

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LITTLE MELTON FIRST SCHOOL**

Little Melton, Norwich

Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120827

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Clements

Reporting inspector: Mrs Joy Richardson  
6676

Dates of inspection: 14 -15 June 2000

Inspection number: 188080

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane Little Melton Norwich Norfolk
Postcode:	NR9 3AD
Telephone number:	01603 811446
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Terry Larkowsky
Date of previous inspection:	4 March 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Little Melton is a first school for boys and girls aged from four to eight. There are 81 pupils on roll and the number is increasing. About half the pupils come from the catchment area of Little Melton, Great Melton and Colney, and half from further afield. The school has three classes for pupils from reception to Year 3 and some subjects are taught in four separate year groups. There are 12 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, including three with statements. The extent of special needs is below the national average but rising. Few pupils are from an ethnic minority background and none speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Children's attainment ranges widely on entry to school but most are well advanced for their age.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Little Melton is a successful school. It provides a very good all-round education, achieving high standards as a result of effective leadership and management and good teaching. The school values its pupils and works hard to meet their needs. It provides good value for money.

#### What the school does well

- Standards are high in literacy, numeracy and science.
- The school provides a broad and interesting curriculum to support pupils' all-round education.
- Good teaching helps pupils of all abilities to learn well.
- The school has a strong ethos of care for individuals and their personal development.
- The school is well led and managed, promoting effective teamwork among staff and with parents.

#### What could be improved

- A small minority of pupils lack self discipline and commitment to their learning.
- The development of pupils' writing skills is not monitored closely enough.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1996. Since then it has maintained high standards and pursued further improvement. All the key issues for action identified in the last report have been addressed effectively. The school has developed its use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress and to guide teaching. It has cultivated pupils' independence in learning, for example in investigative work in science. The quality of reports is now better. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented to good effect. The school takes stock of how well it is doing and is purposeful in taking action to secure further improvement.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
reading	A	A	A	A
writing	A	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A	A	B

<b>Key</b>
well above average    A
above average        B
average                C
below average        D
well below average   E

The school's results in the tests for seven year olds show consistently high standards over the last three years. In 1999, all pupils reached at least Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Almost half reached Level 3 in reading and a third did so in mathematics. The work of pupils currently in Year 2 shows some lower attainment by pupils with special educational needs, but the proportion achieving beyond the expectation for their age is similar to last year. Standards at the end of Year 3, when pupils leave the school, are good for their age in literacy, numeracy and science.

Good teaching and close attention to individual needs enable pupils of all abilities to achieve well and to reach the targets set for them.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils show pride in their work and in the school and have a very positive attitude to learning. A small minority lacks focus, particularly when working on their own.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally good, though a few pupils show too little self control. Most listen well and show respect for others. They tidy up well and take care with equipment. Pupils play together constructively and co-operate well in groups.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Staff and pupils know each other well. Pupils learn to take responsibility and to contribute to the whole community. They have a strong sense of belonging.
Attendance	Attendance is above the national average and there is no unauthorised absence.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	good	good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Teaching was at least satisfactory in all the lessons seen during the inspection. It was good or better in 88 per cent and very good in 25 per cent. Teaching is well planned to extend and reinforce learning. It is lively and imaginative and captures pupils' interest. Literacy skills are taught thoroughly and effectively. Pupils become confident in reading and writing as a result, though their progress in writing is not monitored closely enough. The teaching of numeracy is good and pupils achieve well in mental arithmetic.

Teachers organise practical work well, for example in science, art and technology, developing pupils' skills and extending their thinking.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and interesting curriculum which is extensively enriched by educational visits, special events and extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school identifies needs carefully, provides effective support where it is needed and monitors progress closely.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is a strong emphasis on cultivating pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to understand their feelings and those of others and to take an interest in the wider world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very careful attention is given to pupils' welfare and individual needs and to the monitoring of their academic progress.

