

Lower Meadow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133484
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	381509
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Wintle

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	310
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Law
Headteacher	Jan O'Connor
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2009
School address	Batemoor Road Sheffield S8 8EE
Telephone number	0114 237 2700
Fax number	0114 237 8572
Email address	enquiries@lowermeadow.sheffield.sch.uk



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



© Crown copyright 2012

Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Wintle
Bobbi Mothersdale
Joan Beale

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 22 lessons taught by 15 teachers for a total of approximately 15 hours. They also observed a number of intervention activities, including a parental workshop on mathematics. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, senior leaders, members of the governing body, and the school's professional partners. Inspectors observed the school's work, listened to pupils reading, looked at its methods for tracking pupils' progress, and at a range of school documents, including its policies, monitoring records, and samples of pupils' work. Responses from 71 parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire were considered, along with questionnaires completed by staff and pupils. The responses from the on-line Parent View survey were also considered in planning the inspection.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is twice the national figure. Fewer pupils than average belong to minority ethnic groups and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well-above average. The statements are mainly for hearing impairment and most are taught partly off-site and partly within the school. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has achieved Healthy Schools Status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because pupils do not achieve consistently well in mathematics and middle leaders do not contribute sufficiently to evaluating their impact on learning and devising subsequent action. The strongly held values of respect, tolerance, and understanding are consistently applied by adults and adopted by pupils. That ensures that inclusion is outstanding and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good.
- Pupils make good progress overall and especially at the upper end of Key Stage 2. They leave Year 6 with broadly average attainment in reading and writing. Mathematics attainment is below average, but improving at a good pace. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those pupils speaking English as an additional language make good progress because of high-quality interventions to support their learning. Most pupils with an educational statement for hearing impairment make outstanding progress.
- The quality of teaching is good and there are examples of exemplary teaching. It is based on staff's good relationships with pupils and a secure knowledge of a wide range of teaching strategies. Teaching assistants and other adults with responsibilities for supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make a valuable contribution to the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Teachers promote pupils' literacy skills well in many subjects, but opportunities are missed sometimes to develop their mathematical skills.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. The pupils are punctual and ready for work and attendance is rising, so that it is now average. They make a very good contribution to improving their own and others' well-being.
- The senior leadership team knows the school well and has a strong commitment to improvement. The headteacher leads teaching and learning and performance management effectively and the governing body challenges and supports the school rigorously. There are some strong features, including the school's clear vision of what it can achieve and what is needed to get it there.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics to be at least average and accelerate progress to be good or better by:
 - increasing opportunities for more activities that help support problem solving and reasoning skills
 - ensuring that pupils have greater opportunities to use new technology, so that learning can be supported even better.
- Develop the role of middle leaders further still, so that existing strengths are built on, and sharpen the way they focus on the impact of developments to improve the quality of pupils' learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils of all abilities make good progress from their starting points. Parents and carers agree. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below the levels expected for their age. Speech and language skills are particularly low initially. Children develop good social and learning skills, which prepare them well for their future learning. Their early communication and number skills are developed quickly and systematically and children apply them well. They show curiosity and are keen to learn. As a result, there is a good trend of improving achievement and a narrowing of any gap between the achievements of different groups of children.

Pupils enter Year 1 with attainment still below the national average, but continue to make good progress as they move through the school, so that, by the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average for most pupils. Throughout school, pupils' progress in reading is good. Standards in reading are below average by the end of Year 2, but the gap is narrowing. Reading standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6 and there is a trend of rising standards for all groups of pupils. Pupils show a good and improving understanding of letters and sounds (phonics) and how they are written. Throughout the school, they respond well to a sharp focus on phonics skills and regular opportunities to practise them and read to adults. As a result, all groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, have good skills in decoding new words and reading with expression. Because of outstanding provision for pupils with hearing impairment, they, often, make outstanding progress.

Pupils develop good writing skills. They respond well to realistic writing contexts, such as Key Stage 1 pupils writing about a trip to the local fire station or their visit to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Pupils, largely, take good care to present their work well, with accurate spelling and handwriting. Very occasionally, especially when note-taking or practising a new literacy skill, their presentation is not to the usual standard. Although most pupils make good progress in mathematics, it is a little slower than in other areas of learning. They make good progress with their basic 'four rules' and their mental work and oracy is good because the teaching has reinforced these important aspects of mathematics. Pupils' application of their knowledge systematically in problem solving and reasoning is less secure and opportunities to develop these aspects are limited.

Pupils are positive about their learning. They are increasingly involved in using precise targets and success criteria to help them improve. Pupils' use of information and communication technology (ICT) is underdeveloped throughout the school. An example of this is the opportunities missed in a mathematics lesson on shape that would have been enhanced by the use of new technology to support even quicker progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good throughout the school, with some examples of outstanding practice. The excellent quality of relationships between adults and pupils is a common feature of all lessons. The best lessons are well planned, teachers make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn and then allow them to try things out for themselves. Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning because the lessons are fast paced and verbal feedback to help them make progress is often outstanding. Teachers have worked hard to make sure that their feedback is supporting learning and there are examples of high-quality marking in school that successfully builds on pupils' good progress in lessons.

Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and play a vital role in supporting different groups of pupils. That ensures that most pupils make the same good progress over time, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, or those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The teaching of pupils with hearing impairment is often outstanding because pupils' communication skills are taught effectively, so that barriers to learning are overcome quickly. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows in lessons when teachers try to give too much direction and learning becomes too teacher centered.

Lessons provide many good opportunities for pupils to use their reading and writing skills throughout the curriculum. For example, pupils are given many opportunities to write for different audiences and purposes in meaningful contexts. Reading skills are taught systematically and practised in many subjects. The approach is not embedded for mathematics, as there are not enough opportunities for pupils to solve problems and link their mathematical learning with real-life applications. Also, there is limited use made in the classrooms of new technology. That limits pupils' progress in acquiring ICT skills and developing other subject skills, particularly in mathematics, in enjoyable and relevant contexts.

Parents and carers are wholly positive about the quality of teaching in the school and pupils, also, say that they enjoy their learning. The outstanding parental workshop integrates pupils and parents and carers into learning about mathematics together. The school's curriculum, with the clearly stated focus on tolerance, respect, and support for others, has a marked impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. An example of that is the way pupils in a Key Stage 2 class were learning about sound-proofing in a science lesson. The clear questioning skills of the class teacher, the significant opportunities made for collaborative work, and a range of different teaching strategies made the lesson outcomes good for all pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Because of pupils' good behaviour and safety and the way these aspects are promoted effectively, the school is a calm, safe, and harmonious community. Children in the Early

Years Foundation Stage are taught how to follow routines and rules and older pupils continue the good habits ingrained into them. They develop into considerate, friendly, and confident young people.

Pupils are all valued and supported as individuals and, consequently, they feel very secure. Inclusion is a strength of the school and promoted well. The school takes frequent steps to inform the pupils about how to keep safe, such as when using the Internet. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and also of different forms of bullying. Parents, carers, and pupils all say that bullying of any kind is rare and is dealt with quickly by all adults when it occurs. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions show that behaviour is good over time too. Assiduous work by the school to raise attendance has resulted in it rising to average in the current year. Pupils' very positive attitudes towards school are shown in their enthusiastic participation in all aspects of school life, from lessons, to the lunchtime gardening club, to the class trips to the farm and museum.

Leadership and management

School leaders and the governing body provide good leadership to a very committed staff. The senior leadership team knows the school and the surrounding catchment area well and has driven the improvements in attainment, so that it is now broadly average and most pupils are making good progress from their starting points. The headteacher leads by example and has developed an effective team which supports and drives the vision of the school. That, coupled with the improvements made since the previous inspection, shows the school's good capacity to improve.

The school has succeeded in developing a broad and balanced curriculum that is effective in supporting pupils' good progress and matching their needs. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development well. The school has a very positive relationship with the vast majority of groups of parents and carers, who say that they find school staff approachable and very helpful.

The school promotes equal opportunities well and is very effective in tackling any form of discrimination. There is a good awareness of safeguarding issues among members of the governing body and all staff and, as a result, the school makes effective arrangements to ensure pupils are safe. The school is very cohesive and strives to ensure that pupils work well together and get on with each other. It is particularly successful and the school is a harmonious community.

The management of performance is good. A key driver in improving the quality of teaching is the good system for monitoring teaching and learning set up by the headteacher and now taken up by all senior leaders. Well-targeted professional development is ensuring that the quality of teaching is continuing to improve. Members of the governing body are well informed and very aware of the progress and attainment data and its relationship to the quality of teaching in the school. In particular, success is underpinned by rigorous procedures by the senior leadership team in checking the effectiveness of the school's work. As a result, the school's self-evaluation is good and the systems in place for tracking pupils' progress are comprehensive. The school recognises that it has not developed its middle leaders sufficiently. Middle leaders do not make a significant contribution to analyse the impact of initiatives in their areas of responsibility and to act upon their findings.

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lower Meadow Primary School, Sheffield, S8 8EE

First, may I say what an enjoyable time my colleagues and I had when we visited your school. Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work. We enjoyed especially hearing about what you were learning and how many of you enjoyed coming to school. You, obviously, enjoy school a lot.

Yours is a good school. You told us you thought the school was a happy, warm place, where you feel very safe and where all pupils are valued and respected; we agree with you. We think you are making good progress in the school and believe that your reading skills are making the school even better. We have asked your headteacher and the other teachers to do some things which will help you progress even more. These are the things we have asked them to do:

- give pupils more opportunities to use new technology such as computers, so that their learning can be even more exciting
- give some of your teachers more responsibilities, so that they can support your headteacher.

You can help here a little by attending every day and telling your parents and carers just how much you enjoy coming to school and learning so much.

Our very best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Wintle
Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

