

Meadowside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121901
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380346
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Sheridan HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	382
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Walters
Headteacher	Diane Perry
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2009
School address	Park Road Kettering NN15 5QY
Telephone number	01536 723985
Fax number	01536 725927
Email address	bursar@meadowside-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching in 27 lessons taught by 15 teachers. Inspectors met with pupils, members of the governing body, leaders and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at policy documents, tracking data, work in pupils' books and school improvement planning. Inspectors considered the views of staff, pupils and 98 parents and carers through returned questionnaires.

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

- How effective are leaders in driving improvements in teaching and the curriculum?
- To what extent is underachievement in mathematics being eradicated?
- How effective is the school in closing the gap in achievement between boys and girls?

Information about the school

Meadowside is a larger-than-average primary school which was formed in January 2008 by the amalgamation of the former Meadowside Infant and Junior Schools. Most pupils are White British and live in the small town of Burton Latimer. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school holds Activemark, Eco Award, International Schools Award and has Healthy Schools status.

The children's centre on the same site was subject to a separate inspection at the same time as this inspection. Out-of-hours on-site childcare, before and after school and in the holidays, is offered by a private provider and is also subject to separate inspection arrangements.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Pupils are well cared for and enjoy their learning in this satisfactory and improving school. Pastoral needs are met well and most pupils develop in maturity and independence as they move through the school. During a longer-than-usual period of turbulence following the amalgamation of the two schools, standards of attainment fell and girls did less well than boys, particularly in mathematics. The school is now on a firm footing with pupils making satisfactory and improving progress. Leaders have recognised the need to halt the deterioration in attainment in mathematics and ensure that girls and boys achieve equally well. Tracking data, work in pupils' books and lesson observations all show that this gap in attainment is closing quickly and previous underachievement is being eradicated. The school rightly recognises that there is still work to do in completely eradicating underachievement and ensuring pupils do not have gaps in their knowledge.

The quality of teaching and the curriculum is improving but remains variable because too many lessons do not fully meet the learning needs of all pupils, particularly in mathematics. In occasional lessons which are less successful at engaging all learners, some pupils lose focus and display silly behaviour that limits the work that they do. While pupils make satisfactory progress in these lessons, the off-task behaviour of some prevents them making the rapid progress that they need to completely catch up. Occasionally, teachers are slow to correct this behaviour and miss opportunities to acknowledge pupils who remain focused and on task. In some lessons, teachers spend too much time explaining things to pupils and this slows the pace of the lessons. In the good lessons work is set at the precise level needed for pupils to make accelerated progress and is rapid with questions that encourage pupils to think deeply. In these good lessons, teachers are very clear about their high expectations and pupils meet these, are eager to learn and enjoy their work.

The school has introduced a useful calculations policy which sets out the methods and order in which calculation strategies should be taught. This is helpful in ensuring that all teachers know the methods that are being developed throughout the school. However, on occasions, teachers do not fully recognise the need for pupils to use different methods that are appropriate to the task in hand and always expect pupils to use the most advanced methods they know. As a consequence, pupils are asked to use methods which are, at times, overly complex and not suited to the problems they are solving.

The school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory. Leaders at all levels have a

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clear understanding of the school's current position and what needs to be done. Self-evaluation is accurate and honest. They share a well-thought-out vision for the school and plan actions appropriately to move towards this. Their actions so far have been effective in developing a sense of one school despite Key Stages 1 and 2 remaining in separate buildings, developing the quality of teaching, raising standards of attainment in writing at Key Stage 2 and improving provision for individuals with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their actions to help pupils who have fallen behind are proving effective so that gaps in attainment are beginning to close. As a consequence, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have fallen behind because of previously weak teaching, make satisfactory progress in line with their peers. School improvements have been frustrated by instability in staffing and a higher-than-usual number of staff changes. School improvement planning is comprehensive but, too often, actions are planned without clearly identifying the purpose behind activities. This makes it difficult for leaders to measure the impact of each of the many different actions identified. Further, teachers are not always clear about the reasons why they are being asked to develop strategies and practice. As a consequence of this, the impact of some of these actions, particularly in mathematics, is not as significant as it could be.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the behaviour and attitude of all pupils in lessons are conducive to learning by:
 - making sure all teachers set down clear and consistent expectations for behaviour and attitudes and effectively promote positive attitudes and challenge inappropriate behaviour
 - ensuring that the school's systems for monitoring behaviour are applied consistently by all members of staff
 - making sure activities and lessons are always well paced, well timed and at the appropriate level of challenge so pupils are consistently motivated by what they are asked to do.

