

The Meadows Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Unique reference number | 103296 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 376871 |
| Inspection dates | 2–3 February 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Anna Coyle |

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

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|--|---|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 415 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jackie Philpott |
| Headteacher | Liane Barton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 16 September 2008 |
| School address | Bristol Road South Birmingham B31 2SW |
| Telephone number | 0121 6753203 |
| Fax number | 0121 6752242 |
| Email address | enquiry@meadows.bham.sch.uk |

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
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Introduction

Inspection team

Anna Coyle

Additional inspector

Richard Boswell

Additional inspector

Sa'ad Khaldi

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 21 lessons taught by 14 teachers. Half of these visits were conducted with a member of the senior leadership team. The inspectors also held meetings with staff, pupils, and members of the governing body. They took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at monitoring information assessment records, the minutes of meetings of the governing body and the school's action plans and evaluations. They also analysed 178 parent and carer questionnaires, 29 staff questionnaires and 98 pupil questionnaires.

Information about the school

The school is a larger than the average sized primary school which serves the local community. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. There are a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. The school has a 24-place, specially resourced provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties. Other pupils with speech and learning difficulties and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are integrated in the school's mainstream classes. The school meets the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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 | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 3 |
| Leadership and management | 3 |

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It has improved over the last two years.
- The headteacher's drive and determination have focused well on addressing the issues from the previous inspection in this highly inclusive school.
- Standards in English have risen well at the end of Key Stage 2, but progress in mathematics is not consistent across Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils say they feel safe and they know to whom they should go if any problems arise. Safeguarding procedures are good.
- Behaviour is satisfactory over time: it is often good in lessons. The large majority of parents and carers indicated in the questionnaires that behaviour is good. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average.
- In the majority of lessons, teaching is satisfactory. It is sometimes outstanding and occasionally inadequate. Teaching has improved due to the help and support provided by senior staff. However, the more-able pupils are not challenged enough in some mathematics lessons at Key Stage 2.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Some middle leaders, including those responsible for subjects, do not keep a close enough check on pupils' progress.
- The themed curriculum is satisfactory but there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical and numeracy skills across all subjects. There is limited focus on geography and design and technology.
- Lessons include appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and increase the ability to work together, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Assessment is generally used effectively and teachers' marking is good in English but it is inconsistent in mathematics.
- Parents and carers are involved in their children's learning and the large majority indicate that they are satisfied with the education provided.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress in mathematics across each of Years 3 to 6 and increase the proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2 by:
 - giving them better opportunities to apply their numeracy skills and mathematical knowledge across other subjects of the curriculum
 - making sure there is better challenge for the more-able pupils in lessons.
- Improve the quality of teaching in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 so that a higher proportion is good or better by ensuring that:
 - marking consistently shows pupils what they need to do to improve their work
 - pupils are consistently engaged in lessons and work at a good pace.
- Extend the roles of middle leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - they all keep a careful check on achievement and progress in their subject areas
 - the themed curriculum has a more specific focus on geography and design and technology.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is satisfactory. It is improving steadily, but especially in English where standards have risen over the last two years because there has been a good impact from the school's strong focus on the subject. Pupils begin school in the Reception classes with attainment on entry as expected nationally. They make satisfactory progress overall, and sometimes good progress, in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1. Attainment in reading is average at the end of Year 2 and some pupils are fluent readers who enjoy books. Pupils achieved broadly average standards in English, including reading, last year at the end of Year 6, but below average in mathematics; in the latter a lower proportion than nationally reached the higher levels. Current pupils are reaching similar standards. This is because progress is not as steady in mathematics at Key Stage 2 as in English.

During the inspection, the inspectors observed pupils making mainly satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress in English. The questionnaire responses of parents and carers show that most agree that their children make sufficient progress at the school. Learning was best when teachers' skilful questioning was used well to enable pupils to consider narrative writing approaches. For example, pupils enjoyed using persuasive speech and benefited from the teacher's good pace to learning. In an outstanding lesson on multiplying numbers, pupils in Year 4 worked with great

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energy and enthusiasm because the teaching motivated them really well. This helped pupils develop better reasoning skills and increased their problem-solving ability. However, at times, pupils in other mathematics lessons were less engaged and became restless. In these lessons, learning was only satisfactory and occasionally inadequate.

Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the few who speak English as an additional language make progress that is similar to their peers. However, the more-able pupils do not achieve as well as others because they are not always challenged enough or given suitable activities to extend their thinking and learning. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress in learning in the mainstream classes. Pupils who are taught in the resource base benefit from specific strategies to support them and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their starting points. The satisfactory progress of lower-attaining pupils means that while they are not losing ground, they are not closing gaps on pupils nationally.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree their children are taught well. Inspectors found that teaching is mainly satisfactory, and sometimes good or outstanding. It has improved since the last inspection when there were more weaknesses to address. When teaching is good, pupils become involved in their work quickly and get off to a brisk start. Staff make good use of whiteboards to help pupils learn and they use questioning skilfully to encourage pupils to think hard. For example, pupils in a Year 6 top set successfully tackled work involving shapes by rotating them and using co-ordinates to translate them. The teacher's good subject knowledge and strong attention to supporting higher attaining pupils meant that all achieved success. However, not all pupils of higher ability are challenged enough, especially in other mathematics classes at Key Stage 2 and, as a result, learning is inconsistent in the subject. Pupils with speech and language difficulties in the resource base receive appropriate work, targeted to their needs.

