

Meadowdale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132010
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	364031
Inspection dates	6–7 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Scott
Headteacher	Kerry Rodger
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons. They also visited small out-of-class teaching groups and observed 14 teachers in all. The inspection team met parents and carers informally and held meetings with the headteacher, teaching staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised samples of pupils' work, the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, management and curriculum documentation, teachers' planning and safeguarding documents. They took account of questionnaire responses from 122 parents and carers, 27 staff and 100 pupils.

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

- What steps is the school taking to improve attainment in English in Key Stage 2 for all pupils?
- How well do teachers use assessment information to identify underachievement and plan work that meets the needs of pupils of different ability?
- How rigorous and effective are leaders and managers at all levels in monitoring the work of the school, ensuring consistent achievement for all groups of pupils and making judgements about the school's performance?

Information about the school

Meadowdale is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, and a few of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in two Reception classes. The school holds Eco School status and has the Active Mark award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Meadowdale provides a good quality of education for its pupils. They are enthusiastic about their learning because good teaching and an outstanding curriculum ensure that lessons are stimulating and fun. Pupils receive good care and support and are helped to develop a strong sense of commitment so they make an outstanding contribution to their school and local community. The improvement in links with parents and carers has been a priority and they are now outstanding. Parents and carers are pleased with the new initiatives, in particular their closer involvement in school, the better information they receive and the wide range of activities arranged for their children. One wrote, 'Meadowdale is a fantastic school that encourages children to achieve their full potential in all areas. My children both love school and are making very good progress.' Another wrote positively about the development of the curriculum: 'I love the musical influence on the school and the quality of lunch and after-school clubs has improved dramatically.'

Children settle well when they join Reception and make good gains in their learning to enter Year 1 with above-average skills and abilities, although the outdoor learning area is not used to full advantage to accelerate their language development in a range of stimulating activities. In 2010 attainment at the end of Year 6 dipped but remained above average, although weaker in English. As a result of carefully structured initiatives, this has been reversed. Progress is now good for all groups and standards are rising. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully, although the resulting information is not used consistently well by teachers to plan lessons that fully challenge pupils of all abilities, especially in English. Similarly, the marking of pupils' work is not consistent from class to class and does not always identify for pupils how they can improve their work and make even better progress.

The headteacher provides incisive and ambitious leadership. Important areas for development such as a more creative curriculum, new strategies to improve both English and mathematics, and the careful tracking of pupils' progress have been accurately identified. New developments are carefully monitored by leaders and managers at all levels and are showing signs of positive impact on pupils' achievement. Staff work with a dedicated and united ambition to ensure every child achieves as well as possible and to drive the school forward. The governing body works in an outstanding partnership with the school. It provides a strong balance of support and challenge, and takes an active part in strategic planning and monitoring developments in the school. Leaders and managers are not complacent and self-evaluation is ambitious. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment, especially in English, by:

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- ensuring tasks in lessons are consistently well matched to pupils' ability so they are always challenging
- providing a stimulating range of activities in the outside learning area in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve teaching by ensuring that marking consistently identifies for pupils how and where a piece of work can be improved.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils find learning fun so they work hard and try to do their best. They enjoy discussions in class and work well in small groups and independently. In a Year 6 numeracy lesson a problem-solving task based on the movement of a car across a grid absorbed pupils well. Good questioning by the teacher, often posing unrealistic assumptions, encouraged pupils of all abilities to think hard and challenge these assumptions by their own calculations. The pace of the lesson was good and pupils moved confidently to their own tasks. Well-chosen strategies in reading, writing and numeracy are accelerating pupils' progress, especially in Key Stage 2. Themes which engage the interest of boys as well as girls are encouraging the extension of pupils' writing skills. The school's own assessment information and inspection evidence indicate that pupils are making good progress and are on course to meet the school's challenging targets. Carefully structured support for individuals and small groups of pupils, including those identified as falling behind in their learning and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensures that they also make good progress.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average as a result. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their good behaviour and awareness of the needs of others. They carry out important responsibilities as school councillors, house captains and helpers in Reception with pride and efficiency. There is a strong awareness of the importance of protecting the environment, as shown in their participation in a local litter campaign and the work of the green team. This has contributed to the school's success in gaining the Eco School award. Pupils develop a good awareness of how to stay safe and an outstanding understanding of all that contributes to a healthy lifestyle. They have been involved in helping to make school lunches healthier and have a very well developed awareness of the importance of exercise through sports activities, both in school and in the wider community. The Active Mark award indicates the importance placed on this aspect of pupils' development. Pupils' good achievement, their love of learning and their good personal development ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education at secondary school and later life.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge which is applied well to ensure lessons are well paced and interesting for pupils. Good questioning gives pupils confidence to explain their ideas and helps teachers assess their understanding. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and provide good support for different ability groups. They ensure that all pupils, especially those who find learning difficult, show independence and contribute confidently in class. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and the resulting information is used to set targets in literacy and numeracy which pupils find helpful. Developing, but still inconsistent between classes and lessons, is the use made of progress information to ensure that all ability groups receive work that extends them fully to make even better progress and so improve their attainment. This is especially the case in English, where there is a whole-school focus on improving the progress all groups make.

The curriculum is broad and made exciting for pupils by the very rich variety of learning experiences provided for them. A creative approach to linking different subjects is making learning fun as well as providing valuable opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills in new and engaging ways. For example, a topic on rivers and water in Years 4 and 5 linked science, art, literacy, geography and mathematics. The recording studio and music room have been greatly welcomed by pupils and their creative development now includes film-making. Extra-curricular clubs and visits out of school extend learning

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extremely well beyond the classroom and cater for a wide range of sporting, artistic and musical interests so there is something for all pupils.