- Improve the teaching and learning in mathematics so that, overall, it leads to good progress by:
 - making sure the calculations policy is clear about the appropriateness of different methods in different contexts and that all teachers are confident in encouraging pupils to find the most suitable methods of calculation
 - ensuring that teaching is precisely matched to pupils' needs and abilities, taking into account any gaps in their learning caused by previous underachievement.

- Make sure that the specific intention of actions identified in school improvement

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plans are clearly stated so all people involved in delivering improvements are clear about what they are trying to achieve through different systems and actions.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils generally enjoy their lessons and almost all pupils asked say they enjoy school. In the good lessons seen, pupils work exceptionally hard and make rapid progress because of the high expectations and the clear guidance they receive. However, the progress pupils make varies throughout the school and, until recently, progress in Key Stage 2 has not been good enough, particularly for girls in mathematics. Achievement overall is now satisfactory because of improvements in teaching and intervention for pupils who have fallen behind. However, there still remains some variability and inequality in the progress pupils make. While behaviour around school is often good, low-level silliness sometimes disrupts learning.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know that adults will help them if they have a problem and willingly speak to their teachers about a range of issues. Good-quality opportunities help pupils understand about staying safe, including when using technology, and making appropriate decisions. Pupils develop a good understanding about how to stay healthy. They understand factors that can affect health and well-being. Pupils talk confidently about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. The school provides a good range of activities and many pupils take part in sport or health-related activity beyond the curriculum.

Pupils value their school community and willingly take on a range of roles and responsibilities that contribute to the school. The school council is active and plays a pivotal role in, for example, determining the charities to be supported for the following year. Through projects such as the Young Detectives, pupils contribute to their local community, taking a keen interest in local environmental issues. Pupils contribute to the global community through long term projects such as the contribution of a water pump for a partner school in Uganda

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

While there are clear signs that teaching is improving through the work seen in pupils' book and the school's tracking data, the quality of teaching remains satisfactory overall. Good lessons typically involve teachers asking pertinent questions of different groups of pupils that make them think about the learning that is taking place. Because these questions are precisely placed, pupils are able to respond promptly and the pace of the lesson remains brisk. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour and pupils respond positively to this. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers tend to spend longer telling pupils information and, in some cases, this means that some groups of pupils are less well engaged. In occasional satisfactory lessons, the behaviour of a few causes progress to slow. Sometimes, it is the teachers' willingness to allow silly behaviour to go unchecked that prevents pupils making better progress.

The curriculum has recently been developed so that different subjects are taught through themes. While this is at an early stage of development, it is enabling teachers to plan cross-curricular links more effectively so that core skills, including those in information and communication technology, are regularly developed. Literacy and numeracy sessions take place daily and extra sessions are proving effective in helping pupils catch up from previous underachievement. Teachers talk enthusiastically about various curriculum projects they have planned but, at times, they are not entirely clear about the learning that is intended through these projects.

The school's provision for providing care, guidance and support is good. Pupils are known well by their teachers as individuals and, as a result, pastoral issues are dealt with personally and sensitively. Effective working relationships with partners, including the children's centre, go a long way in ensuring pupils with statements of special educational needs and/or disability and other potentially vulnerable pupils and their families are well supported. The special educational needs coordinator effectively coordinates support for pupils who have fallen behind and, as a result, their confidence is growing and many are catching up.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders share a common goal in building a school where pupils are well cared for and enjoy learning. Much time and energy has gone into developing systems to ensure a smooth amalgamation of the two predecessor schools. Monitoring is largely accurate, although in some instances it is a little over-generous because it focuses too heavily on what teachers are doing rather than how effectively their actions are making an impact on learning for all groups. Leaders have recognised the importance of taking decisive action so that standards of attainment rise. These actions, along with the willing support of the wider staff, are beginning to eradicate the entrenched underachievement previously found in Key Stage 2. The school promotes equalities satisfactorily. It has taken appropriate action to tackle inequality where it exists, such as in the achievement of girls compared to boys. As a result of these actions, gaps are closing and attainment is rising overall.

Leaders have a clear view of the needs of the school community and have developed, through activities that have developed a sense of one school, a cohesive school community. Activities in the local community have engendered a sense of belonging within the local town. Leaders recognise the need to engage further with communities beyond the local area to support pupils in developing an understanding of diversity beyond their immediate experiences.

