

Meadows Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124102
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	359584
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Welsh
Headteacher	Catherine Henson
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors observed 7 lessons and 4 different teachers. In addition to the lesson observations, inspectors made short visits to classes in Key Stages 1 and 2 with the headteacher to look at learning and progress in writing and mathematics. They also looked at children's work and the learning environment with the deputy headteacher during a visit to the Reception class. They met with a group of parents and carers, pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from a partner who works with the school. A telephone conversation was held with the school's improvement partner. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, governing body minutes, policies and teachers' planning. Questionnaires from 32 parents and carers, 9 staff and 50 pupils were also analysed.

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

- What are the current rates of progress, especially in writing?
- How well does the curriculum meet the needs of pupils of different abilities?
- How effectively do leaders and managers use monitoring and evaluation evidence to tackle weaknesses and improve the performance of all groups of pupils?
- How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage?

Information about the school

Meadows is a smaller than average primary school. Nearly all pupils are White British with a small number from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Reception class. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught in one mixed-age class, Years 3 and 4 in another and Years 5 and 6 in a third mixed-age class. Within the school premises, there is a before- and after-school club that runs during term time. This facility was separately inspected. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and Dyslexia Friendly status.

Since the last inspection, the school has experienced high levels of staff absence. Last year, the Reception and the Key Stage 1 class had a number of temporary teachers. From September 2009 until April 2010, the headteacher was seconded to work elsewhere for two days a week. The governing body appointed a new long-term temporary teacher for the Reception class. She took up her post in September 2010.

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

Meadows Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education. Some aspects of its work are good. Strengths include:

- pupils' good behaviour and their high levels of attendance
- the way in which the school works with a number of partners to ensure pupils have the opportunity to take part in a good range of sporting and enrichment activities
- pupils' willingness to take on responsibilities within school and the local community.

Since the last inspection, instability in staffing has led to uneven rates of progress with some pupils making less than expected progress. Staffing has now stabilised. Inspection evidence shows that rates of progress are steadily improving. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are now making satisfactory progress. In some lessons, pupils are making good progress. This is especially the case in Years 5 and 6. Pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 6. The school has worked effectively with the local authority to improve provision in mathematics. Consequently, standards in mathematics are relatively higher than in reading and writing throughout the school.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Occasionally it is good. 'Teachers make lessons fun by giving us challenges that make us think,' and 'teacher's instructions are clear,' were just some of the comments made by pupils when describing the best lessons. Pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress overall because teachers do not always make best use of assessment information to match activities to the needs of pupils of different abilities. More-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are capable of making better progress, particularly in writing. Teachers' marking celebrates achievements. It does not always identify the errors that pupils have made or tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work. In Reception, staff regularly observe and assess children in all six areas of learning before planning activities. However, their assessments do not always represent a true reflection of the skills consistently demonstrated by the children. In this Key Stage, assessment information is not always used well enough to provide a sufficient level of challenge for the more-able children.

Senior leaders and staff work together well to provide pupils with an environment where they feel welcome. Many parents and carers describe the school as 'caring' and 'an enjoyable place for their children'. Self-evaluation of the school's performance is sound but generous in some aspects, such as the effectiveness of leadership. This is because senior leaders, subject leaders and members of the governing body do not always focus on the progress made by different groups of pupils when monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and evaluating the impact of their actions. The recent improvements in pupils' achievement and particularly mathematics provision demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the progress made by pupils throughout the school, particularly in writing by:
 - making sure assessment information is used more precisely to match activities to the needs of pupils of different abilities, especially for more-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in other subjects.
- Further improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring the activities for the more-able are sufficiently challenging
 - providing pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities with appropriate resources to support their learning
 - making sure errors in pupils' work are corrected and they are clear about how to improve their work.
- Ensure leaders and managers, including the governing body, rigorously monitor and evaluate the work of the school by:
 - more frequently monitoring pupils' performance in order to bring about more rapid improvement in pupils' outcomes and the school's provision
 - focusing on the progress made by different groups of pupils when monitoring and evaluating the work of the school
 - ensuring that the systems for recording reviews of the school's policies and practices are manageable and robust.
- Improve outcomes and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - confirming the accuracy of teachers' assessments and ensuring this information is used to plan activities that better meet the needs of pupils, and particularly the more-able
 - reorganising the indoor and outdoor environment so that it encourages children to be more independent.
- 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.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils' work and lesson observations show that progress is satisfactory and steadily improving. Sometimes it is good. Progress in writing lags behind that in reading and mathematics. In all lessons, pupils respond with enthusiasm when they are asked to talk to each other about their work. In one effective example, pupils watched a video clip of 'The Little Match Girl' and worked in pairs to produce a list of descriptive words. Through their discussions they encouraged each other to extend their ideas.

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The rate of progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities sometimes slows. This happens when they are not provided with suitable resources to support their learning. In one lesson, for instance they were given a list of words to help them with their writing. However, the words were too difficult for them to read. In too many lessons, the more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and they make satisfactory rather than good progress.

Pupils are polite, friendly and courteous. In school, they take on a number of roles, such as play leaders and becoming members of the school council. Pupils take their involvement in the community seriously. Members of the gardening club, for instance, contribute to the maintenance of the community memorial garden by planting flowers throughout the year. Through the curriculum, pupils develop a sound understanding of how to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. While pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.

