

Meadowbank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135008
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	360675
Inspection dates	3–4 May 2011
Reporting inspector	David Byrne

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	369
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Cowhig
Headteacher	Mrs Janine Appleton
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons, taught by 14 teachers, and held meetings with representatives of the local authority, the governing body, staff, pupils and parents and carers. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation provided by the school, including records of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and policies for securing safeguarding and child protection. The work of the resource provision base, known as the school's SEN unit, was evaluated. The team analysed the questionnaires returned by 130 parents and carers and also evaluated those supplied by pupils and staff.

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

- The attainment on entry of children starting in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the subsequent attainment when they move onto Reception.
- Whether the achievement and progress of pupils across the school is consistent.
- The quality of the curriculum to establish whether it has sufficient impact on the learning of pupils.
- Whether the quality of leadership and management gives the school the capacity to improve in future.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school which educates some pupils in mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The percentage with a statement of special educational needs is high. This reflects the inclusion in the school of pupils educated within a resource provision base, known within the school as the SEN unit. The school site includes a Sure Start Children's Centre. Since the last inspection a number of staff changes have taken place, including the creation of a new senior leadership team. Major upgrades have been made to the school buildings and aspects of the outdoor areas. The school provides before- and after-school provision.

The school has gained a number of awards, including Continuous Professional Development Mark (CPD Mark), the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA), Financial Management Systems in Schools, Extended School Status, Healthy School status, the Inclusion Quality Mark and the Activemark.

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

This is a good school. It is rated highly by parents and carers. The comment of one typifies that of most, 'not only does the school support my child's learning - it does so in a warm and friendly way'. Effective leadership and management driven by a highly skilled headteacher, dedicated leadership team, effective teaching and support staff and an excellent governing body are driving up progress and achievement. Outstanding care, guidance and support provides excellent levels of inclusion for all pupils. The pupils in the resource base, with a statement of special educational needs, benefit from effective support. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen steadily to broadly average. Given the below typical starting points on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, this represents good achievement. The rate of progress is increasing and variations in rates between classes and groups are diminishing very quickly as staffing settles. There is some underachievement in writing, particularly among boys, although the gap is narrowing rapidly. On occasions, more-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently.

A dedicated staff team has high morale and energy. Effective use of assessment informs the well-planned lessons with clear objectives. Pupils are increasingly secure in evaluating their own progress. At times, unnecessary effort is made by pupils responding to instructions rather than making a brisk transition to working independently. A creative approach to the curriculum is being constructed. This increasingly enables pupils to set up their own enquiries and select topics of interest. Expectations for pupils' writing across the curriculum, however, are not as high as those in dedicated literacy lessons.

Safeguarding is outstanding and pupils have an excellent understanding of safety. Good initiatives encourage pupils to manage their own feelings and, as a result, behaviour is good. Pupils are proud of being school councillors, keen to help others as playground buddies and determined to protect the environment. Most know the importance of eating sensibly and taking regular exercise.

The school is very well managed and finances are carefully spent. Significant upgrades to the accommodation, stronger teaching, radical changes to the curriculum and the increased involvement of pupils in decision making has improved the school considerably since the last inspection. Excellent partnerships with parents and carers contribute to the improving progress of pupils. These factors, together with robust systems for school self-evaluation, although at times optimistic, and the clear targets for future development, demonstrate a good capacity to improve in future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and progress by:

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- improving pupils' performance in writing, particularly that of boys, by setting consistently high expectations for writing in all subjects across the curriculum.
- Raise the overall quality of teaching further by:
 - ensuring that more-able pupils in all classes are sufficiently challenged
 - widening opportunities for pupils to work independently.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. They are particularly enthusiastic when they are challenged to use their own initiative to find answers for themselves. This was the case in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson when pupils conscientiously set about solving problems related to hundreds, tens and units. Pupils respond to expectations for them to check their answers and monitor their own progress using targets shared with them by staff. This confidence in evaluating whether or not they have 'got it right' is developing a positive culture among pupils that learning is not just about getting things correct but also learning from occasions when the expected result is not gained.

