

The Meadows

Whitworth Lane, Spennymoor, Durham, DL6 7QW

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The high expectations of the headteacher and the leadership team have moved the school forward considerably since the last inspection.
- Senior leaders are committed to improving the quality of teaching and tracking pupils' performance. Clear action plans are in place. Good monitoring of teaching and professional development of staff, including support staff, has increased the level of consistently good teaching.
- Pupils' achievement across the school is good. The majority of pupils arrive with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. They quickly respond to the positive and supportive environment and begin to adopt the skills required for their learning.
- Teachers have well-developed skills that meet the needs of all pupils. Lessons are made interesting and enjoyable, motivating pupils well so that they make good progress.
- Considering the social, emotional and behavioural needs of the pupils, behaviour is good. This is because pupils truly enjoy working with the staff to support their learning and respond to the consistency in applying the behaviour policy.
- The school's caring ethos has the safety and care of all pupils at its core. Through highly productive partnerships with agencies, effective interventions support both pupils' and family needs and realise opportunities for learning.
- The skilled and dedicated governing body provide good support and challenge. Consequently, the school has good capacity for continuous improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is insufficient consistency in marking in pupils' books to develop pupils' understanding of their next steps in learning and indicate the level of work they have achieved.
- In some subjects there is not sufficient focus on developing mathematical skills.
- Some teachers need to focus on presentation of work to improve completion of tasks and show learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 11 teachers. A learning walk across four lessons with the headteacher was undertaken to hear pupils read.
- The inspection team had discussions with teachers, a member of the governing body, pupils, senior leaders, parents and a representative of the local educational authority.
- Three parents made their views known through discussions in school and by telephone.
- The inspection team looked at the work of the school as well as scrutinising health and safety documentation, pupils' work, the school's system for tracking pupils' progress and teachers' curriculum planning.

