

The Meadows Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132179
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	360388
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Josephine Simmons
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2008
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Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2011
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Registered Childcare provision	EY416756
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	48
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twenty-five lessons were visited and ten teachers observed. Meetings were held with parents, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and members of staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation including the school improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation reports, pupils' work, assessment records, safeguarding documentation and the School Improvement Partner's reports. In total, 59 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed. The team also analysed responses to the Key Stage 2 pupil survey and the staff questionnaire.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- They explored whether progress is sufficient in writing and mathematics throughout the school, and whether the rise in attainment seen in 2010 by the end of Year 6, is expected to continue in 2011.
- They evaluated how well the curriculum matches the needs of boys.
- They checked how leadership at all levels evaluates teaching in terms of impact on pupils' progress.
- They explored the depth of pupils' understanding of the multicultural world in which they live.

Information about the school

In this above-average-sized primary school, the vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, and the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. All pupils, apart from Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, are taught in classes containing two year groups. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made in two Reception and Year 1 classes. On site there is a pre-school, 'Little Learners' which is managed by the governing body. Since the last inspection there have been significant staffing changes, with eight new members of staff joining the school.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The Meadows Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education. However, there are strengths, particularly in the pre-school 'Little Learners', and the Reception classes. Children get a good start to school life in these classes and as a result of good teaching, they make good progress. However, this good progress does not continue evenly throughout the school. It is faster in reading in all year groups. In writing and mathematics, progress, although satisfactory, is inconsistent. This is because in Years 1 to 4 assessment information is not always used effectively enough to plan exactly what pupils need to learn to accelerate progress. Expectations, of what pupils are able to do and of the amount of recorded work, are sometimes too low. Even so, leaders have successfully ensured that teaching is never less than satisfactory. In some year groups, notably Years 5 and 6, teaching is good, and in these classes pupils' progress is accelerating. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is average, with a good proportion of pupils in Years 5 and 6 on track to attain the higher level in both English and mathematics. This good teaching is ensuring that the rise in attainment noted in 2010 is likely to continue in 2011 and 2012. While in all classes there are good examples of written feedback, this is less evident in mathematics and time for pupils to respond to comments is insufficient.

Most parents and carers who returned questionnaires think their children enjoy school and are happy with their child's experience. 'It is a fantastic school', 'Approachable hard-working staff' and 'The teachers really work hard to maintain a fun environment' are typical of the many positive comments made. However, a minority of parents have concerns about the level of communication regarding their children's progress, how they can help them learn more and information about school events. Systems for finding out their views are not well established. For example, the governing body does not have an effective mechanism for finding out how parents and carers view the school.

School leaders are committed to improvement and, as staffing is stabilising, the school is moving in the right direction based on a clear understanding of what needs to be done. Self-evaluation is accurate, and the school improvement plan addresses the correct priorities. A number of useful initiatives have begun to improve teaching, and these are having a positive effect on raising attainment by the end of Year 6. Although good practice in teaching is evident, as yet staff have not had sufficient opportunities to learn from their colleagues. Monitoring and evaluation is becoming more rigorous but lesson observations do not focus clearly enough on pupils' learning. The improving picture of attainment and of teaching shows the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Up to 40% of the 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?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing and in mathematics in Years 1 to 4 by
 - using assessment information to plan precisely the next steps of learning for each pupil
 - raising teachers' expectations of the level and the amount of work which pupils' are capable of
 - ensuring that marking clearly identifies how pupils can improve their work especially in mathematics and that teachers provide them with time to respond to the feedback given
 - sharing good practice with all members of staff
 - focusing on pupils' learning during lesson observations.
- Strengthen links with parents and carers by:
 - providing more information to parents and carers about their children's progress and how they may help their children improve their learning
 - improving communications so that parents and carers' are fully informed about what is happening in school
 - ensuring the governing body takes a pro-active role in finding out and responding to parents' and carers' opinions of the school's work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The majority of pupils enjoy school and behaviour is satisfactory. In most lessons they are interested in their activities. In Years 5 and 6 learning is good, as was seen when Year 5 pupils eagerly discussed what they could infer about a character from the way he was standing. Supported by good questioning from the teacher, pupils debated how the way people look, including their facial expressions, provides others with useful information. In Year 6, pupils were engaged well in using Venn diagrams and Carroll diagrams to sort and classify shapes. In these lessons pupils were keen to learn and applied themselves to their tasks. In other lessons where learning was satisfactory, the tasks did not all fully engage pupils, and were sometimes too hard for them to complete. For example, in a lesson for Years 3 and 4, pupils were asked to write sentences describing a variety of camera shots and insufficient time was given for them to complete the task. In writing and mathematics, although progress is improving as teachers are starting to use information about what pupils know already, some tasks are not relevant to their needs. In the Years 1 and 2 classes, there was limited evidence of Year 2 pupils recording their number work or of Year 1 children applying their phonic skills when writing sentences. Even so, considering children's attainment on entry which matches that expected for their age, and their average attainment at the end of Year 6, progress and achievement are satisfactory. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress similar to their peers, sometimes better when they are supported by a teaching assistant. There were no differences in boys' and girls' progress noted during the inspection.

