

# Meadows Primary School

Newcastle Road, Madeley Heath, Crewe, CW3 9JX

**Inspection dates** 28–29 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although teaching has improved recently, and a number of good lessons were observed during the inspection, it is still not good. Teaching is not strong enough for all pupils to achieve well in all subjects.
- Teachers do not always make enough use of the school's data on each pupil's progress to plan work at a suitable level for the range of ability in each mixed-age class. The pace of learning is too slow in some lessons.
- Not enough pupils are working above the expectations for their age, particularly in writing. Standards of writing are lower than in reading and mathematics.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across different subjects.
- Subject leaders do not take an active enough role in observing teaching in their subjects and in analysing data in order to ensure further improvements.
- Governors do not all know how to interpret more complex data about how well the school and the pupils are doing, so they are not yet taking an active role in deciding the direction of improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school has been through a difficult period since its last inspection but is now back on track and improving steadily under the strong leadership of the new headteacher.
- Behaviour is good across the school.
- Teaching and the care of the youngest children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and the children make good progress.
- Senior leaders and the governing body use checks on teaching effectively to challenge weaknesses, link pay to performance and promote improvement.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance levels are consistently high.
- The school has rigorous procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of its pupils. Pupils feel safe.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions were held with representatives of the governing body, members of staff with responsibility for individual subjects, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils, including the school council.
- The inspector took into account the 21 responses to the online questionnaire for parents and carers (Parent View).
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Clive Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than most other primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- Pupils are organised into a Reception class and three mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average and no pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher took up her post in September 2012.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the overall quality of teaching to good and make it more consistent by ensuring:
  - teachers make better use of school data to ensure there is an appropriate level of challenge for all age and ability groups within each class
  - all lessons proceed at a brisk pace.
- Improve achievement in writing by:
  - devising ways to improve pupils' grammar and sentence construction skills and use them to plan their writing
  - providing more opportunities for pupils, particularly more-able pupils, to use their writing skills in other subjects.
- Develop the roles of subject leaders by ensuring that they are supported in their areas of responsibility and encouraged to take a more active role in improving teaching and pupils' attainment and progress.
- Improve governors' skills in evaluation and the analysis of data so that the governing body can more effectively hold the school to account for its performance and help direct its key decisions about priorities.

## Inspection judgements

### **The achievement of pupils** requires improvement

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress. Achievement in Years 1 to 6 requires improvement.
- Although the overall progress of pupils is broadly in line with the national average, not enough pupils are attaining the higher levels. Improvements have been made in reading and mathematics, particularly in reading, where pupils are making rapid gains. However, standards of writing are not as good and the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing remains well below average. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length. This means they do not have the chance to put into practice their knowledge of spellings, grammar and sentence structure or to develop their ideas.
- Most children enter the school's Reception class with skills that are equivalent to those typically expected. They make good progress in all areas of learning during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and, as a result, their attainment is above average when they enter Year 1.
- In recent years the school's results in the national tests have fluctuated because of historic variations in the quality of teaching and year-on-year variations resulting from the small number of pupils in each year group, but they have been broadly in line with the national average overall.
- Although there are clear signs of improvements across the school, and particularly in the lower school, this improvement has not yet made enough difference to standards in Year 6. Here standards are not yet sufficiently high to demonstrate good progress, even though the standard of work of pupils in the current Year 6 is higher than the previous year.
- Regular, daily phonics activities (the links between letters and sounds) and guided reading lessons help pupils to make good progress in reading.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium and pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Despite the recent improvements in teaching, it is not yet good. There has not been enough time for pupils who have made slow progress lower down the school, to make the accelerated progress that would allow them to reach higher standards.
- Where teaching has improved, for example, in the teaching of reading, this is due to the good training and support teachers have received. The strong focus on improving literacy skills, with regular phonics and guided reading lessons, has improved pupils' reading skills considerably and this is beginning to have a positive effect on the quality of pupils' writing. However, pupils' grammar and sentence construction skills are not yet sufficiently strong enough to allow them, particularly those who are more able, to produce work of a higher standard.
- A number of good lessons were observed during the inspection. In these lessons, teaching was well paced throughout and teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge. Teachers used a wide range of teaching methods and resources effectively to engage and maintain pupils' interest. Good support was provided by skilled teaching assistants, with the result that pupils of

all abilities made good progress.

