

Meole Brace CofE Primary School and Nursery

Church Road, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 9HG

Inspection dates 17–18 November 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are at the forefront of this school's work and are outstanding as a result.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have ensured the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes have continued to improve.
- Middle leaders have been given increased responsibility and consequently have made a strong contribution to improving teaching and raising achievement.
- Teaching and pupils' progress across the school are typically good and better at times. As a result of this, outcomes for pupils are good overall.
- The early years provision is outstanding. The Nursery and Reception classes are very calm and organised, and provide children with an effective start to school, which ensures they make at least good progress.
- The needs of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs are well provided for. As a result, they make good progress alongside other pupils in the school.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to small groups and individual pupils across the school.
- Strong, productive relationships exist between staff, parents and pupils, creating a very positive climate for learning. As a result, pupils feel safe, conduct themselves very well and make effective progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders do not rapidly analyse the latest published assessment information and use this to improve the provision for current pupils.
- Expectations of the most-able pupils are not always high enough and, as a result, some of these pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Governors do not have enough information about the school's performance to challenge leaders effectively and hold them to account.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - rapidly analysing the latest assessment information to enable staff to improve teaching provision and allow governors to challenge any dip in standards for particular groups of pupils
 - ensuring governors have all the training and information they need fully to support, challenge and hold school leaders to account
 - ensuring the statutory Department for Education requirements are kept up to date and available for parents on the school's website.

- Further improve the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes by:
 - using up-to-date assessment information provided by leaders to ensure the needs of all groups of pupils are fully met
 - increasing the expectations of the most-able pupils to ensure they are consistently challenged to make the progress they are capable of.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have improved teaching, especially in the early years. They have also improved middle leadership and pupil outcomes. As a result, standards are rising and most pupils have made effective progress by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.
- Middle leaders now have more responsibility, work together well and regularly contribute to whole-school improvement plans. Middle leaders have effectively improved mathematics, literacy, early years and the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result, outcomes in these subjects and for these groups of pupils have improved, particularly in 2015.
- Leadership roles have been developed and expanded since the previous inspection. Middle and subject leaders have clear roles, can show the impact of subject developments and have a number of appropriate plans in place. The leadership of early years, supported by the deputy headteacher, has seen effective improvement in Nursery and Reception teaching. As a result, provision has been adapted to meet the changing needs of some of the children in these classes.
- Although leadership and management have been strengthened effectively since the last inspection, some inconsistencies remain in the analysis of assessment information and the quality of teaching. Consequently, governors and teachers do not have up-to-date assessment information for all groups of pupils and therefore are not able to fully target support, or hold teachers and leaders to account.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for the school, due to improving performance. The headteacher is a local leader of education and is used by the local authority to provide support to other schools. However, the local authority has an overgenerous view of Meole Brace Primary School and Nursery in some areas and therefore has not provided effective challenge to help the school fully develop aspects such as governance.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Additional teaching and support has focused well on improving English, mathematics and personal confidence for eligible pupils. As a result, the progress of these pupils has improved and the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, both in the school and nationally, has almost closed. Most disadvantaged pupils achieved outcomes in line with or above other pupils nationally in 2015, although the most-able disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as their peers nationally.
- The staff questionnaire shows that the vast majority of staff think that the school has improved since the previous inspection and pupils' behaviour is managed effectively. Most staff agree that leaders have created a climate in which teachers are trusted to take risks in ways that are right for pupils. This means that nearly all staff are positive about leadership. Several parents and staff commented warmly on how well leaders and the church team recently managed a very sensitive situation in the school.
- The school's curriculum provides an improved range of learning experiences for pupils. The curriculum is carefully evaluated and includes a variety of extra-curricular clubs and exciting opportunities, such as a history trip to a Roman villa. Pupils learn about democracy and equality of opportunity through the election of the school council. Pupils talked enthusiastically to inspectors about how friendly the school is and how caring the staff are. Pupils who gave their views say that they enjoy school, consider that the difficulty of the work they are given is about right and that they have developed a strong sense of caring for both each other and others in the world. Their understanding of different religions and other modern-day countries is less well developed. The opportunities provided by the school have improved pupil's understanding of democracy and their preparation for life in modern Britain, although this is not yet fully developed.
- Worship assemblies provide good opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, celebrate their personal achievements and tackle discrimination. Weekly whole-school 'Open the Book' assemblies are led by the local church team. Pupils listen very carefully, behave well and are respectful to school visitors, by holding doors open for example.
- Additional money to improve pupils' participation and ability in sport has been used effectively. The school uses most of this funding to pay for a coaching company to provide sports lessons and a range of after-school clubs. Pupils enjoy sports, have improved attitudes and have enjoyed some success in both intra-school and inter-school competitions. The funding has also been used to provide a range of staff training, such as in dance and gymnastics, leading to a wider range of opportunities for pupils.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors know the strengths of the school well, along with the overall improvement areas. However,