Pupils show a satisfactory understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They know the main elements of a healthy diet, and younger pupils enjoy the morning

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'Activate' sessions. They say they know how to keep safe and play workers and young leaders effectively encourage safe play in the playground. However a minority of pupils say that there is some bullying, and although it gets sorted out, not all adults listen and respond quickly to their concerns. Pupils are pleased to be school council members or junior road safety officers. They enjoy helping others. They are developing a satisfactory understanding of the community and the wider multicultural world. They respond to others' needs through their charity work such as Macmillan Nursing, Comic Relief and Children in Need.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Good features of teaching were seen in all lessons. Most teachers use 'talk partners' to enable pupils to share ideas and learn from each other. In the most effective lessons the purpose of the lesson is clear, and the steps to success provide a valuable prompt to support learning. This was seen as Year 6 pupils learnt how to build up complex sentences in the context of a biography about David Beckham. This subject choice effectively engaged the interest of boys and girls. During the plenary the teacher effectively encouraged pupils to reflect on their learning and how this could be used in tomorrow's lesson. However, this effective use of the plenary was not seen throughout the school, and at times teachers talked too much. Teaching assistants generally provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are occasions,

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however, where they provide too much support rather than allowing pupils to generate their own ideas.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs satisfactorily and since the time of the previous inspection there have been improvements in the opportunities for pupils to practice their literacy and numeracy skills in other curriculum areas. There has been an emphasis on making the curriculum interesting for boys and in this respect the school has been successful. Boys enjoy practical activities, and activities such as tasting different Chinese foods, enthused both boys and girls in Year 1 and 2, when they described the taste using 'wow' words. The range of after-school clubs is satisfactory, and these, along with visits to places of interest and visitors to the school, enrich the curriculum.

The school places appropriate emphasis on pupils' welfare, working effectively with a range of agencies to support potentially vulnerable pupils. Those pupils with specific needs including behavioural issues are supported well. Induction procedures are good and transitions between classes are satisfactory. Strategies to improve behaviour, attitudes towards learning and attendance are beginning to have an impact. Although relationships are mainly good, there are a minority of pupils who are not fully confident that issues such as bullying will be dealt with swiftly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership team provide clear direction, but efforts to accelerate the pace of school improvement since the last inspection have been hampered by staff turnover. As staffing is becoming more stable, a common sense of purpose is developing. Self-evaluation is accurate; senior leaders know the progress of pupils is not even throughout the school, especially in writing and mathematics. In response, they have instigated half-termly meetings with teachers, where underachievement is identified and actions implemented. Senior leaders have also, rightly, recognised that observations of lessons have not focused sufficiently on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. As a result, areas for improvement identified are not always fine-tuned.