The school works in constructive partnership with parents, fostering good communication between home and school; this supports pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led. The headteacher pursues high standards and the best for all pupils, fostering effective teamwork among the staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well, taking a close interest in the school's development and promoting good liaison with parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school clearly identifies priorities for development and reviews its progress and performance in order to take action where needed.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of all the resources available to it. It applies principles of best value in ensuring that its expenditure achieves the maximum benefit for pupils.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Children make good progress; they are expected to work hard and to achieve their best.</li> <li>• The school welcomes parents and the staff are very accessible; teachers communicate well about how children are getting on.</li> <li>• The school accepts and nurtures individuals, developing confidence and self-esteem.</li> <li>• Children do a wide range of interesting work.</li> <li>• The school has improved its management of pupils' behaviour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents consider that homework is not challenging enough for able pupils.</li> <li>• A few parents are concerned about behaviour at lunchtime.</li> <li>• A minority of parents consider there is too little information about their children's progress.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by most parents. They consider that the school

communicates well with parents about children's work and progress, that the headteacher and staff are very approachable and that homework effectively reinforces learning in school. Inspectors agree that longstanding behavioural difficulties persist amongst a small group of older pupils, and that the problem has been compounded this year by changes of staffing in the oldest class. However, the behaviour of most pupils is good and they generally play together well.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Standards are generally high in literacy, numeracy and science.**

1. Literacy skills are developed effectively throughout the school and most pupils read very well for their age. Pupils in the reception year know and use letter sounds, for example confidently listing words ending in 'ot' or 'in' and identifying the letters needed to write 'stop'. They take a lively interest in reading, participating eagerly in shared reading and remembering what they have learned. They extend their reading and writing vocabulary rapidly through the use of 'Champion Chuffer' word banks. Pupils of all ages read regularly and frequently and enjoy a wide range of books. They become knowledgeable about writers' use of language, constructing their own riddles and alliterative poems in Years 1/2 and considering, in Years 2/3, the use of 'sensational' headlines to grab the newspaper reader's attention. Pupils in the oldest class have good skills for their age in reading for information, for example scanning a newspaper to find and list the sections it contains. Reading and writing are closely linked within work in literacy and this supports pupils' learning, as seen in their alertness to spelling patterns and the uses of punctuation.
2. Pupils achieve good standards in numeracy because they are well taught and their thinking is extended by talking about mathematical processes, using the correct terms. Pupils become confident in manipulating numbers in their head, using efficient strategies to aid their calculation. Higher attaining pupils are challenged appropriately, completing a good amount of work and achieving well beyond the expectation for their age. They are encouraged to investigate number patterns, as when pupils in Year 3 explored tests of divisibility by adding the digits within a number.
3. Standards are high in science because the teaching is well organised and pupils' learning is underpinned by practical investigation and discussion. One afternoon a week is spent learning science in separate year groups. Units of work are developed over half a term and pupils' understanding of key scientific concepts is steadily reinforced and extended over this time. For example, pupils in year 2 have developed a good understanding that materials have different properties. Building on earlier work about changing the shape of materials, they observed closely to see how chocolate, egg and jelly altered in response to heating and cooling. Pupils show good scientific thinking, readily asking and answering questions and applying the knowledge which they bring from outside school. They predict what will happen and observe what does with interest and curiosity. They record their findings well, using their literacy and numeracy skills to good effect in the process. By the time pupils leave the school, their knowledge and understanding of science are very good for their age.

#### **The school provides a broad and interesting curriculum which promotes pupils' all-round development.**

4. The school's curricular provision takes account of all the dimensions of pupils' learning. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy but the school also gives careful attention to other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Well-constructed activities ensure that the youngest children achieve the learning expected by the age of five. In much of their work, pupils of all ages learn well because they are actively involved and they develop understanding in the process of doing.
5. Creativity is fostered in workshops for art and design and technology which are timetabled on one afternoon a week. With the help of expert volunteers, pupils work in small groups, learning and applying skills in the course of a project lasting several weeks. For example, pupils in reception extended their painting skills in mixing colours to make a sea picture, inspired by a poem and a local artist's work. Older pupils were guided by a visiting artist in exploring the use of positive and negative mirror images in their painting. Others developed their skills in designing and making in the process of constructing and decorating their own photograph frames.
6. Pupils extend their learning and their confidence through participating in presentations and

performances. They sing well and all those in Year 3 learn the recorder. Drama is used imaginatively to interpret what has been learned and to enhance pupils' skills in literacy.

