

Meadow Vale Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 109942 |
| Local Authority | Bracknell Forest |
| Inspection number | 356657 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 May 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Paul Canham |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 483 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Bob Chapple |
| Headteacher | Nigel Duncan |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3 December 2007 |
| School address | Moordale Avenue Bracknell RG42 1SY |
| Telephone number | 01344 421046 |
| Fax number | 01344 867032 |
| Email address | secretary@office.bracknell-forest.co.uk |

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 28 lessons, observed 16 teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and a group of pupils, as well as talking with pupils in lessons. The inspectors also held discussions with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, lesson plans, safeguarding arrangements, development planning, minutes of governing body meetings and pupils' work. Inspectors scrutinised the 327 questionnaires received from parents and carers, as well as those from staff and a sample of pupils.

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

- The extent to which teachers' expectations determine the level of challenge for pupils, and are increasing the rate of progress in Years 3 to 6.
- Whether the school's improvements to assessment procedures have strengthened monitoring and extended the accountability of staff and the governing body.
- The extent to which the restructured senior leadership team and the governing body influence the school's direction and performance.

Information about the school

Meadow Vale is larger than most other primary schools. The very large majority of pupils are from families of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. There is an additional resource for 18 pupils with speech and language difficulties, which formed part of this inspection. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage into one of two Nursery classes. Since the last inspection, there have been a substantial number of changes to staffing, including members of the senior leadership team.

The school has achieved the Activemark Gold status, the Eco-Schools Bronze certificate, Artsmark Gold award, the Information and Communication Technology Mark, National Healthy Schools Status, and the Rights Respecting School Award.

There is an additional after-school care provision on the site. This is not managed by the governors and was not included in this inspection.

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 which serves its community well. It has a number of outstanding features. These include safeguarding arrangements and the care and support which place a high priority on enhancing pupils' self-esteem and raising achievement. The impact of these positive features is evident in many aspects of pupils' extremely well-developed personal qualities, including their interest in what they do, sensitivity to the environment, their sheer enjoyment of learning and high attendance. Pupils behave exceptionally well and have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe. Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school and one parent's comments sum up the views of others: 'There is something about Meadow Vale that seems to "turbo-charge" the children; they want to do well and are bursting with enthusiasm and determination.'

The exuberance and tenacity of the headteacher, along with strengths in collective leadership, are key factors driving improvement. Systematic monitoring and tracking systems have been established. The school's awareness and vision are well informed by a detailed self-evaluation. The governing body and school leaders have a clear understanding of where the school is now and of the priorities that need to be addressed to maintain recent improvements. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

The school knows that the quality of teaching and learning is at the hub of improved performance. The drive to improve teaching is supported by the systematic review of classroom practice. Accurate assessment procedures support successful teaching, which fully engages pupils and motivates them with creative and imaginative activities. Pupils are progressing well in lessons that are, typically, pitched at the right level and hold their interest. However, the school knows that it does not ensure that all pupils are consistently challenged throughout all lessons. Recent improvements to performance levels reflect the good progress, effective teaching and the wide range of learning opportunities. Attainment is broadly average and pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to reach higher levels than last year. Intervention work, including closely-tailored support for individual pupils, is successfully supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with speech and language difficulties in the resource base.

Children benefit from an outstanding start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where they are extremely well prepared for entry into Year 1. Pupils' excellent personal outcomes are reflected in their maturity, enthusiasm and involvement in the many activities that support the smooth running of the school. Extremely popular clubs and after-school activities provide pupils with numerous opportunities to develop confidence, and refine their creative and performance skills. Pupils are very respectful and value the views of others.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better by making certain that all teachers use assessment information to match learning activities to meet precisely the needs of individual pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' considerable enjoyment of learning is seen in their eagerness to engage with well-paced activities in English, mathematics and physical education. They work particularly well in small groups and readily share success, showing a resolve to complete the tasks and get them right. Pupils worked well independently of the teacher, for example, while working in small groups when constructing a bridge during mathematics. Some pupils spoke confidently about the techniques and the relevance of the subject when considering the strengths of different shapes used in their construction. Pupils participated with much enthusiasm when creating original names for a roller coaster ride, making good use of a thesaurus and dictionary, during literacy. However, pupils make less progress in satisfactory lessons when teaching is not so stimulating and less engaging. In assembly, pupils sang enthusiastically, tunefully and with confidence.