Inspection team

Ann Muxworthy, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides for the education of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs.
- Approximately half the pupils who attend are known to be eligible for pupil premium. This is a significantly larger proportion than the national average.
- Since the last inspection the school has had a new headteacher and leadership team.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin and are boys.
- The school is a specialist school for Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) and a partner school for initial teacher training.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure there is consistency in marking pupils' books to support pupils' understanding of the next steps in their learning and the level of work they have achieved.
- Identify and implement opportunities in all subjects to develop and apply mathematical skills.
- Improve presentation of work to ensure pupils complete tasks and demonstrate their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All pupils who attend the school have a statement of special educational needs to meet their social, emotional and behavioural needs. As a result of the effective approaches to meeting pupils' needs, all groups, including looked-after children, girls and those eligible for the pupil premium make good progress.
- Many pupils have experienced significant disruption in their education prior to joining the school. This has led to the overwhelming majority of pupils with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. A significant number, particularly those who are looked after also lack the social and emotional skills they need for learning.
- Teachers and support staff are highly skilled in supporting access to learning and, as a result, pupils make good progress academically, emotionally and socially.
- Parents agree that their children make good progress and were helpful in sharing their views with the inspector. The view of one parent is representative of what was discussed with parents during the inspection. 'The school is impressive. There are such good facilities for his education and physical needs. My son is now settled and making good progress and we are so pleased with what he is doing.'
- Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. A clear focus on literacy skills ensures that pupils make good progress from low starting points. Reading groups across the school have improved pupils' reading skills and their confidence and progress in reading.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics although opportunities are missed in some subjects to apply learning in different situations.
- A few pupils are able to reach levels of skills and knowledge comparable to age-related expectations and gain GCSEs, while some have the opportunity to return to a mainstream school. Other pupils successfully gain qualifications for life and key skills they have developed by the end of Key Stage 4.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is good because teachers and support staff are exceptionally good at meeting the social, emotional and behavioural needs of all pupils.
- Staff communicate and complement each other in lessons to enhance and engage pupils' learning. As a result, each pupil's academic and behavioural needs are met well.
- Lessons are well structured and objectives are clearly communicated. This supports good engagement and pace.
- Most teachers assess pupils' learning and progress regularly, however, pupils' work showed that some opportunities were missed to provide feedback on progress and learning.
- Teachers and support staff have high expectations for behaviour and learning and create a positive climate in classrooms. This has led to improvements in pupils' listening skills, reading and behaviour. However, many pupils now need a greater focus on presentation of their work in books to improve completion of tasks and show understanding.
- The curriculum has a positive effect on teaching and is supported well by teachers with good subject knowledge. This leads to effective questioning and planning of tasks to meet the individual needs of pupils.
- Many pupils have a lack of confidence from their previous school and family experiences. Staff use praise well to let pupils know they have been successful in their learning and behaviour and this greatly reduces reluctance to learn.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in and outside lessons, despite the high level of social, emotional and behavioural needs of the pupils. This was seen after an energetic and physical rugby lesson where the pupils moved back to lessons and settled behind desks and on to new tasks quickly.
- Pupils have a high level of respect for their teachers and show caring towards each other. They often stop to talk to staff in corridors and enjoy talking to them every morning as they come in to school.
- The restorative approach implemented in school is equipping pupils with the skills and abilities to manage and reflect on their own behaviour. This is very evident when talking to pupils on how their self-esteem has improved and their ability to work with others.
- Parents and pupils feel that the school keeps them safe. Regular anti-bullying sessions and a high regard to personal safety is developing a good level of understanding and has significantly reduced incidents in school. Incidents are few and dealt very effectively by staff.
- Agencies and services are key partners with the school in providing interventions that support pupil and family needs. This is seen in the regularly attended multi-professional and parent meetings, and targeted activities, such as the 'Motivation' course and 'Listening Matters' that have been developed within school.
- The improvement in pupils' attitudes has impacted well on the very good attendance in lessons, although there are a small number of pupils where their attendance at school is still problematic specifically if they join school after a succession of previously failed experiences.
- School leaders' believe that an emphasis on positive behaviour and supporting pupils to manage their behaviour is the essence of the school policy. All staff, therefore, are consistent in their approach and as a result the pupils respond very well to their high expectations.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is focused on driving through and securing nothing less than excellence for pupils. This is shared with all those with leadership responsibility. Self-evaluation is accurate and used well to improve the school's performance.
- The good teaching and performance of all staff is promoting continuous improvement. Performance management targets are clearly matched to the priorities for the school's development plan. The headteacher, newly in post since the last inspection, has been responsible for re-organising the leadership team and for providing clear roles and responsibilities to monitor the school's performance. This devolved approach is motivating leadership and driving the school forward.
- The leadership team have a strong and shared focus on teaching and learning. They have taken actions to improve the quality of teaching and have a good system of appraisal clearly linked to professional development for staff. This has had a worthy impact on the quality of teaching seen in lessons and pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- Pupils and staff feel they are valued in their school community. Systems to promote equality of opportunity are embedded well and the school tackles discrimination promptly. As a result, progress for all pupils is good.
- The curriculum is considerate of the needs of the pupils and provides good opportunities to experience different cultures, such as that of Kenya, and to promote pupils' social skills. Practical activities raise funds and enlighten pupils on the needs of others.
- The school is recognised as light touch by the local authority because of its continuous improvements and good quality of provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a high level of managerial, business, education and community skills to support and challenge leaders and this is very evident in their good support to recruitment

and management of the school's finances.

- The governing body conveys its expectations well to leaders and has been closely involved with the development of the school's self-evaluation and planning. Governors expect regular updates on teaching and pupils' achievements. This has resulted in the quality of teaching and pupils' performance improving.
-

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131905
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	402515

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr William Worth
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Cook
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2010
Telephone number	01388 811178
Fax number	01388 814050
Email address	themedows@durhamlearning.net

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.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 and as part of the inspection.

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 educational 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 St
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2012