



Meriden Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104087
Local Authority Solihull
Inspection number 286852
Inspection date 7 November 2006
Reporting inspector Christine Field

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Fillongley Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Meriden
Age range of pupils	3–11		Coventry CV7 7LW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01676 522488
Number on roll (school)	194	Fax number	01676 523912
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Su Brooker
		Headteacher	Jacky Smith
Date of previous school inspection	30 October 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Meriden C of E Primary is a small village school that serves its local community, with an increasing number of parents living further afield choosing the school. When pupils start school their attainment is typical of that expected for their age. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number are pupils from Traveller communities. No pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is similar to other primary schools. However, six pupils have a statement of special educational need, and this is well above average.

There has been a very high level of staff changes since the last inspection. A new deputy joined the school in September.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is an inclusive school that provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education. Staff turnover has been significant in recent years but the clear educational direction provided by the headteacher together with satisfactory leadership, management and governance have ensured the school's continuing effectiveness. Parents rightly give praise to the very caring Christian ethos, good quality curriculum and wide range of activities additional to lessons. These features make a significant contribution to pupils' good personal development. From the moment they start school, pupils are very well looked after and encouraged to have a go at new things without fear of failure. As one pupil said, 'the staff are really kind and help us to do our best'. Standards are above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils receive a satisfactory education in the Foundation Stage, where they are helped to make progress so that they reach, and in some cases exceed, their learning goals. Pupils with learning difficulties, including those with statements, make consistently good progress, as do pupils from Traveller communities because of well-targeted support. Satisfactory teaching assists other groups of pupils in making generally satisfactory progress. Well-planned strategies to improve teaching and learning in mathematics are beginning to have a positive impact. For example, a comprehensive analysis of current standards has enabled specific groups of pupils to be provided with 'catch up' or 'extension' programmes that are supporting better progress. The school is aware that the next steps are to sharpen assessment and the use of individual pupil targets to further support the raising of standards in mathematics, particularly for the more able.

Pupils' spiritual and moral development is good because of the strong set of values and principles the school promotes. The staff team's consistent approach to nurturing pupils' exceptionally responsible behaviour and respect for one another supports pupils' good social and cultural development. The close attention paid to celebrating cultural diversity widens their appreciation of the world of which they are a part. Excellent relationships are the lynchpin in supporting pupils to grow into confident young people who are extremely willing to take on roles of responsibility such as house captains and prefects. Pupils' understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyle develops well because of the specific focus given to having a balanced diet and regular exercise. Additionally, the Building Learning Power (BLP) programme assists pupils in acquiring attributes such as resilience and resourcefulness, which helps prepare them well for their future working lives.

The headteacher leads a team of dedicated staff who have the best interests of all pupils at heart. The newly formed senior leadership team, working with governors, have undertaken a thorough audit that has enabled them to build an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have put in place a range of strategies to support them in their drive for improvement. New leadership in mathematics is already making a big difference to improving the quality of provision. The school is well placed to improve because of the energy, commitment and well-focused work of the staff team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the tasks teachers set for the more able pupils, particularly in mathematics, provide good levels of challenge so that their rate of progress is increased.
- Sharpen teachers' recording of progress in mathematics and use this information to set challenging individual targets for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make steady gains in the Foundation Stage so that they reach, and in some cases exceed, their learning goals. Pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average at the end of Years 2 and 6.

Recent national test results have been above average in English and science and average in mathematics. However, results show a downward trend in mathematics which the school is working effectively to reverse. Expert subject leadership is having a positive impact on improving teaching and this is assisting the progress pupils are making in mathematics.