- In one good numeracy lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good progress as they learned how to calculate fractions, decimal proportions and percentage equivalents of given amounts. The teacher made good links to pupils' previous learning and set appropriately challenging work for the different age and ability groups within the class. Opportunities were provided for pupils to work together to discuss their ideas. They enjoyed the challenges - more able pupils stated that they found the work 'a bit tricky' - and, as a result, pupils of all abilities made good progress.
- In a minority of lessons observed, however, teachers allowed the pace of learning to slow, frequently after a well-paced, brisk start to the lesson. In other lessons, some tasks provided for more able pupils are too easy, with pupils initially completing the same work as their peers. Although they typically move on to more challenging work, this often does not occur until late in the lesson.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly and the colour-coded marking system, newly revised, gives pupils good guidance on what they can do to improve their work.
- The school uses pupil premium funding appropriately by employing additional teacher-assistants to provide support and nurture for these pupils and help improve their attainment.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils are keen to do their best and answer questions readily. They display high levels of concentration and, when working in pairs or groups, organise themselves swiftly and without the minimum of fuss.
- Pupils mix well with each other in the playgrounds and at lunchtimes. They are polite and courteous to visitors, work well together in class and treat each other with courtesy and respect.
- Pupils say they feel 'really safe' at school and are confident that staff will deal with any issue they raise promptly and effectively. They understand that there are different types of bullying, say that bullying doesn't happen in their school and explain that 'little arguments in the playground aren't really bullying at all'. Older pupils say they will be sorry to leave the school at the end of the year.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their consistently high levels of attendance.
- Pupils are curious about the world around them and readily embrace new experiences such as learning circus skills with their peers from other small local schools, annual residential visits and visits to the theatre.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- With the full support of the local authority the new headteacher has successfully identified key strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers' performance targets are directly linked to these key areas for improvement in the new school development plan and teaching is improving steadily as a result.
- However, leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not yet ensured that the quality of teaching across the school is consistently good, or that standards in

writing match those in reading and mathematics. They have also not ensured that subject leaders are sufficiently involved in improving standards in their subjects. Subject leaders have not all had the opportunity and the training to observe teaching.

- The school has recently been through a period of significant changes in staffing and is now beginning to enjoy the benefits of a more stable staffing situation. Under the strong guidance of the headteacher, the staff are a well-motivated team, demonstrating a shared sense of responsibility and commitment to improving the school.
- Teaching programmes are broad and balanced. Pupils are now learning French and all pupils in Years 3 and 4 are learning to play the violin. Some improvements have been made in planning for the use of skills across subjects, but not enough has yet been done in writing. Not enough opportunities are provided for extended writing in subjects such as geography, history and science.
- The school's leaders have used the funding for those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium effectively. They have improved staffing and support for those pupils who receive it to help them achieve better results.
- The school's safeguarding systems are secure and rigorous.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school. Their review of the school's work provides an accurate view of the actions that need to be taken to further raise achievement. It has helped the school improve the accuracy of assessment and raise the quality of teaching across the school by providing support for literacy and writing development.
- The school provides good pastoral care for all its pupils. The small size of the school ensures that staff know all pupils and families very well. It has good links with a wide range of partners who contribute significantly to improvements in pupils' achievement and well-being.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is supportive of the school but does not have a precise enough understanding of the school's work to be able to offer well-informed challenge, particularly in relation to pupils' achievement and the school's self-evaluation. Governors have had effective training and support and now have a better understanding of the quality of teaching and what is being done to recognise and reward good teachers. It ensures that safeguarding is secure and has overseen the arrangements for the use of the pupil premium funding and the arrangements for relating teachers' performance to pay effectively.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124102
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406214

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	96
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jaqui Rowley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Procter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 750313
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