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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	1
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?

Teaching is satisfactory. Sometimes it is good. In all lessons:

- teachers make effective use of electronic whiteboards to capture pupils' interest
- relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are good

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- teachers encourage pupils to discuss their ideas with each other before asking them to work independently.

The curriculum satisfactorily meets the needs of pupils. Pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress in English and mathematics because teachers do not consistently plan tasks that meet the different needs of all pupils. Teachers are increasingly providing pupils with the opportunity to practise and apply their reading and mathematical skills across the curriculum. Opportunities for developing writing in other subjects are limited. Provision for art and design is good. Consequently, pupils successfully learn to explore and develop their ideas using a range of materials.

Pupils with specific needs or those going through difficult times receive a suitable level of support. Arrangements for pupils when they move from Year 6 to their new school are good because of effective links with local high schools. In contrast, the school has not yet developed effective links with nurseries and pre-school providers.

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?

Senior leaders have the full support of staff and the governing body. Together, they have started to tackle the differences between the outcomes for pupils of different abilities in order to promote greater equality. The school is aware that there is more to do to raise standards, particularly in writing and for more-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff and members of the governing body use a range of suitable strategies to check the quality of teaching and learning, and to identify weaknesses and the actions that will be taken to accelerate progress. Despite this, pupils do not make consistently good progress. This is because, once weaknesses are identified, there are not enough subsequent checks to ensure that the actions which have been implemented are having the necessary impact.

Members of the governing body are supportive. They are developing the skills required to challenge the school by increasingly participating in monitoring and evaluation activities. Arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. Senior leaders, staff and the site supervisor ensure the site is secure and pupils are kept safe. Although the headteacher and governors review policies and practices, the systems for recording the outcomes of these reviews are cumbersome and lack rigour. For instance, there is no coherent system in place to ensure all risk assessments are carried out at regular intervals.

Good links with a range of partners ensure pupils take part in a variety of sporting and enrichment activities that would not be possible because of limited space on the school

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site. Examples include taking part in dance exhibitions, using local sports facilities and working with the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to plan environmental games for other pupils. These add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Links with schools in England in a contrasting locality and opportunities for pupils to visit different places of worship are at an early stage of development. The school acknowledges that not enough parents and carers are encouraged to contribute to decisions about whole-school matters. They have secure plans in place to continue improving communication with parents and carers.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition 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	2
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

Because of effective links with parents and carers, children settle quickly. Staff place a strong emphasis on children's personal development. As a consequence, children behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning in this safe environment. From levels of entry to Reception that are similar to those expected for their age, pupils enter Year 1 with average levels of attainment. This represents satisfactory progress.

In lessons, children speak with confidence, work well with others and enjoy learning through activities which give them the chance to explore and play. An effective example of this was seen during the introduction of a mathematical based session. The children clapped their hands whilst counting and then helped each other to order numbers. They all participated with enthusiasm. Opportunities for children to develop their independence are restricted because of the way in which resources are organised in the indoor and outdoor environment. For example, some resources are stored too high and children are not able to select what they want to use for themselves.

More-able children do not always make the progress of which they are capable because their work is often too easy. Senior leaders are aware that the assessments that staff make of children, particularly when they start the school underrate children's actual

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capabilities. They do not take sufficient account of assessment information from nurseries and pre-school providers.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A below average number of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. The majority of those who responded hold positive views about the school. For example, they all said their children enjoy school. A small number of parents and carers are less satisfied with the extent to which the school informs them about their children's progress, helps them to support their children's learning and takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors investigated these concerns through discussions with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors have asked senior leaders to consider ways in which parents and carers can be more involved in making important decisions about the school. They have also asked them to continue to improve communication with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 95 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	75	8	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	72	8	25	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	44	12	38	3	9	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	44	14	44	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	44	16	50	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	50	11	34	3	9	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	44	16	50	1	3	1	3
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)	15	47	15	47	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	44	16	50	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	50	13	41	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	34	15	47	4	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	53	14	44	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	59	12	38	1	3	0	0

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



3 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meadows Primary School, Crewe, CW3 9JX

I would like to thank you for being so friendly, helpful and polite when we visited your school. We enjoyed speaking with you and listening to your views about your school. Meadows Primary is a satisfactory school. You make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Some of you make good progress. You behave well and attend school regularly. In lessons, you listen carefully to each other and like to talk about your ideas. We were impressed with how much you help out in the school and in the local community. This is a credit to you. Your art work is good. We enjoyed looking at the collages, paintings and portraits. The descriptions you recorded about your art work were very informative.

To help your school continue to improve, we have asked school leaders and the governing body to do five main things:

- help you make even better progress in mathematics and reading and especially writing.
- make sure that the teachers challenge those of you who are capable of harder work and ensure that those of you who need extra support in lessons receive it
- ensure your teachers correct any mistakes you have made when they mark your work and clearly explain how you can improve your work
- make more regular checks on how well you are doing so that they can ensure everything is as good as it could be
- help those of you in the Reception class to achieve even more and to reorganise equipment in the indoor and outdoor environment so that you can choose what you want to use.

You can help by continuing to work hard in your lessons.

Thank you once again for being so helpful. We would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi

Her Majesty's Inspector

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