

Mendlesham Community Primary School

Old Station Road, Mendlesham, Stowmarket, IP14 5RT

Inspection dates 6–7 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress because teaching is good and improving. They reach above-average levels of attainment.
- School leaders and staff act quickly to provide effective support for the pupils when their learning is seen to be slow.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they take delight in learning. They feel safe and say all forms of bullying are extremely rare. They tell an adult readily if they are worried about anything.
- The headteacher provides excellent direction for the school to improve. She identifies areas for improvement accurately and acts quickly to deal with them.
- The school provides good professional development and training for teachers and those in leadership positions.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. They make outstanding progress in developing their personal and social skills.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers do not give enough time for pupils to work on their own, or in small groups.
- Some pupils spell inaccurately.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed three teachers in 14 lessons or parts of lessons. Three of these were paired observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff and pupils. The inspectors spoke to members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, and to parents bringing their children to school.
- The inspector looked at school documentation about the school's work, including information about the achievement of pupils, development planning and the school's self-evaluation.
- The inspector took into account 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also examined the school's own analysis of parents' views.

Inspection team

Edward Wheatley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools. It has three classes: a Reception class, a Years 1 and 2 class, and a Years 3 and 4 class.
- Pupils come from almost entirely White British backgrounds and none is in the early stages of learning English. The school has a small number of children from Traveller families.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The percentage supported through school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funds given to the school by the government) is below average. These pupils include those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- In recent years, there have been significant changes in staffing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that teachers:
 - provide enough time in lessons for pupils to work by themselves or alongside other pupils
 - check that pupils spell accurately.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress is uniformly good in all classes. It is improving and some pupils make exceptional progress. In the most recent teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2, levels of attainment were above average and pupils in Year 4 reached standards above those expected for their age.
- Attainment in writing is above average. Pupils write in several styles. For example, in a lesson using the theme of hurricanes, pupils described in detail what they would expect to see, hear, or feel, if they were at the scene of a hurricane. They used adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and connectives well to create long pieces of writing and punctuated their writing accurately.
- Most pupils spell carefully and correctly, but, across the school, some pupils do not spell accurately, even though the words may be displayed in the classroom for them to copy.
- Pupils read well and with confidence. They make effective use of their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) to read words they do not recognise. When they find that difficult, slower readers try hard to work out what the words are before asking for help. Most pupils read with enjoyment. They own their own books and regularly borrow books from the school library.
- Pupils have good mathematical skills. They know their multiplication tables and add, subtract, and divide competently. Older pupils have a good understanding of fractions and decimals and younger ones measure accurately and estimate lengths with increasing precision.
- Pupils supported through pupil premium funding and those with special educational needs make good progress. The small numbers of pupils involved do better than similar pupils nationally. The pupils from Traveller families settle in to school quickly. They are made to feel welcome by other pupils and rapidly start to make good progress.
- Learning is helped by the excellent relationships between pupils. They work together with good humour and eagerness. They listen to each other, check each other's work and often help each other. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development.
- On starting in the Reception Year, children have lower than expected literacy and numeracy skills and their social skills are well below those of children of a similar age. They make good and often exceptional progress, especially in their personal and social development. They speak, write and read well for their age and they count and carry out simple calculations well. They play and work together extremely well, listen to each other and share toys and equipment happily.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and outstanding relationships play an important part in how well and enthusiastically pupils learn. Teaching is consistently good and is ensuring that pupils make good and sometimes excellent progress.
- Teachers plan their lessons well and use accurate information about how well pupils make progress to organise activities to ensure learning is brisk.