Since the last inspection, attainment has been rising. This is the result of settled teaching, stronger leadership and management and a more enjoyable curriculum. In 2010, attainment at both Year 2 and Year 6 improved to average. Robust data held by the school, confirmed by the local authority, shows that the school is meeting and increasingly exceeding challenging targets for a school with this context. Strengths exist in reading, with above average attainment overall. In writing, attainment lags behind and girls tend to do better than boys. Attainment at Year 6 varies because of the influence of the inclusion of the high percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. While the progress of these pupils is good and better than similar pupils nationally, their attainment is low in comparison with other pupils of their age. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective support provided for them.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Much time is given to building pupils' capacity to resolve incidents of disagreement. This has resulted in behaviour improving in recent years. Pupils are polite and take pride in helping others. Their enjoyment of school is evident in all that goes on. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about topics such as the Aztecs and the Second World War. They are aware of the circumstances of others less fortunate than themselves and do much to raise funds for charities, such as Comic Relief and for shoe box appeals. Many pupils are determined to 'preserve the planet'. Growing and harvesting vegetables from the school garden, participating in 'park and stride' events and keeping an eye on the unnecessary use of electricity underpins an increasingly 'green' culture among pupils. Despite the high levels of enjoyment of the large majority of pupils, attendance is average. This is mainly due to a few families taking holidays during term time. The good achievement, good social skills and positive attitudes to school give the large majority of pupils a good preparation for the next stage of their education.

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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	3
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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 work diligently to reinforce their mostly high expectations for pupils' work by creating inspirational displays around the school. The place of pupils in learning is given a high priority and teachers and teaching assistants listen to their views and respect their opinions. Much effort is put into involving pupils in evaluating their progress within lessons and in guiding them in how to improve their work over time. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Excellent teamwork with teaching assistants ensure the excellent inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In the very best lessons, strong links are made to situations relevant to pupils' lives and a problem-solving, active approach is adopted. In an outstanding science lesson in Year 6, a good range of activities well matched to all pupils' learning needs resulted in them being totally engrossed in their investigations and confidently sharing their findings with others. Occasionally, pupils are expected to listen for too long and questions asked by teachers restrict the options for pupils to develop their ideas through discussion and debate. Marking is generally prompt but expectations for writing across the curriculum are not consistently high enough. Pupils in the resource provision benefit from lively, interactive teaching which lifts the pupils' confidence while promoting good progress in their basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics.

Creative approaches to the curriculum are contributing to the improving progress for all pupils and particularly for boys. While good attention is given to developing the basic skills

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of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, the use of topics is increasing pupils' enjoyment. Effective links with local organisations broaden pupils' experiences. For example, work with Manchester Art Gallery has enabled Years 5 and 6 pupils to work with professional actors and artists, and links with a secondary school have created opportunities for Year 5 pupils to work with journalists, cameramen and others with careers in the media. A good emphasis is given in the curriculum to supporting pupils' personal, social and health education, resulting in good outcomes in these areas. Good adaptations are made to the curriculum to enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access to all areas of learning.

The school's inclusive philosophy ensures that all pupils, including those in the resource provision with challenging needs, can participate in the mainstream school life while still benefiting from specialist support where necessary. The levels of staff expertise are very high and make a significant impact on the achievement of individual pupils. Where required, effective links with outside agencies from education, health and welfare supplement the skills of school staff. Good links with the children's centre and before- and after-school clubs enable parents and carers to have access to good-quality support with child care. Transition arrangements for children joining school in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils moving on to secondary are exemplary. Good support is targeted to helping some families who have difficulties in ensuring their children attend school regularly, led primarily by the parent-support adviser.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Energetic, visionary and caring leadership by the headteacher sets high expectations for pupils and staff. After a period of changes in staffing, a settled team is in place which is implementing strategies to improve the school. Effective management systems involve all staff in decision making and evaluating the school's performance. Staff have clear roles and as their expertise develops they are taking actions to raise achievement. Detailed tracking informs staff about the progress of each pupil so that any falling behind can be supported. The governing body very successfully combines its role of supporting the school with challenging it to get the best outcomes. It is exceptionally well informed about all that goes on in the school and is involved closely with staff in setting and monitoring the progress of the school towards challenging targets. The governing body ensures that all elements of safeguarding are achieved to the highest standard. Excellent procedures for safeguarding and child protection coupled with rigorous systems for monitoring health and safety within the school minimise all reasonable risk.