7. Pupils horizons are broadened by visits and visitors. This was shown by a recent visit to the printworks of the local newspaper which extended pupils' understanding of how a newspaper is produced. Pupils in Year 3 have an annual residential visit, engaging this year in a study of coastal and woodland areas and participating in adventurous activities. Extra-curricular opportunities, including sports, skipping, country dancing and French further enrich the curriculum.
8. The school makes good use of its extensive grounds to support learning, as when pupils went out to make a collection of stones as part of their study of rocks. The field, with excellent play equipment, including play sheds, a maze and climbing apparatus, is well used throughout the year. This promotes the development of pupils' physical and social skills and their imaginative play.

### **Good teaching helps pupils of all abilities to learn effectively.**

9. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and of how best to help their pupils to learn. Teaching throughout the school is lively, imaginative and interesting. It stimulates pupils' curiosity and engages their thinking.
10. Teaching is well planned with clear objectives for learning which are shared with the pupils. Pupils in Years 1/2 knew, for example, that the purpose of a lesson was to be able to order numbers of any size by recognising the value of each digit. This helped them to articulate and to understand what they were doing. Connections are well made with other learning as when, in a shared reading session in reception, the teacher referred to work on solid shapes, drawing attention to the cuboid shape of a straw bale. Teachers build steadily on what has gone before. In Years 2/3, pupils were reminded about the use of the first person in writing and the punctuation of direct and indirect speech, in preparation for writing about a printer's job.
11. Teachers introduce and explain technical vocabulary well, encouraging pupils in the use of correct terminology. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, the teacher explored pupils' understanding of the term 'vibration' in preparation for later work on sound production. In Year 3, the classification of rocks was discussed so that some layered rocks were identified as 'sedimentary'.
12. Tasks are well designed to reinforce learning and to enable pupils of all levels of attainment to make progress. Games and activities are devised well to underpin learning. This was seen, for example, in the generating of words by rolling a letter dice marked with word endings and in games to guess the number in the teacher's mind. Skilled teaching generates enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning. This was evident in the response of pupils in Years 1/2 when acting out the story of the Prodigal Son. Following the teacher's guidance on clarity, timing and the use of space, they participated with verve, striving to do their best and reflecting constructively on their performance. Good use is made of resources as in Years 2/3 when photographs taken on a visit served to stimulate and to support pupils' writing.
13. Teachers challenge pupils to think beyond the obvious, and they explain points clearly. This was seen in a discussion with the youngest pupils about why balls are not used to make walls, or bricks to make wheels. Teachers ask questions well, tapping into children's natural curiosity. For example, pupils were interested by the question "What do you think is the heaviest metal?", in an introductory science lesson on rocks. At the end of lessons, teachers draw together what has been learned, revisiting points which have caused confusion and reinforcing the key learning in preparation for subsequent work.

### **The school has a strong ethos of care for individuals and their personal development.**

14. The school places a major emphasis on building confidence and self esteem alongside understanding and respect for others. Within the small community of the school, pupils are very well known and this generates a strong sense of belonging. Pupils are accepted and nurtured as individuals, whatever their talents or special needs.
15. This is reflected in assemblies which stress the uniqueness of each person and the recognition of their special qualities. Personal, social and health education includes weekly 'circle time' in which pupils learn to talk about and to understand their feelings and those of others. They are encouraged to speak their mind and readily do so. They participate fully in lessons, knowing that their contribution will be valued, and are articulate in expressing their ideas.
16. The school's attention to individual needs and its promotion of interest in learning are reflected in the way the day starts. Pupils come into school before the official start of lessons. They share matters of interest with the staff and other children, for example bringing in a bird's nest and finding a book to identify it. Registration, homework and the changing of reading books are dealt with smoothly and efficiently while pupils engage in worthwhile activities - poring over an atlas together, working out patterns on a number square, or continuing work on the computer. In the youngest class, parents and younger siblings are welcomed and this keeps parents in touch with the work children are doing.
17. The school sets standards consistently for pupils' behaviour. It has taken appropriate steps to improve the management of pupils' behaviour at lunchtime, introducing a yellow and red card system for good and bad behaviour, and involving pupils in the recognition of which is which. Where pupils fall out, they are encouraged to resolve problems by discussion and negotiation.