they do not have all the information they need to fully hold leaders to account to ensure continuous improvement. There have been recent changes to the governing board and some of the governor roles are not yet established.

- Governors are involved and well informed about how the school works with the local church and community. Finances are well managed and balanced.
- Pay decisions are linked to staff performance. Governors have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school. They have been involved in the development of middle leaders and the expansion of the senior management team.
- Governors are aware of the latest published pupil attainment data but do not know the up-to-date impact of additional funding such as the pupil premium. Governors and leaders have not ensured all statutory Department for Education requirements have been published on the school's website for parents to access.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors, leaders, staff and pupils understand the importance of safeguarding. Individual cases of concern about pupils are followed up to ensure these pupils are kept safe. Statutory safeguarding requirements are met and leaders have ensured all staff are regularly updated, including recent training regarding the prevention of radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is typically good across the school and sometimes better. However, there is not yet enough outstanding teaching to enable all pupils, especially the most able, to make the progress they are capable of.
- Teachers and teaching assistants create a very positive climate for learning through openness and effective questioning. This has resulted in pupils taking more responsibility for their learning and progress. The pupils inspectors spoke to say that most of their work is hard enough.
- At the time of the inspection, leaders and teachers did not have all of the most up-to-date assessment information. This means teachers are not able to adjust their teaching to meet the needs of all groups of pupils and leaders are not able to target where provision needs to be focused.
- Very good relationships exist between adults and pupils, enabling high-quality discussions to occur about learning. Pupils are very respectful of adults and each other. Pupils give attention quickly when asked and listen carefully. At the end of a mathematics lesson in Year 2, the teacher praised several pupils in particular for doing well and the rest of the class spontaneously applauded.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved and pupil outcomes are strong. The latest published assessment information shows that nearly all groups of pupils are making good progress. One of the mathematics subject leaders recently took part in a teaching exchange to China, which also involved a Chinese teacher spending a month in Meole Brace. Consequently, the school has adopted a new approach to mathematics teaching. Inspectors observed pupils across the school confidently using this new approach to solve a range of number problems.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has improved so that the large majority of pupils are now achieving the level they should, above the national average. Pupils enjoy reading often and are usually able to use their phonics skills to decode unfamiliar words. Inspectors agreed that phonics and guided reading teaching is typically outstanding. Pupils make rapid progress, due to effective teaching and excellent attitudes to learning.
- The teaching of writing is effective and is supporting pupils' improved use of punctuation and better sentence construction. Consequently, most groups of pupils are making good progress in writing. Some of the most-able pupils do not progress as much as other pupils, as the expectations of what they can achieve are not always high enough.
- Teachers' feedback usually follows the school's marking policy by providing specific guidance to pupils on how to improve a piece of work and suggestions are usually followed up. However, pupils' books show this is not yet consistent across the school.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide effective support for pupils. They use detailed questioning, both in lessons and with small groups, to maintain pupils' concentration and challenge them to deepen their thinking and understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils know that funds raised for national charities such as 'Water Aid' go to help provide clean water for people in poorer countries who do not have the same access to clean water as we do.
- Pupils' thoughtful safety and care of one another is shown by the way they look after each other at playtime and lunchtime. This was demonstrated during the inspection by older Year 6 pupils helping to serve younger pupils and cut up their hot food if needed.
- Leaders have ensured pupils' confidence and physical and emotional well-being are nurtured and they are given time to discuss sensitive issues. Consequently, pupils have excellent self-awareness about their learning and confidently try out new things and seek challenges in their learning.
- Parents are very supportive of the school's actions to support pupils' personal development and welfare. For example, one parent explained that the teacher and teaching assistants have supported her daughter immensely since recently starting school. They have helped her daughter overcome her initial apprehensions both in the classroom and at lunchtimes.
- Pupils are fully aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. They are knowledgeable about the dangers associated with the internet. Pupils say that they feel safe in school because adults are always there to help them if needed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their courtesy and conduct in lessons is exemplary and they have very positive attitudes towards each other. Pupils show great respect to all adults, at all times of the day.
- All staff have high expectations of behaviour and manage pupils' needs well. As a result, lessons are very rarely disrupted. The vast majority of parents are very positive about the management of behaviour in the school.
- Pupils clearly enjoy lessons and respond quickly to adults' questions and prompts. They move sensibly between activities in lessons and work thoughtfully during group work, carefully considering each other's views and ideas.
- Pupils are aware of the possible consequences of bullying. They say it is very rare and if any bullying does occur, it is quickly stopped. Pupils have been taught about right and wrong and trust adults to sort out any problems that do happen. When asked if there are any disagreements at playtime, one pupil said, 'we don't really allow that sort of thing here'.
- The school analyses behaviour logs carefully and follows up any concerns. Checks on these records show behaviour incidents are rare and, although some pupils have been excluded in the last three years, the number of exclusions is falling. The school works closely with parents and outside agencies to support individual pupils' emotional, social and behavioural needs.
- The school works hard to promote and sustain high attendance. Any absences are quickly followed up and leaders work closely with parents to improve low attendance for individuals. Pupil attendance rates for some groups were below the national average in 2014, but have improved since then. Pupils are keen to come to school because they feel safe and there is a very positive atmosphere of learning and care around the school.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' outcomes have continued to improve for nearly all groups for the last three years. Evidence of progress in pupils' books and published assessment information for English and mathematics supports this. Most pupils have responded well to challenges set by teachers and they produce work of a high quality.
- Pupils read well. Effective daily teaching of phonics has resulted in improvements in pupils' reading skills. Consequently, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check has been improving since 2013 and is above the national average, despite a slight dip this year. Pupils that did not meet the expected phonics standard in Year 1 catch up very quickly in Year 2.