The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have identified that to become more effective they must have more direct involvement with staff, parents and carers, and pupils. All requirements for safeguarding pupils' health and well-being are in place and meet statutory requirements. Appropriate checks have been made on adults working within the school and the governing body ensures all policies and procedures are reviewed regularly. Equal opportunities are satisfactory; all pupils achieve

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equally and have opportunities to take part in all that the school provides. Community cohesion is strong within the school and the local community. However, links with other communities within the United Kingdom and the wider world are less extensive. The school has a strategy to develop these.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding a mbition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The pre-school, 'Little Learners', provides a safe welcoming environment where children quickly settle, develop good attitudes towards learning, and make good progress. The provision meets the requirements for registration. Staff are knowledgeable about how children learn and there is a strong emphasis on purposeful play. Adults interact well with children and the results of observational assessments are used carefully to plan future learning experiences. Good attention is given to health, as children are encouraged to eat fruit and drink milk or water. Leadership is good, and good links with the Reception classes ensure that transition is seamless. All welfare requirements are met. The good progress and positive attitudes noted in the 'Little Learners' continues in Reception. During the inspection, children in both settings greatly enjoyed the work on Chinese New Year, for example when enthusiastically taking part in the Chinese dragon dance. All have good access to the outdoor environment, and there is a good balance between teacher-led activities and those that children choose for themselves. The leader of the Reception provision has a good understanding of the strengths and the areas needing improvement. For example, she has identified that writing is a weaker aspect of development, so increasing the opportunities for writing has become a priority for development. Children are kept safe in both settings, and receive a good level of care from staff.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the Ofsted questionnaire are satisfied with the school's work, saying their children enjoy school, are kept safe and the teaching is good. However, analysis of the parents' and carers' questionnaires shows disquiet in the level of communication. Although the school provides parents and carers with an annual report on pupils' progress, they would like more regular information about how well their children are learning. Parents and carers do not have an overview of the work their children are engaged in, or of when trips or visits will occur. The school has been asked to improve a range of these things as a result of the inspection. A small minority of returns indicate inappropriate behaviour is not managed well. During the inspection, inappropriate behaviour was not observed and the behaviour of the vast majority of pupils was satisfactory or better.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Meadows Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 265 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	59	18	31	5	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	58	22	37	3	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	24	41	24	41	9	15	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	46	23	39	5	8	4	7
The teaching is good at this school	26	44	28	47	3	5	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	41	30	51	2	3	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	49	26	44	3	5	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	39	29	49	3	5	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	41	27	46	5	8	3	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	27	28	47	3	5	9	15
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	37	23	39	7	12	5	8
The school is led and managed effectively	23	39	20	34	7	12	6	10
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	49	22	37	5	8	2	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



7 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Meadows Primary School, Lincoln, LN5 9BB

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. We thought you would like to know the outcome of the inspection and what we found the school could do to improve.

We think your school provides you with a satisfactory education. You get a good start to school life in the pre school 'Little Learners' and in the Reception classes. We saw how much you enjoy your learning in these classes and thought your Chinese dragon dance was amazing. It is good to know that almost all of you enjoy school and know how to keep safe. Some of you do a good job as school council members and as junior road safety officers. We could see you enjoy helping others and willingly collect money for different charities. You say you feel safe in school. Although some of you say that adults do not always respond quickly to any concerns you may have, we were pleased to hear you say problems are eventually sorted.

Your attainment in English and mathematics is improving, and by Year 6 most of you are attaining standards similar to those found in most schools. However we found that the progress you make is uneven, especially in writing and mathematics. You make better progress in Years 5 and 6, than in Years 1 to 4. We have asked your headteacher and staff to make your progress faster in these year groups, by improving marking and making sure your work is exactly the right level for you. Also we found out that some of your parents and carers would like to know more about how well you are progressing and more about how to help you learn. We have therefore asked your school leaders to make this happen.

Thank you again for your help with the inspection. You can also help your teachers by asking them to give you time to reply to their useful marking comments.

Yours sincerely

Lois Furness

Lead inspector

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