



# Mepal and Witcham CofE VC Primary

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 110808  
**LEA** CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 278519  
**Inspection dates** 26 September 2005 to 27 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Ian Nelson LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Brangehill Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		CB6 2AL
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 12		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01353 778300
<b>Number on roll</b>	86	<b>Fax number</b>	01353 778300
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	.Jan Stuart-Menteath
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Jane Green

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 12	<b>Inspection dates</b> 26 September 2005 - 27 September 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278519
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a small rural school serving two neighbouring villages. Most pupils are of white British heritage. There are broadly average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. During the term before the inspection the deputy head acted as head, following the retirement of the previous head teacher. The new head teacher took office at the start of the autumn term, about three weeks before the inspection.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and it provides satisfactory value for money. The head teacher has worked closely with her deputy to evaluate accurately how well the school is doing and where it could be better. They have motivated the staff and governors very well so that all are buzzing with the prospect of working together to take the school forward. The inspector agrees with the school's view of its performance. Standards are broadly satisfactory but could be better for more able pupils. The school does not use information on how well pupils are doing, or on how good teaching is, to ensure that more able pupils get hard enough work. Staff give satisfactory support to pupils who need extra help, with the result that they achieve their targets. Children in the reception year make satisfactory progress and achieve the goals expected of children of this age. Governors have allowed things to slip over recent years so that they have not been fully aware of how well the school is doing, nor have they fulfilled their statutory duties. However, much has been done in a short time to begin putting these matters right, so that the school is satisfactorily placed to improve further. Although the school cares satisfactorily for pupils, it does not have systems in place to check their views or to give them responsibilities within school. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

Focus on: - Ensuring that governors have the training they need to know how well the school is doing and to fulfil all their statutory duties. - Making better use of information on how well pupils are doing, and how good teaching is, to make sure that more able pupils get hard enough work. - Providing ways for pupils to express their views on how the school could be better and giving them more opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children enter the reception year with the skills and knowledge typical of their age and make satisfactory progress. As a result they are satisfactorily prepared for the transition to Year 1 and the start of the National Curriculum. Standards are average at Year 2 and Year 6 and most pupils make satisfactory progress. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the previous inspection. However, more able pupils do not make enough progress because the school does not make good enough use of information on how well they are doing to set them hard enough work. Consequently too few pupils reach higher than expected levels in the national tests at Year 6. The school met or exceeded its targets in the 2004 national tests except for more able pupils in English. Standards in writing and mathematics at Year 2 have risen faster than standards nationally. This is because teachers have focused on improving writing over recent years. Standards in reading dipped in 2001 and have risen each year since then, but they are still slightly lower than at the time of the last inspection. At Year 6 standards