Although most children join the school with attainment that is broadly as expected across the areas of learning as a whole, skill levels in communication, language and literacy, and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy are lower. While pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 2, school data show that levels of attainment and the rate of progress are improving rapidly and securely for all groups, and in Years 3 to 6. Achievement is good and the school is on track to reach its realistic but challenging targets for English and mathematics in 2011, with a considerably larger proportion of pupils on course to reach the higher level ? Level 5.

Pupils say they like coming to school because they enjoy making friends, feel listened to, learn lots of things and enjoy participating in the many exciting activities. Pupils are exceptionally courteous and respectful. They show much interest in and respect for different people's feelings through their involvement in community projects and in fund raising activities. Pupils' excellent understanding of living healthily is reflected in the school's nationally recognised award. It is also evident in the way they talk confidently about the importance of eating different kinds of food and drinking fluids, the need for regular exercise and its impact on the body. The school council provides exceptionally good opportunities for pupils to represent the views of others and to make decisions regarding additional equipment for the outdoor adventure area, for example.

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

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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |

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?

Positive relationships, good subject knowledge and well-paced activities are key strengths of teaching. Incisive questioning often gives pupils opportunities to think about their work and reflect on the answers. Topics, such as those that relate the activities to everyday experiences and encourage creative writing, successfully capture pupils' interest and hold their attention. However, on occasion, some activities do not provide sufficient challenge for pupils. Assessment is not consistently used well to guide planning. Marking is supportive and usually explains how pupils can improve their work.

A wide range of attractive and informative displays, including working models, gives an insight into the richness and range of pupils' learning experiences. Following a recent review, the school strives to develop a curriculum that offers a balance between basic skills in English and mathematics and the enhancement of pupils' creative and performance skills, which is reflected in nationally recognised awards.

Recent changes, which include a greater focus on mental mathematics and writing, are beginning to have a positive influence on pupils' progress. Planning effectively links different subjects and pupils are given opportunities to reinforce their learning and develop their skills through topics. Pupils with speech and language difficulties, who are attached to the additional resource base, benefit from a balanced range of activities that include regular involvement in mainstream classes. The school is increasingly ensuring that the closely matched work they receive in small groups is replicated in whole-class

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activities. The curriculum is well supported by the effective use of information and communication technology, which enhances learning and gives pupils access to a wide range of resources. Pupils' learning experiences are further enriched by a large number of very popular clubs, sports activities, residential trips, and visits to places of local interest.

The outstanding support for pupils' personal development and pastoral care is recognised and valued by parents and carers. One parent, expressing a typical view, commented: 'Having recently moved into the area, the staff and pupils have not only made my daughter feel welcome, but our whole family. This has made the move far less stressful... very, very impressed.' Attention to pupils' health and well-being is reflected not just in the wide range of opportunities for physical activity, but also in the provision of healthy school meals. A number of strategies have been introduced, which have proven to be highly effective in tailoring individualised programmes of support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable to underachievement. These have included the appointment of a key member of staff to strengthen contacts with parents and carers and outside agencies. As a result, pupils with the greatest need gain confidence, strengthen their self-esteem and make good progress.

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?

Leadership and management are increasingly embedding ambition and driving improvement. With support from committed staff, the restructured leadership team has developed a school that is dedicated not only to strengthening each pupil's self-esteem but also to raising achievement. Systematic monitoring has led to improvements in teaching and, consequently, to more rapid progress in lessons. Staff are more accountable than they were in the past for the progress pupils make in their lessons. Established systems and procedures ensure that this ethos is maintained through staff changes. The promotion of equality and approaches to tackling any form of discrimination are good. The school's analysis of data is helping staff to identify the needs of individual pupils at an early stage. As a result, groups of pupils make similar progress, although some pupils could make faster progress in some classes.

The governing body is supportive of the school. Since the last inspection, it has seen a considerable turnover of membership and welcomes training opportunities to develop expertise and challenge the school's work. The governing body is closely involved in school improvement, and its awareness of the community and knowledge about pupils' progress provide the information needed to challenge the school's work. Attention to pupils' safety and safeguarding is excellent and integral to the school's work; high-quality assurance and

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detailed risk assessment systems have been established. Meticulously organised procedures ensure that safeguarding arrangements are carefully followed. The school has clear management responsibilities to ensure pupils are always safe, and the governing body rigorously monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of its policies and practices. Local services and agencies are used exceptionally well to enhance the well-being of pupils experiencing difficult circumstances and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Community cohesion is strongly promoted within the school and in the community. The school demonstrates an extremely good understanding of local needs and challenges. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to gain a deep understanding of people's backgrounds within the local community and a good awareness internationally. The school is taking appropriate steps to develop community cohesion nationally. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and play a very active part in school events, including fund raising projects and school performances. Coffee mornings and workshops help parents to strengthen their ties with the school and understand their children's different learning experiences.

