

Meadow Farm Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112752
Local authority	Derby City
Inspection number	378550
Inspection dates	31 January–1 February 2012
Lead inspector	Sue Hall

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 of pupils on the school roll	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony MacDonald (Acting)
Headteacher	Clare Morgan
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sue Hall

Additional inspector

David Westall

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed ten teachers in 16 lessons. They also observed two guided group-reading sessions and heard children of mixed abilities, from both Year 2 and 6, read individually. The inspectors also held meetings with groups of pupils, with senior leaders, and with representatives of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, looked at data about achievement across the school and examined samples of pupils' recent work. They scrutinised documents including the school's self-evaluation information, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and a sample of whole-school policies. They examined evidence regarding the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors analysed 116 questionnaires received from parents and carers, 12 from members of staff and 127 from pupils.

Information about the school

This is a larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British background. A very small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is close to the average; most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The school exceeded the floor standards, the minimum expectations for attainment set by the government, last year.

There is provision for children from the age of three in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school is currently in the middle of a rebuilding project to house a new Early Years Foundation Stage unit and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities. Due to construction work at the school there was no functioning computer system during the period of the inspection.

The school has achieved a range of awards recently, including the Healthy School award, an accreditation for Personal, Social and Health Education and is part of a School Sports Partnership.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in all year groups including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by skilled staff and make good progress towards their targets. When they leave the school pupils attain standards that are close to national averages.
- Reading is well taught. Most pupils develop a good understanding of letters and the sounds they make and say they like books. Pupils speaking skills are, however, widely variable. Many have a quite limited vocabulary. This affects their communication with others, and their skills in a range of subjects especially their writing.
- Teaching is good across the school. Assessment information is used effectively to ensure a good level of challenge in all activities and staff ask a good range of questions to check pupils' understanding. However, teachers do not take every opportunity to involve pupils in discussions and some are very quiet and passive in lessons. At times, the introductions to activities are too lengthy which limits the time available for more practical learning.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They say almost unanimously that they feel safe, like their teachers and enjoy working with others. Most pupils concentrate well, although attention wanes when teachers talk for too long.
- The school mission statement, 'Confident, caring and accomplished children', is at the very heart of everything it does. Pupils are valued and supported well and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The headteacher provides well-focused leadership, which has ensured that what was already a successful school continues to move forward. Staff work well together as a team. There is a clear emphasis on continually raising standards;

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therefore the school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop pupils' communication skills including their written work by:
 - providing more planned opportunities to discuss their ideas with others
 - making sure all pupils join in discussions
 - developing confidence in using a wider and more descriptive vocabulary to help in the recording of their ideas
 - extending pupils' involvement in their own learning by making sure that time is used well in lessons for pupils to find things out for themselves and that they are not passive listeners for lengthy periods.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are very pleased with the quality of care and education provided for their children. Typical of many responses is 'Thanks for a brill school' and 'I give it 12 out of 10.' Evidence from the inspection supports the view that this is a good school.

Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are typically below the expectations for their age. In some areas of communication, language and literacy, skills are well below expectations. Assessment data and inspection observations confirm that many children, especially the boys, often have very limited speaking skills. Many are initially quiet and speak in short phrases with a limited number of words. The school has recognised the challenges of improving communication skills, and put much planning, effort and resources into trying to capture their interest. In all the lessons observed in Nursery and Reception and across the school boys and girls made equally good progress.

In Key Stages 1 and 2 all groups of pupils achieve well, making good progress to reach standards close to the national average in English and mathematics. Pupils with additional needs, and the very small number speaking English as an additional language also make good progress. Nevertheless, despite good overall achievement, pupils' speaking skills are often below the level of their other abilities, which has a limiting effect on their progress in subjects including writing and mathematics.

Achievement in reading is good and pupils enjoy the range of books they have to choose from. They use a variety of strategies, including their knowledge of the sounds letters make, to help them read unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 2 and

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Year 6 standards in reading and other subjects are close to the national average. Pupils make good use of their reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, in a Year 3 science lesson, pupils used their knowledge of words related to plants to play a quick game of 'hangman' before planning an experiment to check whether plants need water more than light to grow. Similarly in a Year 2 mathematics lesson pupils learned how to organise an array of items and so make clear gains in understanding that multiplication is a form of repeated addition. Such activities have a practical element, interest the pupils, and give opportunities to work with others that contribute to their social development.

Quality of teaching

All the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire consider that their children are well taught. Inspection findings support this view and note the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school. Staff have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and use assessment information well to provide work that challenges those of higher, average and lower abilities. Staff manage behaviour well and lessons are conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. Teachers are often enthusiastic in their approach and try to make activities interesting to all, especially the boys. This was illustrated in Year 6 lessons when 'hot seating' sections of the story of 'The Highwaymen'; here, staff and pupils played the role of one of the key characters by wearing a mask or wig and answering questions about their actions or feelings.