- Teachers work closely with teaching assistants to provide work that is carefully tailored to help pupils learn fast. There is often extension work for able pupils and work that provides small steps in learning to help lower-attaining pupils make good progress.
- In most lessons, teachers make sure that there are opportunities for pupils to learn together and on their own. Good questioning encourages pupils to talk about their work and this helps them explain and write about their understanding well. When pupils work in small groups, they learn to respect each other's views, to share their learning and to collaborate over results in practical work. This contributes well to pupils' development of social, moral and cultural skills.
- Where teaching is particularly good, the pace of learning is fast because the teacher provides extension work and additional things to do as the lesson progresses. For example, in a lesson on measuring, based on work being done on dinosaurs in other subjects, the teacher asked pupils to check how accurately they were measuring, how their measurements related to room sizes, and to work out approximate lengths in whole metres. This made sure that pupils were fully occupied, learned several pieces of information while they were measuring, and were inquisitive about what they were learning.
- Occasionally, teachers do not time activities well enough, so that pupils work for too short a time by themselves or in small groups. When this occurs, it slows learning because pupils are not able to make the best use of the time.
- Teachers link subjects together well. They plan learning around topics that interest pupils. For example, a link with a school in Africa plays an important part in developing pupils' geographical knowledge; their literacy, because they write letters to pupils at the school; and numeracy, because they calculate how funds they raise to help the school can be spent. This contributes well to pupils' basic skills and to their understanding of the lives of people from other cultures.
- Teachers' marking is good. It informs pupils how well they are doing, gives guidance on how pupils should improve their work, which they follow, and tells them what the next steps in learning are. However, teachers are not always rigorous enough in correcting pupils' inaccurate spelling.
- Teaching in Reception Year is outstanding and children's learning is exceptionally good. Adults check children's progress frequently. They plan activities to help develop children's literacy, numeracy and social skills particularly well. They use the indoor and outdoor areas exceptionally well; improvements to the outside area are well under way.
- Parents are generally pleased with the quality of teaching and how well their children learn.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around school. They are proud to be at their school and are keen to make sure visitors know that they think the school is good.
- Pupils take on responsibilities readily. Older pupils look after younger ones, a group of older pupils organises the changing of library books in the busy library, and other pupils take their responsibilities as members of the school council seriously.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of what is unacceptable behaviour, how this differs from bullying, and about different forms of bullying. They know what is right and wrong. On the rare

occasion that they are concerned about anything, they know who to ask for help.

- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour extremely well. Inattention and behaviour likely to distract other pupils are rare. When teachers need to deal with inattention, this is mainly because pupils are occupied enthusiastically with their work and have not heard the teacher asking for their attention.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. The school monitors attendance thoroughly and has extremely good links with social services and families to encourage good attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is led well and the headteacher is very clear about how she expects the school to improve. She has dealt with past staff changes effectively and has a highly supportive team of staff, committed to further improvement. Teachers are keen to make sure that their teaching becomes outstanding and, as a result, pupils' progress is good and improving. The capacity for further improvement is good.
 - The school knows its own strengths and weaknesses. Teachers' performance management targets reflect school priorities and include targets for improving pupils' progress. The school provides good training to improve teachers' skills and a wide range of coaching for staff who have recently taken on subject leadership responsibilities. The local authority plays an important part in supporting all staff and helping with their professional training.
 - Differences in performance between different groups of pupils are small and are dealt with as soon as the school is aware of them. The school is committed to all pupils being successful, whatever their backgrounds. The range of subjects taught is wide and includes many opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their literacy, numeracy and computer skills. The school makes good use of local places for pupils to visit, so that they gain a wide experience of art, history and the environment. It provides a good personal, social and health education programme taught through lessons and assemblies. The combined effect of all that the school teaches contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - The school has good relationships with parents and carers. It encourages them to visit school, to meet teachers and to join in with pupil activities on a regular basis. It provides good support for families when it is needed, and almost all parents are pleased with the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body is committed to supporting the school and helping it to improve. Several members make valuable contributions to learning in day-to-day classroom activities. The governing body questions the headteacher rigorously and is well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses. It monitors pupils' progress closely, including of those pupils supported through pupil premium funding, and makes sure that expenditure is focused on promoting pupils' progress. It checks that requirements for the performance management of teachers are met and that advancement on teacher salary scales is linked to pupils' progress. The governing body ensures that safeguarding requirements are met and that the school has secure procedures to check new staff before they are appointed. It ensures that it is up-to-date with training so that it can offer a high level of support and challenge for the school.

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	124599
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	402276

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Fenning
Headteacher	Claire Jones
Date of previous school inspection	14 July 2010
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