

Meadows Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique reference number	134999
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	381773
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2012
Lead inspector	David Speakman

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	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Whitehouse
Headteacher	Anna Sydenham
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2007
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Speakman	Additional inspector
Keith Brown	Additional inspector
Sandra Ewing	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 14 lessons taught by 11 teachers, spending 11 hours directly observing pupils' learning in class. They heard pupils read and scrutinised their writing in workbooks and on display. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils. 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 a wide range of documentation including improvement plans and self-evaluation, as well as assessment data to monitor pupils' progress. Questionnaire responses from 88 parents and carers, 100 pupils and 17 members of staff were analysed.

Information about the school

Meadows Primary School and Nursery is larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are White British but a few come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average and very few are in the early stages of learning to speak English. The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of educational needs, is similar to other schools. More pupils than is usual join or leave the school at various times during the year. Pupils are taught in mixed- and single-age classes. The school meets the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The governors provide before school care each morning at a breakfast club; this was included in the inspection.

The school has experienced a high level of disruption to staffing over the last three years. This has particularly affected Years 2, 5 and 6 and continuity in the leadership in the key subjects of English and mathematics.

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	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It has successfully overcome difficulties in staffing in recent years and now, greater stability means that there is a more consistent approach than of late. As a result of improvements in teaching and learning, pupils' achievement has improved and standards are rising.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' progress has quickened and is at least satisfactory and more recently, it is good. Some groups of pupils, including those with disabilities or special educational needs, pupils who speak English as an additional language or those known to be eligible for free school meals, progress as well as their peers. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Some good teaching was seen during the inspection, helping to close the gap where there is a legacy of underachievement. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated but there is still too much teaching that is satisfactory to secure consistently good progress. Teachers take care to adapt the curriculum to match tasks to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Pupils develop many good personal skills and their approach to learning is good. Their consistently good behaviour contributes well to a harmonious and welcoming environment. It makes a good contribution to their learning and progress, which is steadily improving because pupils have the skills needed to learn independently and in collaboration with other pupils. Attendance has improved over recent years and is now similar to the national average.
- Senior leaders and subject coordinators for English and mathematics have worked effectively to overcome the impact of recent staffing issues. Through robust monitoring of provision and standards, they have accurately identified areas where improvement is needed. They have implemented a range of effective initiatives and as a result, teaching and pupils' progress have improved.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 to above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - accelerating all pupils' progress, particularly at Key Stage 2 by increasing the pace of learning where it is slowest
 - ensuring a high level of challenge for more able pupils so they achieve the higher levels of attainment
 - enabling pupils to practise, consolidate and strengthen core skills, particularly writing, in all subjects and by developing word processing skills.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - enabling teachers to share good or better practice across the school
 - increasing the time pupils are given to work independently on their tasks in lessons.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children join the Nursery with attainment below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress and by the end of the Reception Year, attainment is average overall and above in creative and physical development and in children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are keen to learn and demonstrate good independent learning skills, making purposeful choices in their learning. Children follow instructions well and build skills in personal development, language, literacy and numeracy to prepare them for the next stages in their education.

Although achievement over time is satisfactory, the progress that pupils are now making, since staffing issues have been resolved, has improved. Following a dip in standards over the last two years, they are now rising at Key Stages 1 and 2 and are broadly average in reading, writing and in mathematics.

Attainment in reading is average in both Years 2 and 6. Older pupils read with confidence and clarity; they show secure understanding and are able to explain how the plots in their chosen books are developing. They are aware of punctuation and read with expression. Younger pupils show good strategies for reading unfamiliar words. Pupils enjoy reading for pleasure. Independent readers choose texts that are

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challenging and effective in developing their reading skills and their levels of comprehension. They talk with understanding about stories they have read.

Recent initiatives are having a significant impact on writing standards throughout the school, which although broadly satisfactory, are not yet as well developed as in reading. The quality of writing in pupils' books, particularly in the weekly 'Big Write' sessions, shows good progress this year. The main developments are in pupils' careful choice of words to make their writing interesting and expressive. Older pupils use adjectives, similes and metaphors well to make their writing vivid and clear. Handwriting shows clear improvement over time, but when using computers, limited word processing skills hinder progress. Younger pupils have good opportunities to write at length, during which pupils capable of higher attainment do well for their age. Pupils are confident writers and are developing well the skills to record their ideas on paper.

Pupils are now making similarly good progress in mathematics, although there is still, some catching up to do to get standards back to their former above average levels. Pupils are developing secure numeracy skills and use them well to solve problems. Work books show a good balance of progress across numeracy, shape and measure and applying skills and knowledge in problem solving.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. The provision of extra help through support programmes is prompt and effective. Support is well targeted and focused on individual needs so many pupils quickly develop the knowledge and confidence to work independently. These pupils are beginning to close the gap between their attainment and that of similar aged pupils nationally. Once pupils who speak English as an additional language have mastered English, they progress as well as other pupils.

Most parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire feel that the school meets their children's needs, develops their basic skills and enables them to make good progress. This is now true, but the few who expressed worries about progress in the past, are justified in their concerns.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers feel their children are taught well at Meadows Primary School. This is now the case, but significant disruption over recent years has had a negative effect on pupils' achievement, which means that the impact of teaching on pupils' progress is satisfactory. The majority of lessons, seen during the inspection, were good and none were inadequate and consequently, pupils' progress has improved.