The school is successful in meeting, and sometimes exceeding, the targets it sets in English and science. The school recognises that, although predictions of pupils' performance in mathematics are realistic, the targets set should be more challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Above-average attendance levels clearly indicate pupils' keenness to come to school. From Nursery to Year 6, pupils enjoy learning and show good levels of confidence and self-esteem. Pupils have been involved in devising the School Charter and they live up to this by acting very responsibly and showing exemplary behaviour. Relationships are excellent and are reflected in the very happy classrooms and hassle-free playtimes. Pupils' support for their community is outstanding. The school council played a major role in the appointment of the new deputy and is currently planning how to spend a £20,000 grant earmarked for playground equipment. Peer mediators are always on hand to sort out any quarrels or deal with worries and this is a key reason why the school is such a harmonious community. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to show leadership qualities, to work in teams and show enterprise, such as when running competitions and organising stalls at the Christmas and Summer Fayres. The BLP programme is successfully enabling a good range of vocational skills to be built which, together with good skills in literacy and satisfactory skills in numeracy, are preparing pupils well for their future careers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, with some good teaching reflected in pupils' good achievement in English and science. Recent improvements to the teaching in mathematics are due to effective coaching and well-targeted support. Pupils' learning is benefiting from interesting, well-paced and active lessons that secure their full enjoyment in trying to achieve as much as they can. However, there are still occasions when teachers are not expecting enough of the more able learners in mathematics lessons, and this limits progress. In contrast, pupils who have specific learning difficulties, including those with statements, are given precise tasks and receive exactly the right amount of support they require to make consistently good progress in meeting personal targets.

Teachers check up on pupils' work in lessons and use the information to plan subsequent lessons. Planned assessment systems in mathematics have the potential for teachers to be able to pinpoint short-term spurts or dips in progress but these have yet to be fully implemented. There is sensible use of group targets to further raise expectations but there is inconsistent use of individual targets to help pupils focus on their next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A wide range of activities outside lessons and the close attention paid to developing pupils' artistic and musical gifts, as well as sporting talents, contribute significantly to pupils' good personal development. A recent move geared towards improving pupils' academic achievement has been to allocate more curriculum time to mathematics. For example, effective use is being made of registration periods for pupils to undertake 'maths challenges'. Information and communication technology (ICT) has improved well since the last inspection, with good use now made of computers to support pupils' work across subjects. Weekly French lessons help develop pupils' linguistic skills and open their eyes to a culture different from their own.

The very effective provision made for pupils with learning difficulties and those from Traveller communities include strong links with a range of outside agencies that support their full access to the curriculum. The parents of pupils with physical disabilities told inspectors how highly they value the school's exceptional work to fully include their children in all activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A very caring Christian ethos permeates all aspects of school life and results in pupils saying they feel very well looked after and happy at school. Very effective systems

are in place for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare. Child protection procedures are robust and supportive of the more vulnerable pupils. Parents identify that their children are known as individuals by staff and that staff respond well to personal needs. Work undertaken towards 'Healthy School' and 'Investors in Communities' status demonstrates the school's strong commitment to providing pupils with high quality personal, social and health education. Their involvement in the 'Embrace' project has raised awareness about how to combat all forms of bullying and racism. Excellent relationships between adults and pupils mean that pupils are confident to seek help and know that they will receive guidance about how to improve their work. The use of personal learning targets is not yet sufficiently rigorous to assist this.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has made reasonable improvement since the time of the last inspection. Staff changes have been a barrier that leaders and managers have worked effectively to overcome. Notable has been the success with which the school has sustained its many good features and made significant improvement to ICT. The headteacher and new leadership team have a secure grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have devised a sensible improvement plan that rightly places mathematics as the top priority. A range of useful monitoring activities is in place to identify and disseminate best practice in teaching and learning.

The governors are interested and involved in the school and make sure that all legal requirements are met. A new chair of governors is giving a very strong lead to further improving their role as 'critical friend'. There is good involvement of parents in supporting the life of the school, for example, by attending 'Inspire' workshops and helping their children to enjoy achieving.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to me when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting so many of you, finding out about what goes on and hearing all about the exciting plans the school council has for improving the playground.

You clearly enjoy school and it was very pleasing to see how well you get on together. Your behaviour is outstanding and you should feel very proud of the excellent contributions you make to the community as monitors, peer mediators and house captains. The school provides you with a good range of activities and takes good care of you. These things help prepare you well for your future working lives.

Teaching in the school is satisfactory and sometimes good. Most of you are learning successfully in English and science and achieve well. However, this is not always the case in mathematics and the school agrees with me that you should be doing better. The headteacher and her staff have your best interests at heart and are doing a sound job to improve the quality of education you are receiving from being satisfactory to good. I am sure you will want to do your best to help.

Here are some things I have suggested to the school to make things even better for you:

- Make sure that the tasks in maths are always challenging for you, especially for those of you who find maths easy.
- Record and check your progress in maths in more detail so that teachers can see ways to help you improve more easily.