are higher in mathematics than in English or science. This is because the school uses a well-structured mathematics scheme that helps pupils to build upon earlier learning effectively. In science there has been too little work on practical investigations to enable pupils to make effective enough progress on this element of the curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because teaching assistants help them in lessons.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. They enjoy school, and attendance is broadly average. Older pupils say lessons are more interesting now than they used to be. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and appreciate each other's efforts. For example, in a literacy lesson, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils were suggesting ideas for a ghost story and one boy said, spontaneously, 'Well done, to another on his suggestion. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and have adults to go to with any worries they have. They say there is no bullying at all but feel that, if there were, the teachers would quickly sort it out. They play energetically at break times and know how to stay healthy through exercise and a balanced diet. They do not have enough opportunities to air their views and make a contribution to the running of the school. They are suitably working in the local community but are not effectively involved in the school community. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for later life through achieving sound standards in key skills such as literacy and numeracy.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have a very good rapport with pupils and make clear how they expect them to behave. Consequently, no time is lost in lessons because of poor behaviour, and pupils are polite and respectful. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils who need extra help so that they make satisfactory progress and achieve their targets. Although teachers check how well pupils are doing, they do not use this information to plan hard enough work for the more able so these pupils do not make as much progress as they could. The best lessons include opportunities for pupils to work together on a task, as the Year 5 and 6 pupils did in a history lesson, devising rules for a Victorian classroom. Reception children learn satisfactorily because the teacher plans a balance of activities to develop their growing skills. The theme of weddings, for example, enabled them to practise their creative skills in making costumes and their language and social skills in being at a wedding breakfast.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a satisfactory range of activities to help pupils to learn. The tasks the reception children do are based firmly on the requirements of the Foundation Stage, with a good balance between teacher-directed and child-chosen activities. Pupils and their parents criticised the lack of physical education in the past and the way lessons would be cancelled for other activities such as revising for national tests. However, the deputy head teacher, as acting head, began to resolve these issues last term through very effective links with the neighbouring sports college and other providers. As a consequence the pupils became the county KWIK cricket champions. The school is now working towards the Healthy Schools Mark. There has been too little work in science on practical investigations, which has contributed to the declining results in national tests at Year 6. However, teachers' plans and pupils' books show that science is now focused on practical work. There have been few after-school activities for pupils and the school has already taken steps to improve this.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Child protection procedures are in place and risk assessments are in place to ensure that educational outings and activities are carried out safely. Pupils say they know what their targets for improvement are and that teachers tell them how to make their work better. The school has effective systems for identifying and assessing pupils with learning difficulties so that adequate support can be provided. It does not have sufficiently good systems for identifying the most able and providing them with hard enough work to ensure good progress. The good links with the neighbouring secondary school and with the local play group ensure that pupils transfer from one to the other easily.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory, as at the time of the last inspection, but have weaknesses that are only just beginning to be addressed. Governors have not kept up with all their statutory responsibilities or their knowledge of how well the school is doing. This is partly because of the number of vacancies on the governing body and pressures of recruiting a new head teacher. However, the school has lacked systems for checking how well it is doing, for checking the quality of teaching and learning and for the performance management of teachers. These issues were highlighted by the deputy head, acting as head, last term and much has been done to put things right. A suitable performance management policy is in place. The new head has worked closely with the deputy to analyse the school's strengths and areas for development and the school now has an accurate picture of its effectiveness and what it needs to do to improve. The governors have re-established a committee structure. They have started recruiting additional governors and have an action plan for their

own development. Staff are very enthusiastic about recent improvements and share the senior leadership's vision for the school's future. Consequently, the school is in a satisfactory position to improve. While the school ensures that all pupils are involved in all activities it does not do enough to seek their views and involve them in decision-making. Parents have also expressed concerns about the lack of consultation and information from the school, but the latest survey shows that the school has begun to put this right. The school has an adequate number of staff and satisfactory resources. It enjoys very good accommodation in a recently refurbished building. It makes satisfactory use of its budget.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	4	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	No
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	No
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils, Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. This letter is to tell you what is good about your school and what it could do better. Your school helps most of you to make satisfactory progress with your learning but some of you brighter pupils could do even better. Teachers and teaching assistants look after you well so that you have someone to talk to if you are worried. You behave well in lessons and at play times and get on well with each other. You told me that PE lessons were sometimes cancelled for other things and you did not like that. However, your teachers have worked with Witchford Sports College to make PE at your school better. You told me that you would like to be able to tell teachers your ideas for making the school better. You have good ideas but there is no system for you to express them. Your school governors have been so busy this year with the job of finding a new head teacher that they have not done all the other jobs they should have done. They have now started trying to persuade more people to become governors and help with their work. Your new headteacher has quickly worked out what your school is good at and how it could be better. She has some really good ideas for improving the school and all the staff are very excited about them. To make the school even better I have asked the governors to make sure they do all their jobs in the future. I have asked the teachers to make sure you all get hard enough work, especially you brighter ones, so that you learn faster and do better in your tests. Finally, I have asked your teachers to find ways for you to tell them what you think about the school and suggest ideas for improving it.