Teachers work effectively to promote positive relationships and behaviour so that lessons are calm and pupils sustain concentration. Most teachers match work well to pupils' needs but occasionally teachers do not provide a sufficiently wide range of tasks that match the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in their mixed-age

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classes.

The majority of teachers use a wide range of techniques to interest and involve pupils. They promote pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development well in lessons, for example by encouraging discussion and reflection, and promoting enquiry. However, in some teaching, where elements were judged to be good, teachers talk for too long at the beginning of lessons and leave insufficient time for pupils to practise and consolidate new learning. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they teach children effectively about letters and the sounds they make ; teachers model sounds accurately and give children lots of opportunities, in their activities indoors and outside, to communicate confidently with others.

A number of common strengths have developed under the robust monitoring of the senior leadership team. Teachers' questioning skills are effective in getting pupils to think for themselves. Teachers model expected outcomes well so pupils are aware of their high expectations. Sessions at the end of lessons are used productively to enable pupils to assess their own and others' work, and develop their own understanding of what makes a piece of work good. Teaching assistants are briefed well and used effectively to support targeted groups of pupils so they make progress as good as others.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils behave well. The very large majority of pupils and their parents and carers think behaviour is good in lessons and around school. School records confirm that behaviour is good and that there are few incidents of concern. Incidents of bullying or racial harassment are rare, and the vast majority do not re-offend. The school's behaviour management arrangements are clearly understood by all and are consistently applied; the school confirms that behaviour has improved. Very occasionally teachers need to remind pupils of the school's high expectations.

Pupils are very considerate and cooperate well in lessons. They are respectful of others' feelings and during peer assessment times, they are very careful not to offend. They listen respectfully to each other. Pupils feel safe in school and the overwhelming majority of questionnaire responses confirm that parents and carers are confident of their children's safety. Pupils with concerns turn confidently to an adult knowing that it will be quickly resolved. Excellent levels of pastoral care ensure that there is sensitive support for pupils and families whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The learning mentor has a significant impact on improving the behaviour of more challenging pupils or those who are vulnerable. Attendance has improved significantly and is average. The school is rigorous in tracking attendance and punctuality.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, the senior leadership team

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and subject coordinators, particularly for English and mathematics, have conducted in depth evaluations of provision and standards and used their skills and knowledge well to implement initiatives to address previous weaknesses, improve provision and raise standards. Questionnaires show staff are unanimous in their support of senior leaders' work.

Focused leadership has brought about recent improvements in key areas of the school's work. Standards are rising, pupils' progress is accelerating, and teaching has improved. Leaders are demonstrating the capacity to improve further. They provide effective professional development for all staff, so that they are able to provide well-targeted support to ensure pupils now make good progress to compensate for previous underachievement. The senior leadership team monitors very carefully the progress of every pupil and, through regular reviews, hold teachers accountable for the progress of their pupils. Additionally, robust monitoring of teaching and follow up of identified areas for improvement have increased the proportion of good teaching and eradicated any that was inadequate.

The governing body provides good levels of challenge and support. Its members are experienced and well qualified. They have close links with the school and know it well. The governing body actively seeks the views of parents and carers and acts promptly upon its findings. It ensures that all regulatory requirements for safeguarding and protecting pupils, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, are secure. Staff are well qualified in this area of their work and the school ensures good quality safeguarding for vulnerable children and families.

The broad and balanced curriculum provides pupils with rich opportunities to develop their communication, language, literacy and numeracy skills by applying them in meaningful contexts. The curriculum is effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through this themed approach, and strong personal development programme. The school operates as a cohesive community, based on understanding and respecting others. Equality is promoted well and discrimination of any kind not tolerated. All pupils, regardless of background or ability, have equality of opportunity to succeed.

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.



26 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meadows Primary School and Nursery, Telford, TF1 5HF

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you. Your views were really helpful, including those you expressed in questionnaires. We have judged the school to be satisfactory. Some of you are aware of the difficulties there have been with many changes of teachers recently, but these problems seem to be over now and the school is on track to become as good as it was before.

You all now make good progress, but this improvement is quite recent. Over time, your progress is satisfactory. As a result, standards in your school work by Year 6 are similar to those in most other schools. Your behaviour is good; you approach school life in a sensible and mature way, helping each other wherever possible. It is clear that you enjoy school. Your school is a very safe and pleasant place for you to learn.

Your school is led and managed well. Those in charge make sure they know how well you are doing and what needs to be improved. They have made some effective plans for improvement and these are having an impact; standards are beginning to rise again. You play your part well by taking on challenges with excitement and enthusiasm. We have asked those in charge to take the following action.

- Improve standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 by helping you to make better progress in your work; making work harder for those of you that are capable of succeeding at the higher levels and giving you opportunities to practise and strengthen your reading, writing and mathematics.
- Make sure that all teaching is at least good by giving teachers the opportunity to see other teach and by reducing the length of time they sometimes talk at the beginning of lessons so you have more time to practise new learning.

We are confident that you will do all you can to help the school improve even further, particularly by continuing to work as hard as you do now.

Yours sincerely

David Speakman
Lead inspector

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