

Meridian Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100137
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	307300
Inspection date	9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Thomson

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr I Parkes
Headteacher	Mr D Suttle
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2004
School address	Old Woolwich Road Greenwich London SE10 9NY
Telephone number	020 8858 3572
Fax number	020 8858 5574

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of leadership and management on the drive to raise standards and achievement, with a particular focus on writing and on the more able; how well initiatives are prioritised; the consistency of teaching and learning in raising standards and the progress of all pupils; and how well the pupils know their targets and what they need to do to improve. Evidence was gathered from national published assessment data; the school's self-evaluation, assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work, including lessons; discussions with the chair of governors, members of staff, pupils and parents; and the questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Meridian is of average size. Boys outnumber girls. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, from minority ethnic groups and whose first language is not English are all much higher than average. There are more pupils than in most schools with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need. There is designated special provision for deaf and hearing impaired children. Pupil mobility is much higher than average.

The school has Healthy Schools status, Activemark and its status as Investors in People has recently been renewed for the third time.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Meridian is a very effective school where pupils achieve well and have outstanding personal development. This is due to the school's excellent pastoral care, creative curriculum, good teaching and good leadership and management. It is a truly inclusive school where careful attention to the needs and interests of all pupils results in the school being so successful. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and typical of their views are, 'This is a well-led school which is creative and child-centred' and 'Meridian is a terrific school which has a fantastic friendly feel to it'.

Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school. They are exceedingly proud of what they do at school, particularly events such as the Art and Writing Festival and whole school music events. Pupils, including a group of deaf and hearing impaired pupils, were seen during the inspection singing confidently and enthusiastically, playing musical instruments and conducting performances. Children feel very safe and secure in the school environment. They understand very well what it means to have a healthy lifestyle and the benefits of taking on responsibilities. For example, they enjoy being 'peer mentors' in the playground and helping younger children with their reading. They feel that the school listens to them and they are proud of being instrumental in some of the innovations in the playground, such as the wildlife garden. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They report that behaviour of the vast majority is very good. They interact well with others, because of the school's strong focus on respect.

From starting points that are very variable, but below those typically expected overall, pupils reach standards that are securely in line with those seen nationally at the end of Year 6. All pupils make good progress, regardless of background and ability, because of the excellent focused support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants and the good creative curriculum. The provision for deaf and hearing impaired pupils is well thought-out and managed, resulting in these pupils having a good balance of specialist teaching and integration in mainstream classes. The school has placed a strong emphasis on raising standards in writing, a point for improvement raised at the previous inspection. Whilst there is evidence that strategies have helped to accelerate pupils' progress, standards are not yet high enough, nor is progress in writing uniform across the school. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in some areas of the curriculum, such as science.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Enthusiastic teaching, interesting lessons and pupils' readiness to learn lead to the pupils' achievement being good. Pupils talk about their lessons being 'fun' and the teachers being 'very helpful' and say they learn best when they 'get to do things'. However, there are inconsistencies and the good practice found in the school is not shared well enough. Sometimes the work is not matched carefully enough to the abilities of all the pupils. As a result some of the higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Pupils say that they are keen to improve their level of achievement and they engage actively in the evaluation of their own work and that of other pupils, when given the opportunity to do so. This was seen to particularly good effect in a Year 6 literacy lesson. Pupils are aware of their targets and the steps they need to take to improve their work. One pupil, when asked to describe his school, said, 'it's a learnable school - you learn more here than at any other school'.

There is no doubt that the leadership and management of the school have played a large part in its success. The dedicated headteacher, ably supported by a talented leadership team, has

instilled a culture of pride and self-reflection amongst the staff. Parents talk about the teachers contributing 'so much more than their given working hours' and many are proud to have the opportunity to support their children's education in ways such as coming into school to help with reading. School self-evaluation is accurate and, increasingly, subject leaders are becoming more involved in holding all staff accountable for the progress of the pupils, resulting in their improving achievement. Governance is strong and provides a good level of challenge. There is clear direction for further development and the recent improvements indicate that there is good capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents appreciate the good quality of provision in the Foundation Stage and the fact that children get off to a good start in school. The happy atmosphere, attractive surroundings and approachable staff ensure that children feel safe and secure. Many children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for that age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. By the end of Reception, they achieve well to reach standards that are broadly in line with those expected. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception because there is well focused support for groups and individuals, with a strong emphasis on practical activities, language, and personal, social and emotional development. Writing is less strong compared to other areas. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and the teamwork of staff is strong. Children are given encouragement to explore the world around them and to develop their independence. This is seen to particularly good effect in the well-used outdoor space, although children in Reception do not have the same ready access. The focus on personal and social development and language skills encourages self-esteem and provides a firm foundation for the next phase of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the existing strategies to raise achievement further in writing across the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is all at least good, particularly with regard to challenge given to higher attaining pupils.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

17 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meridian Primary School, London, SE10 9NY

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you and am very grateful for the excellent contribution you made to the inspection. I would now like to tell you what I found out.

Meridian is a good school and I know you are very all very proud of it! Your behaviour is good and you get on very well with each other. Older pupils look after younger ones and members of the school council to represent your views well and they make many suggestions about how to improve the school.

The standards you reach in your work are in line with those of many other schools in the country. You are very well aware of the importance of healthy eating and keeping fit and you take part in lots of sport and games. You enjoy very much the many visits and exciting things the school has to offer. I particularly enjoyed seeing your wonderful Art and Writing Festival and listening to you singing and playing your musical instruments. Your teachers and teaching assistants care for you very well indeed and many of you told me that there is always someone to turn to if you have any problems.

Your headteacher and all the other staff know exactly what is needed to make Meridian an even better school and they work very hard to make sure that the school improves all the time. I have asked them now to work with you to make your writing a little better. I have also asked them to make sure that you learn as well as you can in all your lessons and provide harder work for those of you who find learning easy. This will help you reach even higher standards. You have your part to play too: please continue to work hard and keep enjoying your lessons!

Thank you once again for being so polite and welcoming. I enjoyed watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Alison Thomson

Lead Inspector