- Outcomes by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have continued to improve since 2012 and were well above the national average this year. Pupils have secure mathematical skills and are able to effectively use information to solve number problems. By the time pupils leave Year 6, most pupils have above-average skills in English and mathematics. This is a result of strong teaching, enabling pupils to build on their existing knowledge and make at least expected progress. For example, older pupils are able to confidently find 1%, 10% and 20% of house prices.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is above the national average in all areas of English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The most-able pupils are able to demonstrate their confidence, effective use of reading, writing and mathematics skills and their engagement in all areas of learning. However, not all of this pupil group make as much progress as they are capable of.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is effective and their needs are met well. Good-quality external support and effective programmes have resulted in a highly individual approach to support progress for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, as well as those who need additional help to achieve well. Consequently, these pupils make good progress by the time they leave Year 6, especially in mathematics and reading.
- Most pupils eligible for pupil premium funding at the school achieve well. The additional support given to these pupils has enabled the school to reduce the attainment gap with other pupils in the school and to enable disadvantaged pupils to make good progress from their starting points. This year, disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 had better outcomes than other Year 2 pupils in the school and nationally. As a result of well-tailored programmes of support and effective help in lessons in Key Stage 2, there is a similar picture at the end of Year 6. Outcomes for the most-able disadvantaged pupils are not as high as other pupils, especially in reading, mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The school ensures that all pupils are treated equally and that social skills are developed. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and other staff and are successfully prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- The leadership of the early years is outstanding. Nursery and Reception staff systematically check how children improve their skills through play and modify activities according to the children's needs and interests. The classrooms are very well equipped and staff have created very calm, caring and purposeful learning environments.
- Some children start Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age, especially in speech, language, social and emotional areas. All Nursery children are very keen to learn and show high levels of concentration. Adults provide well-directed support and encourage children's independence right from the start. Consequently, this provision enables the vast majority of children to progress well towards their early learning goals.
- The early years staff are effective in helping children to quickly settle and make progress. One parent said about her daughter, 'I have been really impressed with how well she has settled in and the progress she has made over the space of just a few months.'
- New staff have been given effective induction and support. As a result of this and strong support from leaders, teaching across early years is typically outstanding. Although it is too early to measure the full impact, leaders have adapted the provision to meet the changing needs of some of the children who have recently joined the school.
- The majority of Nursery children transfer into Reception. They make an excellent start in both Nursery and Reception, as a result of an outstanding provision and a very consistent approach from all adults.
- Children in early years have excellent listening skills. Due to high-quality adult input and established routines, children are able to show great enthusiasm as they are learning and then immediately stop and listen when required. In one typical lesson seen, the teacher supported a child to use a tambourine to gain the other children's attention and say 'Tidy up time!' The other children stopped straight away and all helped to tidy up.
- Children's love of learning is effectively promoted because of the high-quality teaching and engaging learning environments. Exciting activities planned by the adults, such as role play, correspond to the children's interests and are well matched to their needs. The adults have very quickly established learning, social and communication routines across the early years provision, enabling children to be confident and progress well. This is a key feature of the success of the early years provision.
- Adults promote early reading skills through daily phonics sessions. Children's active participation helps to

