

Meadowside Primary School

Park Road, Burton Latimer, Kettering, NN15 5QY

Inspection dates 3–4 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Instability in staffing and leadership has meant standards have declined over time. In the past, not all pupils made expected progress.
- While most pupils are now making expected progress, too few are reaching the higher levels of attainment.
- More-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to do as well as they can.
- Leaders and managers have not set sufficiently aspirational targets to ensure more pupils exceed expected progress.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the school.
- Teachers do not always keep a close enough check on how pupils are responding to learning to pick up any misconceptions straight away.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough time to respond to their comments after they have marked their books. They do not always check that pupils have acted upon their advice afterwards.
- Leaders, managers and governors have not had time to make sure that all new members of staff are following agreed policies and procedures.
- The school faces a continuing period of uncertainty as it attempts to recruit a permanent headteacher.

The school has the following strengths

- Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is consistently good.
- Under the leadership of the interim headteacher, teaching improved and standards rose significantly in 2013, especially in mathematics and for girls.
- Behaviour is good and pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They say they feel safe in school.
- The interim headteacher has built a strong team of senior leaders around him and is well supported and challenged by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 26 lessons or parts of lessons, most of which were observed jointly with the interim headteacher or deputy headteachers.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and, together with the senior leadership team, looked closely at examples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- The inspectors met with pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with the interim headteacher, deputy headteachers, inclusion manager, members of staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View and one letter from a parent. They also spoke with parents and carers.
- The inspectors considered 44 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christopher Crouch

Additional Inspector

Jane Burton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (that is pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- The interim headteacher joined the school in January 2013 to help cover the absence of the permanent headteacher. The school is currently recruiting a new permanent headteacher.
- There have been many changes of teaching staff over the past year. During the inspection, eight of the 14 classes were taught by teachers who were new to the school or by supply teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good by:
 - making sure that teachers check pupils' understanding throughout each lesson to tackle any misconceptions
 - giving pupils time to respond to teachers' comments in their books and making sure pupils act upon them.
- Make sure that the proportion of pupils exceeding expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics increases at least to the national level by:
 - challenging more-able pupils to reach the higher levels of attainment
 - setting aspirational targets for pupils at all levels of ability and keeping these under constant review to ensure that pupils are on course to meet them.
- Make sure the school sustains the momentum of improvement by ensuring:
 - senior leaders check that the new members of staff consistently follow the school's policies and procedures, especially in securing good or better teaching
 - governors support senior leaders in steering the school through its next period of transition with the appointment of a permanent headteacher.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Over the last few years, standards have fallen, especially in mathematics. This is because the school had many unavoidable changes of staffing and uncertainty in its leadership. As a result, teaching was not consistent enough to ensure that all pupils made expected or better progress.
- Since the interim headteacher has joined the school, this decline has been reversed and standards have been rising rapidly. For example, the unconfirmed results of the national tests in 2013 show that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels in mathematics moved up from significantly below average to above last year's average. Standards in reading are above the 2012 average and they are average in writing.
- Children join the school with skills and abilities in line with those normally expected. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because learning is carefully planned with a variety of activities and resources tailored to children's needs.
- Across the school, most pupils are making expected progress but the proportions exceeding expected progress fall below the national picture. This is because more-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and leaders and managers have not set aspirational enough targets for pupils of all abilities.
- Standards at Key Stage 1 have fluctuated over time, but rose significantly in 2013. This is a result of better teaching, which set work at the right level for pupils.
- Pupils make good progress in reading across the school because phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught systematically and pupils use their skills well to tackle unfamiliar words. Pupils in Year 1 performed well in the national screening check in 2013. Pupils read widely both at school and at home and talk with enthusiasm about their favourite authors.
- Mathematics has seen the greatest improvement in the past year because staff have received considerable training, new practical resources have been introduced and there has been greater consistency in the application of the school's calculation policy.
- In writing, pupils have more opportunities to write at length across different subjects. For example, pupils wrote explanations in science about different types of sound, and wrote a letter home as an evacuee during the Second World War.
- The school has made sure that pupils present their work neatly and handwriting is carefully formed. Spelling and grammar have improved so that in the national tests pupils performed above the national average.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to other pupils, although there are examples of individuals who have achieved particularly well. This is because teaching assistants are well briefed and knowledgeable and programmes of support are carefully tailored to pupils' needs.
- In 2012, girls performed much worse than boys. The school worked closely with girls in 2013 to close the gap and organised a programme of visits from female role models to encourage girls to have confidence in mathematics in particular. As a result, the gap between boys and girls reduced from boys doing better by 17 percentage points in mathematics in 2012 to girls doing

better by 2 percentage points in 2013.