Pupils are confident that they can share their problems and seek help from the adults who care for them. Transition arrangements at all stages are sensitively organised so pupils feel confident about moving forward with their learning. Pupils recognise and value all that the school provides for them. Good quality care, guidance and support are seen as a priority by all staff and the valuable links made with other agencies and services augment this provision. Pupils also show care and respect for each other, as seen in the kind way that Year 6 pupils come to play with Reception children at lunch time. One said, 'I love my school because we learn lots of things and we have good creative things like painting and the world book day. We never get bored and we are like a family.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has united staff in an enthusiastic drive to move the school forward and improve pupils' achievement further, and works in complementary partnership with the deputy headteacher. A range of important improvements have been integrated into the school and are showing clear signs of success in accelerating the progress made by the pupils. Pupils' progress is now tracked accurately and a focus on improving writing and problem-solving skills is helping to promote improved progress, especially in English. New phase and subject leaders are rapidly expanding their skills and playing an active role in monitoring teaching and learning as well as identifying and promoting improvements in their subject areas. The governing body has a very active strategic role, and is outstanding in the effectiveness with which it monitors the impact of all new initiatives and poses high-level challenge for senior leaders and managers.

Equal opportunities are good. All pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, in the well-resourced and stimulating environment of Meadowdale. Pupils are known and valued as individuals and the school is free of discrimination. The safeguarding of pupils' welfare is good and supported by clear policies that are rigorously implemented and well-integrated throughout all aspects of the school, and all staff receive regular update training to ensure they are alert to all safeguarding matters. Community cohesion is good. The school has carried out a careful evaluation of local needs, based on its involvement in the local community. Pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures around the world, but the school is aware that pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of the United Kingdom is an area to develop further.

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A priority for the headteacher had been to extend and improve the links with parents and carers. They are very well informed about the progress their children are making through regular reports and information about what is being taught in class. The school website and written communications give regular guidance on how parents and carers can help their child's learning at home. A range of interesting and valuable social events give a further dimension to the school's outstanding engagement with parents and carers.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly in Reception because they receive outstanding care. Independence is fostered carefully so children develop their own games and become curious about the world around them. Children help to decide the themes in class and have been looking at the weather. They have built their own weather recording instruments from scrap to put in their weather station. One child, deeply involved in the weather station, pretending to turn silver paper dials on the cardboard television said, 'We have made things to tell us what weather there will be. If they don't work we'll have to turn on our TV and listen to the weather man.'

Children enter Reception with skills and abilities that are at the levels expected nationally for their age, but are weaker in the areas of communication and language, and some elements of numeracy. Well-focused teaching sessions ensure children make a good start to their learning. A recent careful focus on blending letter sounds and forming words is proving effective in developing children's language skills, and learning about numbers is made fun so children develop their numeracy skills well. Speaking and listening skills are developed progressively and adults model language well. However, in the outdoor learning area there are insufficient stimulating activities to help extend children's exploration of language when they are learning through play.

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Leadership and management are good and staff work as a close and efficient team. Links with parents and carers are fostered well. There is also close liaison with over 16 pre-school settings from which children come to Reception. Good information is provided for parents and carers on their child's development in the well-illustrated learning journeys. Monitoring of children's progress is regular, and used to identify any children who are falling behind in their learning and to provide additional well-focused support for them.

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 large majority of the parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire were pleased with the school. They feel their child is safe and they are happy with their child's experience at school. A few were concerned that unacceptable behaviour was not dealt with well and some felt they were not kept informed about their child's progress. The inspection found that behaviour was good in classes and around the school. The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers, including the range and quality of regular progress reports, was judged as outstanding. Some parents and carers commented positively on the recent changes in the school brought about by the new headteacher. One said simply, 'Mrs Rodger has ensured that Meadowdale continues to be a successful, forward thinking school.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meadowdale 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 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 350 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	62	41	34	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	78	64	42	34	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	50	41	58	48	10	8	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	49	50	41	10	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	67	55	50	41	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	49	57	47	3	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	51	54	44	3	2	0	0
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)	55	45	54	44	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	46	54	44	8	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	31	70	57	10	8	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	34	65	53	5	4	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	69	57	44	36	5	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	71	58	48	39	0	0	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	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.



8 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meadowdale Primary School, Market Harborough, LE16 7XQ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so helpful and polite to us. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at the exciting work you do. You are very proud of your school. Many of you said how pleased you were to see the diggers arrive to begin work on the extension to your playground during the inspection.

We were impressed to see how much you enjoy your lessons and you told us you find learning fun because teachers make your lessons interesting. You get on together and behave well. You have an outstanding understanding of how to stay healthy and know a lot about how to keep safe. You value all the many exciting things that you have a chance to do in school because your curriculum provides you with a very wide range of experiences. We think that you make good progress in your time at Meadowdale and you are well cared for. You make an outstanding contribution to your community and are learning a lot about the world in which you live. Your headteacher, other staff and the governing body work well together to make your school a happy place in which to learn.

You told us yours was a good school and we agree with you. We have suggested three things which we think would help to make your school even better.

We have asked your teachers to make sure they use what they know about how well you are learning, especially in English, to plan lessons that always give you work that challenges you and is a good match to your ability.

To help improve the development of children in Reception, we have suggested that more exciting activities should be planned for them in their outdoor learning area.

Finally, we have asked your teachers to be sure that when they mark your work they always make it clear to you how you can improve what you have done, so that you make even better progress.

You can help by continuing to work hard and doing your best at school. It was a great pleasure to visit Meadowdale and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead inspector

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