### **The school is well led and managed, promoting effective teamwork among staff and with parents.**

18. The headteacher sets the school's ethos and educational direction with vision and purpose. She is closely involved in teaching and, increasingly as the school expands, in the monitoring of teaching, progress and curriculum development throughout the school. She provides insightful leadership in discussion amongst staff about what works and why in teaching and learning.
19. The school evaluates its own performance, analysing test results and gauging the effectiveness, for example, of the school's implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Older pupils are involved in evaluating how well the organisation of these sessions helps them to learn. Teachers share their expertise, working together well to identify areas for development and the changes which will make the difference.
20. The school's leadership and management plans well for the development of the school, identifying priorities and carefully weighing alternatives, for example when considering the organisation of classes or the best way forward in developing resources for information and communications technology. Governors are well informed about the school and give active help in guiding its development and cementing the partnership with parents.
21. Teachers work well with support staff so that work is clearly planned and support is provided where pupils need it most. The school makes good use of volunteer help and expertise, working to ensure that all the adults involved with the school are deployed to maximum effect in support of pupils' learning.
22. The school communicates well with parents. Clear guidance is given about reading and homework and the home-school liaison book facilitates communication. Concerns are shared with parents so that home and school can work together in an effective partnership. The school's approach reflects the philosophy of the poem in its prospectus: 'For behind the parent stood the school, And behind the teacher, the home.'

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **A minority of pupils lack self discipline and commitment to their learning.**

23. Most pupils behave well and many have very positive attitudes to learning, responding well to all that the school provides. However, the behaviour of a minority of older pupils restricts their learning, though the school generally ensures that this does not detract from the learning of others. These pupils, mainly boys, opt for an easy life in the classroom where possible. They spend too much time, when working independently, in talking about life outside school. Though lessons have clear aims, there is too little guidance about the quality and quantity of work expected in a given time, or insistence that this is achieved.
24. The school is effective in developing confidence and self-esteem, but the rewards of praise are not always linked sufficiently to effort in learning and pride in hard-won achievement. In some cases, the school's well-intentioned concern for individuals results in pupils being overly focused on themselves and their immediate desires rather than on the business of learning. For example, time spent resolving playtime disagreements can erode learning time.
25. Pupils are encouraged to speak freely and to participate fully in lessons. Conventions, such as raising a hand to speak, are not consistently enforced in class groups. Some pupils lack self-control in waiting their turn and applying their thinking to the question in hand.
26. Such attitudes, on the part of a small minority of pupils, are at odds with the school's general ethos of high achievement and interest in learning.

### **The development of pupils' writing skills is not monitored closely enough.**

27. The school achieves good standards in writing. Pupils learn to spell and to punctuate well and they develop fluent joined handwriting. They have a thorough grasp of writing conventions, derived from their reading, and many write well for their age. However, factors related to the use of teaching time and the organisation of writing activities mean that there is too little emphasis on extending and refining pupils' writing skills.
28. Pupils frequently write while the teacher is engaged with a group during the literacy hour. As a result, their work is not closely monitored while it is in progress. Teachers do not focus enough on the quality of pupils' writing or insist on accuracy in applying what has been learned. Pupils are not routinely required, in response to marking, to correct and learn from their errors. Although pupils write for a variety of purposes, they have limited opportunities to practise and develop work at length. While progress in writing is evident in annotated examples in pupils' records of achievement, the development of specific skills is not systematically checked.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

29. In order to improve further the school should:
  - ensure the promotion of self-discipline and commitment to learning by:
    - praising and rewarding effort and specific achievement;
    - developing pupils' self control in participating within a group;
    - promoting concentration by giving challenging targets for work.

(paragraphs 23-26)
  - further develop pupils' writing by:
    - ensuring that pupils apply taught skills, remedy errors and strive to improve;
    - monitoring more closely how much and how well pupils write.

(paragraphs 27-28)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	7

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	25	63	12	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	81
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	12

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	9	10	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	19	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	19	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	82	86	87

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	57
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y3

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	27.0

### Education support staff: YR – Y3

Total number of education support staff	5.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	23

## Financial information

Financial year	1998
	£
Total income	139222
Total expenditure	135908
Expenditure per pupil	2158
Balance brought forward from previous year	7717
Balance carried forward to next year	11031

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	81
Number of questionnaires returned	38

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	32	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	50	5	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	45	13	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	37	18	3	0
The teaching is good.	63	26	8	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	29	13	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	26	13	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	39	8	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	34	13	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	39	47	11	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	34	8	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	42	5	5	3