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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| 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

A striking feature of the provision is the attractive and exceptionally well-resourced learning environment which entices children to get fully involved in the wide range of stimulating learning activities. In keeping with the rest of the school, attention to the welfare and safety of children is exemplary. Close links have been established with parents and carers, and committed staff have successfully established a calm and welcoming environment in which children are nurtured and cherished from the start. As a result, children settle quickly and are very eager to learn. They make rapid progress, especially in

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speech and language and mathematical skills, where attainment is initially weaker than in other areas of learning. Children learn to work independently at an early stage and develop a good understanding of how to keep safe. Thoroughly planned, themed topics ensure that all areas of learning are covered, with a particular focus on reading, speaking, listening, writing and number skills. Children listen attentively and chatter enthusiastically about their work. They happily move from one activity to another, making very effective use of the indoor and outdoor areas, which provide a wide range of high quality resources to develop confidence and promote independent learning. Support is good for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable.

Leadership is inspirational. The provision is exceptionally well managed and embedded procedures ensure that staff have accurate and reliable information about children's progress. Detailed planning takes very good account of each child's starting point. Adults, working cohesively as a team, move seamlessly in and out of activities, responding to individuals or taking part in larger group activities. Adults give closely targeted support to activities directed by the teacher as well as those that children choose for themselves. Questioning is often used very well to probe children's understanding and capture their interest.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |

Views of parents and carers

A well above average proportion of the school's parents and carers returned the questionnaires. Almost all of the responses expressed positive views about the school's work. A number of parents and carers made written comments and almost all of these expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. These included positive remarks about the caring and supportive community, the range of additional activities, the quality of the staff, and the level of progress that their children are making. However, a very few questionnaires recorded reservations over a small number of issues. These included the degree of communication between school and home. The inspection team looked at this during the course of the inspection and judged that the range of methods the school uses to communicate with parents and carers, such as weekly newsletters and cards that report on the progress of each child, were helpful in gaining an understanding of the school's work and how well their children are performing.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meadow Vale 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 327 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 483 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 230 | 70 | 93 | 28 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 265 | 81 | 62 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 205 | 63 | 117 | 36 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 204 | 62 | 116 | 35 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 241 | 74 | 82 | 25 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 228 | 70 | 93 | 28 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 208 | 64 | 116 | 35 | 1 | 0 | 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) | 195 | 60 | 111 | 34 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 214 | 65 | 107 | 33 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 190 | 58 | 124 | 38 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 182 | 56 | 130 | 40 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 241 | 74 | 82 | 25 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 248 | 76 | 75 | 23 | 2 | 1 | 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 | 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.



26 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meadow Vale Primary School, Bracknell RG42 1SY

Thank you for being so welcoming when we inspected your school. Thanks also to those of you who completed questionnaires to say what you thought of your school. We enjoyed talking to you at break and lunchtime and when visiting your lessons.

This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found while we were with you.

We were impressed by your exemplary behaviour and the enthusiasm that you showed in lessons and during extra-curricular activities. It was clear from talking to you and the questionnaire replies we received from you and your parents and carers that you enjoy school, feel extremely safe, and benefit from outstanding care and support. You told us it is also a place where you want to be, attend regularly, make friends, and thoroughly enjoy taking part in the many interesting clubs and exciting activities. Almost all your parents and carers expressed considerable satisfaction with the school.

Here are some other important things about your school.

- Those of you in the Nursery and Reception classes get an excellent start to school life.
- You make good progress in lessons.
- You behave exceptionally well.
- You respond enthusiastically to school activities, and lively and interesting lessons.
- You make an outstanding contribution to the smooth running of the school and contribute very successfully to local events.
- You have an excellent understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating.

To make things even better for you, we have asked the headteacher and staff make sure that teaching always challenges you.

We wish each one of you every success in your future education and hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now. You can all help the school by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Paul Canham

Lead inspector

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