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Good partnerships with local schools and a variety of local organisations benefit pupils' learning. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is extremely well managed, reflecting the school's outstanding promotion of equality of opportunity and determination to tackle discrimination. As a consequence, differences between the performance of boys and girls are narrowing quickly and incidents of racist behaviour are virtually non-existent. The engagement of parents and carers is outstanding and contributes to the successful improvement in the school in recent years. High-quality communication keeps parents and carers informed about school events and detailed information about their children's progress and next steps is shared regularly. The views of parents and carers are sought and influence decisions made by the school. A good contribution is made to promoting community cohesion. Staff and the governing body understand the social and cultural context of pupils and their families. Close links with the children's centre and with a range of organisations in the community contribute to cohesion within the locality. Global awareness is encouraged and curricular initiatives, such as teaching French, and planned links to schools in France and Thailand are improving provision.

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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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 get a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most children start nursery with skills that are below the expectations for their age. There is a particular weakness in aspects of their personal development and communication and language. Good teaching ensures that children make good progress as they move through the setting. By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children gaining the expected levels for their age has increased to broadly average. Good partnerships with the local authority and parents and carers have a positive impact on children's progress in communication, language and literacy development. Exemplary techniques are used to

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promote talking and much is done to develop children's awareness of letters and sounds. Assessment procedures are developing well and good staff teamwork informs judgements about the progress of individual children. Communication with parents and carers is very strong with frequent opportunities for meetings with staff. Home-school diaries, play club bags and work with families to encourage the use of nursery rhymes at home have all contributed to encouraging support for learning at home. There is a strong commitment to constant improvement, including working with settings in other schools. At all times the children's welfare is paramount and they are safe and secure.

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

Around a third of parents and carers returned their questionnaires. The vast majority expressed happiness with their child's experience at the school. The large majority commented that their child is well cared for and that they are warmly welcomed at school. The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities was highly praised by the vast majority of parents and carers who responded. The quality of leadership and management was rated highly and teaching was judged to be good. Parents and carers expressed the view that the school was improving after a period when staffing changes had introduced some uncertainty. A few were concerned about the effectiveness of the way in which behaviour is managed. Regarding behaviour, the large majority of parents and carers reported that behaviour is managed effectively and this was found to be the case during the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meadowbank 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 130 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 369 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	66	51	61	47	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	72	55	55	42	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	66	51	58	45	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	54	42	65	50	9	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	42	70	54	3	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	39	73	56	2	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	43	65	50	5	4	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)	46	35	60	46	7	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	42	65	50	7	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	30	66	51	14	11	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	35	74	57	6	5	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	49	38	74	57	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	64	49	62	48	3	2	1	1

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



5 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meadowbank Primary School, Cheadle, SK8 2LE

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for your welcome and the time you took to share your views with us. Your school works very closely with you and your families to make school an interesting experience and give you a good education. Your academic achievement is improving, as a result of good teaching and strong leadership by the headteacher and governing body. Progress in lessons is increasing and is currently good. Your attainment is similar to other schools nationally, but in writing there is scope for all of you to do better, particularly the boys.

You are mostly well behaved and make good friends. Those of you who find learning more difficult have good support and benefit from being included in all that goes on in school. At times, the work could be harder for those who find it easier than others. You are keen to help others, for example, as playground buddies and your understanding of how to be safe is very advanced for your age. The teachers are working hard to provide exciting lessons. The way in which subjects are linked together through topics, such those on the Aztecs and the Second World War are helping you to enjoy learning.

Part of my job is to suggest ways of making your school even better. I have identified three things that will do this and have asked the school to:

- give all of you, but particularly for boys, more opportunities to write to as high a standard as possible in all subjects
- make sure that those of you who find work easy are challenged enough in all lessons
- widen the opportunities for you be more independent in your learning.

I wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

David Byrne

Lead Inspector

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