develop their enjoyment in learning letters and the sounds they make. Consequently, most children's reading skills at the end of Reception are very well developed.

- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception increased in 2013 and again in 2014. This proportion took a slight dip this year, but is still in line with the national average. The school has made effective use of some pupil premium funding to provide 'forest school' sessions and individual support to disadvantaged early years children.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding as a result of high expectations, high-quality provision and an individualised approach. Adults ensure children know how to be safe and who they can talk to if they need help. Whether learning indoors or outdoors, children behave in ways that keep them happy and safe. This was exemplified by a group of Reception children planning and building a pirate ship out of wooden blocks. Without adult interaction, the children cooperated very well, steadied the ship safely when some blocks wobbled and were delighted with the outcome.
- Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's learning through maintaining good communication with the school. For example, children's learning journeys are readily available for parents to view and take away to add contributions about their child's development from home.
- Outstanding teaching, support and well-planned learning activities enable almost all children to make very good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, most pupils leave Reception as confident learners and well equipped to start Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	135789
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10001235

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary and nursery
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Oakley
Headteacher	Jenny Davies
Telephone number	01743 351027
Website	www.meolebraceprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@meolebrace-pri.shropshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 October 2010

Information about this school

- Meole Brace CofE Primary and Nursery School is larger than most combined primary and nursery schools.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education and provides support to other local schools.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is lower than other schools nationally.
- Approximately one quarter of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, which is about the same as the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is slightly above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Children in the Nursery classes attend part time.
- Children in the Reception classes attend full time.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 13 lessons or part lessons, including examples of teaching in every year group. Some of these lesson observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspectors and senior leaders also completed a learning walk throughout the school, visiting most classrooms.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior management team, middle leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority who works with the school.
- The inspection team looked at pupils' books in a range of subjects to establish the progress and quality of their work over time.
- The inspector talked with groups of pupils as well as individual pupils during their lessons and at playtimes to find out their views about the school. No pupils completed Ofsted's voluntary online pupil questionnaire.
- The inspection team heard pupils read and observed their behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Informal discussions were held with parents to gauge their views of the school. The inspector took account of 75 recent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and the comments made.
- The inspection team received responses from 32 staff to the inspection questionnaire and their views were taken into account.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement, external monitoring reports, records of checks made by leaders and information on pupils' progress and outcomes. They also scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

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