learn with others. Academically they make similar progress from their differing starting points to that of their peers. The progress of more-able pupils is also similar to others.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium have lower attainment than similar pupils nationally, in reading, writing and mathematics. They have in the past made less progress than their peers in school. Consequently by the end Year 6, pupils who are known to be eligible for free meals are over a year behind other pupils in the school, however the gap in their attainment is now closing because teaching is improving.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although some of the teaching seen in the lessons observed by the inspector was good, over time teaching has not been consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress. The school has recognised this and implemented robust processes to monitor and improve its quality.
- Weaknesses in teaching have led to gaps in pupils' learning. It has not been at the consistently good level needed to enable pupils to make up for lost ground and achieve well. Targets have not been used effectively enough to show pupils what to aim for next in their understanding of English and mathematics skills. School leaders are quickly addressing this.
- Changes in the teaching of mathematics is helping pupils to become quicker at mentally solving mathematical problems and calculations. Because of the focus by the leadership team on

improving mathematics, teachers have introduced different challenges that sharpen pupils' skills and match the wide range of needs and abilities more closely. However, in some lessons throughout the school the work given to pupils is still too hard or too easy.

- Marking varies in quality. Pupils' work is celebrated, but there are too few specific examples given to pupils of how work could be improved. Pupils do not always respond to teachers' marking, sometimes because they are not given time. Marking in topic work does not take account and build upon pupils' basic skills being mastered in English and mathematics.
- Teachers are over-cautious about their pupils' abilities when questioning pupils in lessons and sometimes provide too much support rather than a high enough level of challenge. As a result pupils who are answering do not show enough independence, often waiting for help or the next prompt or question.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage the teaching has a number of strong features such as the ways in which all adults incorporate children's interests into their planning and make good use of the outside area. Children are fascinated by the work undertaken in the school's woods and this builds their inquisitiveness and understanding about the world around them. However, there are limited opportunities for children to develop their reading skills and use these skills in writing tasks and this is why the teaching here is not yet good.
- Where teaching is good, pupils are enthused about what they are learning and they are challenged to produce their best work. Careful planning builds up pupils' skills over a sequence of lessons and ensures that they have good opportunities to apply and develop these, for example, in challenging maths investigations.
- Learning support assistants provide appropriate specialist support to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils are now making faster progress in lessons than has been seen previously, because of the ways in which teachers and teaching assistants work together to support their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good, a view shared by all the parents who responded on Parent View. Responses by staff and evidence from the inspection agree that pupils behave well throughout the school. They are keen to learn, courteous and work well together both in formal and unstructured situations.
- They understand how to keep themselves safe and can explain how school helps them in their understanding of safety. This includes aspects of safety while using computers (e-safety).
- Pupils show good levels of sensitivity and respect for one another. They are generally proud of their own and other pupils achievements.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of the different forms that bullying can take, for example e-safety, cyber bullying and racial abuse. They confidently report: 'we feel safe here,' and that there is no bullying, just occasional disagreements, which are rapidly sorted out, either by other pupils acting as 'playground buddies' or by staff.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their now above-average attendance. The school works very hard to help pupils who are reluctant to come to school, often providing support for the family as well as the pupils.

- There is a calm and productive atmosphere in the school and relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils take on extra responsibilities willingly and this contributes well to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The leadership and management are good

- The very effective headteacher has made a concerted effort to build and develop a strong team and school community over the past year. The success of this is shown in rapid improvements in a range of areas, for example in the increasing number of pupils who make more than expected progress including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and in the good impact training has had on the quality of teaching.
- Parents hold the school in high regard. Parents responding in Parent View and those who spoke to the inspector during the inspection unanimously agree that the school is well led and managed. Leaders throughout the school show a real drive and determination to improve standards, and have been successful. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement and they use this information to plan training and support well.
- A new system for tracking pupils' progress is being established. This is providing useful management information and now enables teachers to identify more quickly those pupils who are falling behind and need extra support. However, the way in which assessment information has in the past been used to set targets in each year group means that some pupils have not been challenged enough so that they can catch up rapidly.
- School improvement planning reflects the school's clearly stated ambition to raise achievement. The plan has the right priorities and sharply focuses on increasing the proportion of pupils making good progress in all subjects.
- All teachers have a performance objective that is linked to the new 'teacher standards' and pupils' achievements. The monitoring of the quality of teaching is not reliant on just the headteacher but is undertaken by all leaders, and this provides depth to the process. Teachers who have responsibility for leading specific subjects are reviewing the quality of teaching and assessment in their subject areas more rigorously than before and this is improving the quality of teaching quickly. The system of following up on the action points given to teachers supports this well.
- The school provides an exciting and meaningful curriculum that motivates the pupils. Pupils enjoy going on visits to Suffolk School's Farm Fair. These help to widen their knowledge of their wider surroundings and support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The primary school sports funding is being used appropriately to ensure pupils experience a wide range of activities and to improve teachers' understanding of how to develop pupils' physical skills. The school has identified appropriate ways of evaluating the spending.
- Pupils in receipt of the pupil premium are benefiting from more purposefully planned additional adult support, either of individuals or within groups, and the achievement gap with other pupils is closing.
- The local authority knows the school well. It tracks its performance and the standards pupils are reaching. It is providing tailored and effective support to enable the senior leadership team to continue to improve the school and address the issues raised at the previous inspection. The

impact of this is evident in the current strengths in the school's leadership.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are very aware that, in the past, they have not been challenging enough. New appointments and organisation have added strength to the governing body and governors have undertaken training to make sure that they fully understand the school's performance and their roles and responsibilities. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well, including in relation to the safeguarding of staff and pupils. The teaching and learning committee has a good overview of the impact of the spending of the pupil premium funding, the link between teachers' pay and performance, and the quality of teaching that takes place. Targets for the headteacher are regularly reviewed.
- Governors are alert to the previous inconsistencies in pupils' progress and are determined to improve their achievement. They have asked challenging questions of the school and work in close partnership with the local authority to ensure that school improvement takes place.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124597
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	425286

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	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Bruce
Headteacher	Mark Girling
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 February 2012
Telephone number	01394 382506
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