The curriculum is planned with a thematic approach and identifies the key aspects of literacy to be learnt in other subjects. However, numeracy skills are not promoted well across other subjects of the curriculum. This means that pupils are not challenged to think about how they can apply their skills and solve problems in other contexts. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully integrated in lessons; those with speech and language difficulties are given plenty of close support in the resource base and others are taught effectively with their peers in the mainstream classes.

Lessons allow pupils to consider social and moral aspects, such as when developing their social skills in groups and sharing equipment. Teachers encourage them to consider and celebrate the success of their peers, thereby promoting spiritual and cultural dimensions of learning. Marking is good in English but it is often less effective in mathematics. The best marking gives pupils plenty of praise when they

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have done well and identifies the next steps. Pupils say this is useful and respond to the teacher's written advice by writing their comments in green pen and correcting any errors where they are needed.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is satisfactory. It is often good in lessons and pupils are usually polite and courteous, although the behaviour of some pupils has been variable over time. The views of parents and carers are mixed, as expressed in their questionnaire returns and during discussions with the inspectors. Several parental comments included references to the misbehaviour of a few pupils and the disruption to lessons caused by a minority. A number of pupils also expressed concern about the inappropriate behaviour of a few of their peers. Inspectors found that disruption to learning is uncommon. The school has clear strategies to deal with pupils' behaviour, including individual behaviour plans for pupils with special educational needs; and suitable ways to help those who require additional help and guidance such as for pupils in the resource base. These strategies are having an appropriate impact. Staff deal promptly with any incidents and make sure that all pupils are treated equally within the school's highly inclusive ethos. Attendance is average but, at times, a few pupils are late for school.

The large majority of pupils say that they feel safe at school. They get on with each other and share resources willingly. The older pupils help look after the younger ones in the Reception classes and make sure that they know what to do if they need any help. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying and they know to whom they should go if they are worried about anything. Views from parents and carers are mainly positive, although some say that their children have not received enough support when any rare incidents of bullying occur. The inspectors followed up the parental concerns and found that the school keeps careful logs of any incidents of bullying or racism. It has appropriate policies to deal with them, which are known and implemented by the staff.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have steered the school successfully over the last two years and have driven up standards in English. The improvements to teaching are due to their strong drive combined with the effective mentoring and coaching provided by senior staff. Self-evaluation is accurate and there is a strong sense of ambition and vision for the school. These factors have had a positive impact on pupils' learning and demonstrate the school's capacity to improve further. Pupils' performance in mathematics has been less marked and leaders realise that this is the next area for improvement. Middle managers are developing their skills to help them lead their subjects and support colleagues. However, they are not all taking responsibility for keeping a careful check on pupils' progress in their areas. The provision is organised effectively for pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream classes, and for those in the resource base and those who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances.

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Teaching and learning are improving steadily through effective monitoring by the senior leadership team. This, along with senior leaders' rigorous tracking procedures, helps to ensure equality of opportunity for pupils. However, although the curriculum broadly meets pupils' needs and is organised along a thematic approach, geography and design and technology are given limited specific focus. Several pupils told the inspectors that they were not familiar with either subject. Although the subject areas are studied, pupils enter the next stage of their education with less familiarity with these two subjects than would normally be expected. Nevertheless, the school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development with plenty of practical activities and opportunities for reflection; for example, through the school's initiative known as 'Creatures of Learning'.

The governing body provides support for senior staff and holds the school to account. All aspects of safeguarding meet the current requirements. The school ensures that all staff who work with children have been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau. A few parents expressed concerns about the safety of the school site, which were followed up with senior staff, but the inspectors did not find any issues that would jeopardise pupils' safety.

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.



6 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Meadows Primary School, Birmingham B31 2SW

Thank you very much for talking to us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you during lessons and at break and lunch times, and looking at your questionnaires. We also heard some of you read during guided-reading sessions and we looked at your English and mathematics books. Your school has improved in several ways over the last two years and we judge it to be satisfactory overall. Here are some of the things we found out.

- Achievement is satisfactory.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Staff look after you, which is why most of you told us that you enjoy school and feel safe.
- Your behaviour is generally satisfactory: it is often good in lessons, although a few of you do not always behave appropriately.
- The school makes sure that you have opportunities to think about your opinions and reflect on them, and to find out about different cultures.

We have asked the school to do a few things.

- Help you to learn faster in mathematics by keeping you interested and helping you to use your skills in other subjects.
- Make sure that those of you who find work easy have things to do that are challenging and that teachers give you all plenty of help when marking your mathematics books.
- Ask subject leaders to keep a close check on your learning and make sure that you learn more about geography and design and technology before you go on to secondary school.

The headteacher, senior leaders and all of the staff and governors are determined to carry on improving the school. We hope you help too, and always work hard especially in mathematics lessons.

Yours sincerely

Anna Coyle
Lead inspector

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