- In 2012, there was a large attainment gap between pupils eligible for the pupil premium and the others in the school. They were over a year behind in reading, two terms behind in writing and four terms behind in mathematics. In 2013, the school spent much of its pupil-premium funding on small-group support and individual tuition and the impact of this was to eliminate the gap in reading and close it substantially in writing and mathematics. The progress of eligible pupils was similar to that of the others in the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good because there have been so many unavoidable changes of staff. Sometimes, teachers do not check frequently enough how well pupils are responding to learning in lessons, so that opportunities to correct misconceptions are missed.
- More-able pupils have not always reached the higher levels of attainment because teaching has not challenged them sufficiently throughout the lesson. At times, pupils have to sit through explanations they already understand and do not have enough time to complete more demanding tasks. Pupils' books also show that more-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged, especially in mathematics, when they are given calculations to complete that they can easily finish.
- Support staff are used well in class and in conducting programmes of support with individuals and groups. They know the needs of the pupils well.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are very keen to participate in lessons. They work well with a partner or in small groups. In the best lessons, they are actively involved. For example, pupils in Year 4 enjoyed going 'through the keyhole' to explore aspects of Ancient Egypt. Pupils in Year 1 took delight in an autumn nature walk.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, routines are well established and children cooperate well, for example in tidying up the classroom. Children enjoy a wide range of activities both inside and outside chosen by themselves or led by adults.
- Work in books shows that most pupils across the school are making expected progress over time, although this is more consistent in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Pupils take a pride in their work, as it is neatly presented in every year group.
- While marking is regular, some varies in quality across classes and year groups. Pupils are not always given enough time to respond fully to teachers' suggestions, and teachers do not always follow-up their marking to check that pupils have acted upon it.
- In science, pupils cover a wide range of topics and take part in plenty of interesting investigations.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. Pupils in Year 6 shared their pleasure at finding out that there were so many more types of quadrilateral than they had imagined. Behaviour is good in class and around the school. Pupils show courtesy to one another and play cooperatively.

- Pupils have good levels of independence. They do not rely on adults to keep them on task and are happy to work on their own to find things out for themselves.
- Pupils say that bullying is not a concern to them. They know that adults will help them with any troubles they may have. They appreciate that they can leave a note for somebody to contact them if they would rather not go directly to an adult.
- Pupils know about different kinds of bullying such as name calling and prejudice-based bullying. They feel safe in school, commenting on the new entry systems fitted to each external door. Junior road-safety officers help to make pupils aware of keeping safe on the roads. In conjunction with the police, pupils also issue parking tickets to motorists who park illegally outside the school.
- Behaviour is managed well. New staff follow the behaviour policy effectively. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because pupils sometimes become distracted or passive when learning is not sufficiently demanding.
- The school council leads pupils in raising money for good causes such as 'Children in Need', and harvest contributions to a local food bank, as well as supporting 'Operation Christmas Child'.
- Attendance is closely checked, and the school sends letters of congratulation to families where attendance has improved. As a result, attendance is above average.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The school has been through a period of turbulence with many changes in staffing, including at a senior level. While the reasons for these changes have been outside the school's control, such as retirement, relocation, promotion and long-term sickness, they have meant that a disproportionate number of teachers are new to the school.
- Leaders, managers and governors have had little time to ensure that new staff take on board all the school's policies and procedures. In addition, new members of staff have missed out on all the high-quality training the others received in 2013. This has resulted in some continuing unevenness in the quality of teaching, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Since his appointment, the interim headteacher has had a considerably positive impact on uniting staff and building other senior leaders into a strong, cohesive team. A momentum of improvement has developed which has resulted in rapid progress. Underachievement has been tackled successfully and pupils make at least expected progress. However, not enough pupils exceed expected progress, and this is a priority for the school in moving forward.
- New systems introduced by the interim headteacher make staff more accountable for the progress of pupils in their care. An accurate record is kept of how pupils are doing and anyone at risk of falling behind is picked up quickly and helped to catch up. The performance of teachers is managed rigorously to ensure that more teaching moves to good or better.
- Careful checking of the school's work by the interim headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team means that they form an accurate view and use this to plan areas to improve.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils especially enjoy their topics and visits to places of interest such as the Black Country Museum to

find out about the Victorians. The school has plans for spending its primary school sport funding by increasing the range of opportunities for pupils to participate in sport and improve their health and well-being. It also has plans to evaluate the effectiveness of these activities.

- Parents and carers note the improvements to the school in the past year and are positive about its work. They make their views known to senior leaders through a parents' council.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school over a long period of time, especially in helping to secure strong leadership.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear vision for improving the school and communicate well with senior leaders. They know what the data are showing about the progress pupils are making and how the quality of teaching is influencing this. They are aware of how the management of the performance of the headteacher and other teachers is helping to drive improvement. Governors know what the school is doing to reward good teachers and to tackle any underperformance. They make sure that all safeguarding requirements are met to keep pupils safe. They are acutely aware that the school is about to enter a new period of transition with the recruitment of a permanent headteacher and other changes to the leadership team, and are conscious of their role in supporting leaders and managers in maintaining the momentum of improvement that has built up this year under the strong leadership of the interim headteacher.

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	121901
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	425012

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	397
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Walters
Headteacher	Jim Balmbra (interim headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 October 2011
Telephone number	01536 723985
Fax number	01536 725927
Email address	head@meadowside-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk

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 2013