The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's position. It monitors the work of the school and is becoming more effective at using the information it has to discuss priorities for the future.

Safeguarding is well organised and effective. Everyone in school is well briefed and takes responsibility for the safeguarding of young people. Systems are effectively set up, maintained and adapted as a result of effective evaluation. The school regularly communicates with parents and carers so that they know what is happening in school and how they can support learning at home. Several pupils who receive extra support have diaries that allow effective communication between home and school. The school is sensitive to the needs of parents and carers and has set up a parents' working group to consider better ways of working together. Currently, this group is considering how the school reports to parents and carers about pupils' achievements.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and	3
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Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Typically, children arrive in the Reception Year with skills that are in line with expectations for their age. Children quickly settle into a routine and enjoy the exciting and stimulating range of activities organised on a daily basis. Children can be found happily engaging in a range of activities including water play, modelling, problem solving, early writing, sharing books and role-play. Adults work well in supporting individuals and groups with their chosen activities, modelling good use of language and encouraging talk. Teachers plan activities to challenge children, using observations made previously to make sure that each group is making good progress. Children show high levels of independence and cooperate well. Positive behaviour is well developed during group activities, although this sometimes slips when children are expected to sit for long times and listen to an adult. Sessions for teaching early reading and letter sounds are enjoyed by the children and they make good progress in these.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. The phase leader knows the provision very well and talks convincingly about the purpose behind activities and systems. Staff know what is expected of them and contribute effectively to the range of experiences children receive. Communication with parents and carers is good. Regular newsletters along with home/school diaries ensure that parents and carers are well informed.

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

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The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are happy with their children’s experiences overall and say that their children enjoy school. Some parents and carers had concerns about how well bullying and poor behaviour are dealt with. Pupils told inspectors that they felt bullying was dealt with promptly by the school and that they had faith in the school to help them sort out problems. Inspectors found that distracting behaviour was not always dealt with appropriately in all classes. Some parents and carers had concerns about the way that the school communicates with them, particularly concerning their children’s achievements. Inspectors found that the school’s systems for reporting to parents and carers fully met requirements. Part of the reason for the good judgement given for the effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers is because the school is working to find ways of reporting such information and a format that is more useful to parents and carers, in response and recognition of their concerns. Several parents and carers told inspectors about individual incidents concerning their own children. While it is difficult for inspectors to investigate individual circumstances, they did find that the school’s systems for reviewing policy and procedures in the light of lessons learnt are strong and the school has proven its ability to adapt or reinforce policy and practice where necessary.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meadowside 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 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 382 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	47	47	48	5	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	60	38	39	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	35	36	47	48	14	14	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	43	44	45	8	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	46	47	48	4	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	46	47	45	46	6	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	53	46	47	0	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)	40	41	49	50	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	47	48	44	45	6	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	33	46	47	7	7	9	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	35	45	46	14	14	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	46	47	41	42	8	8	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	53	54	39	40	4	4	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



20 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meadowside Primary School, Kettering, NN15 5QY

This letter is to let you know about our findings from the recent inspection of your school. We found that your school is a satisfactory school. We were worried that pupils in your school have not done as well in Key Stage 2 recently. We found that girls have done particularly poorly in mathematics. We were pleased to see that your school has worked hard to make sure that all pupils in Key Stage 2 are now doing much better. However, there is still a lot of catching up to do, so I urge you all to listen carefully, work hard and ask questions when you are unsure about what to do. We found that most of you behave very well around school and usually in class. However, we also found that some of you get silly in class and distract others. We have asked your teachers to make it clear to you that this is not acceptable. We have also asked your teachers to make sure lessons are fast moving, and help you move forward in your learning at a rapid pace. We hope this helps the few of you who get silly to put your energies into working hard.

We have also asked your teachers to think more about how they teach you mathematics. We can see that mathematics lessons have got better because you are making better progress. We have asked your teachers to teach you how to use calculation strategies selectively. This means that you learn to choose the best way to solve different types of problems in mathematics using different strategies. We have also asked your teachers to focus more on the gaps some of you have in your mathematics knowledge. You will find that this will help you get even snappier with numbers.

I would like to finish by thanking all of you who gave time to talk to us. Your views, ideas and thoughts were very useful to us in making our judgements. You have my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan
Her Majesty's Inspector

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