Knowledgeable classroom assistants work closely with the teachers to support pupils with additional needs. Those whose circumstances make them vulnerable are very well supported by all staff, including the learning mentor. Pupils are given many opportunities to work together and do so in a sensible manner, an illustration of the importance the school places on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Teachers use questions well to probe what pupils already know and understand. On rare occasions, though, opportunities are missed to demand more of pupils by asking further questions or encouraging them to use more detail; or pupils spend too long listening to adults and lose concentration. While a few parents have concerns that too much homework is given, inspectors note this is well organised and suitable.

The planned curriculum meets the needs of the pupils well, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school's current lack of computer access is having an impact on the teaching of a range of skills. However, this is a short-term necessity and the school has rightly recognised this as a priority as soon as building work is completed.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers are confident that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils agree and inspection evidence also supports this view. Most of the adults who

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responded to the inspection questionnaire indicate that they consider behaviour in school to be good, although, a small number expressed concerns about bad behaviour. Inspectors' observations confirm school records which show that the typical behaviour of pupils is good and that they are managed consistently and effectively by skilled staff. Pupils with recognised behaviour, social and emotional difficulties are very well supported by teachers, classroom assistants, and the learning mentor. The rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour are well managed and support is sought from external agencies as appropriate. Pupils say there is little bullying although a few younger ones are unclear about what bullying, including cyber-bullying, is.

Pupils respond well to the clear moral code promoted by the school through acts of collective worship and reinforced in discussions and by slogans widely displayed around the school. The school holds awards for encouraging healthy lifestyles and activities promoting personal, social and health education. Pupils' attendance is slightly above average and the school takes an appropriate stand in discouraging the taking of holidays in term time.

Pupils of all ages and backgrounds get along well together. This is illustrated when, unprompted, a Year 6 girl gently helped a much younger pupil carry his lunch tray and checked he was all right. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities such as an older pupil meticulously checking that class registers are collected and organised. Class councils are a valuable way of pupils being involved in deciding how they can improve the school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher shows determination that the school must do all it can to support the pupils and their families. She provides very effective leadership and has motivated a team of dedicated staff so that parents note 'they all show a lot of love and praise for the children'. Governors are supportive of the school and are working to further develop their role as a critical friend.

The school has made improvements to curriculum planning and teaching since the previous inspection and worked with some success to narrow the gap between the achievement of boys and girls. Staff training is focused on making sure teaching and learning continues to improve for all pupils and that their safety is assured. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are carefully implemented.

Systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning are well established and effective. The mentoring of staff enables them to plan, teach and monitor activities together, which ensures the sharing of good practice. The deputy headteacher is effective in the management and use of assessment information to inform planning. Pupils with additional needs are provided with high quality support, which is very well managed by the special educational needs coordinator. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is a shared responsibility which ensures all those involved have a voice in decision making.

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The curriculum is good and meets the needs of pupils of differing abilities well. Additional opportunities provided through visits, visitors and specialist teaching make sure pupils experience a range of activities that extend their learning and understanding of life beyond their local area. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. This ensures that every pupil receives a curriculum that prepares him or her for the next stage of their life and helps them challenge discrimination. The school is a cohesive community that looks outwards to learn from others, with for example, pupils enthusiastically celebrating Chinese New Year. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the school's values and aims.

The school works closely with many parents and carers including in successful weekly parent sessions in Nursery. As observed, a good number attend and join in with the children's activities. Staff use this opportunity well to establish links with families and to model good communication with children. A small number of parents and carers would like more regular information and better notice of school activities.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning; pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meadow Farm Community Primary School, Derby, DE21 6TZ

Thank you very much for making my colleague and me feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We both enjoyed talking to you and listening to your ideas. I particularly enjoyed seeing the children and parents in the Nursery playing with the equipment and seeing the Reception children writing simple sentences. I also liked seeing how the older pupils found out more about a character in 'The Highwayman' by asking questions to someone in the 'hot seat'.

There are many things that we like about your school.

- Your school is a good one, and your headteacher and staff are working well together to make sure it keeps on improving.
- Most of you work hard and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Teaching is good and staff provide you with work that is just hard enough to help you improve.
- You feel safe in school and trust adults to help you if you need it.
- You enjoy being at school and your attendance is good.

These are the things we have asked the school to do to make it even better:

- To provide you with more opportunities to discuss your ideas with others so that you all join in discussions and use more complicated words – this should also help you with your writing.
- To make sure that you have things to do in all parts of lessons and don't just listen to others.

You can also help by making sure that you always try hard to join in discussions and don't wait for other people to give their ideas first.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall
Lead inspector

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