

Meadows Primary School and Nursery

Riddings Close, Telford, TF1 5HF

Inspection dates 12–13 December 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 to allow pupils to make good progress.
- The progress made by pupils varies significantly between classes in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers do not always set work that is sufficiently challenging, especially for the most-able pupils.
- Teachers do not consistently provide pupils with the feedback that would help them to make good progress.
- Pupils do not pay attention and behave well in lessons where the teaching is less than good.
- Although not low, attendance is below average and not improving.
- Senior leaders do not always set sufficiently challenging targets for improvement.
- Governors lack the skills in analysing data that would allow them to hold the headteacher to account for the school's performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2, where pupils make good progress.
- Behaviour outside of lessons is good and pupils feel very safe at school.
- Leaders are improving achievement by accurately checking the quality of teaching and providing good quality feedback to teachers.
- The school has a strong record of promoting competitive sport.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons, including six that were jointly observed with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, they listened to pupils reading and analysed the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, staff and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors met parents informally and analysed the results of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own data on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its performance; records relating to attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

David Driscoll, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sue Calvert	Additional Inspector
Roisin Chambers	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most other primary schools, but with considerably more girls than boys than is seen nationally.
- The great majority of pupils are from a White British background, with others coming from a wide range of different ethnic groups. Almost all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is additional funding for specific groups of pupils, such as children looked after by the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children whose parents are in the armed forces.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in order accelerate pupils' progress and improve their attitudes to learning in Years 3 to 6 by ensuring all teachers consistently:
 - engage pupils in purposeful activities
 - provide suitably challenging work, especially for the most-able pupils
 - check pupils' work, provide good quality feedback on what they need to do to improve and make sure that pupils act on their instructions.
- Improve attendance to at least the national average by raising the trigger point for contacting parents to 92% and including attendance as a priority on the school development plan.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - setting suitably challenging targets for improvement
 - training governors to analyse data for themselves so that they are better able to challenge the senior leaders view of the schools and robustly hold the headteacher to account for the its performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Progress varies considerably between year groups, classes and subjects in Years 3 to 6, which leads to a considerable variation in the achievement of pupils. Over the four years pupils make expected progress and leave with standards that are average, but with variations by subject.
- In 2013, for example, pupils in Year 6 reached above average standards in writing because they had made such good progress since Year 3. However, much of this progress occurred in Year 5 and their progress in Year 6 was much slower. There was some underachievement in reading in 2013 and standards were below average, but current progress has improved and standards in Year 6 are now average.
- A similar picture occurs in reading, writing and mathematics, with pupils making good progress in some years, but then falling behind again in others. Standards for Year 6 were broadly average in 2013, as they had been in the previous two years.
- The variations in progress are caused by differences in the quality of teaching. Where teaching is good or better, pupils pay close attention and work hard. In other lessons their attention wanders and they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The most-able pupils make slower progress than other pupils in Years 3 to 6 because they sometimes find the work too easy. On occasions they do not listen to their teacher and get on with something else instead.
- There are few differences in the progress of different groups of pupils by the time they leave school, but there are variations between classes. In some boys do better than girls in writing, for example, while the reverse is true in other years.
- The same is true of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. By the time they leave school they have made similar progress to others, but their progress varies between classes in Years 3 to 6. In some year groups they make rapid progress because they receive extra help when it is most needed, while in others their progress is not checked frequently so they continue to make basic errors.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are below the level typical for their age. Their progress also requires improvement because it is not consistently good. Children started Year 1 with standards that were below average in 2013, but those starting Year 1 in 2012 made good progress. The indications from the current children's work are that weaknesses in teaching have been addressed and they are again making good progress.
- Progress is good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils enjoy the enthusiastic approach of teachers and are keen to do their best. Standards are rising rapidly as a result, and were above average in the phonics screening test at the end of Year in 2013.
- Leaders have used the pupil premium funds wisely and have closed the gap in attainment between pupils eligible for such support and others by a very large degree. In 2012, for example, such pupils left Year 6 more than a year behind others in reading, writing and mathematics. The difference was negligible in reading and writing in 2013, although they were still two terms behind in mathematics. Current data shows that the gap has closed further in mathematics.

- The school has a strong record of promoting competitive sport and has used the extra funding provided for sport to employ a specialist teacher of physical education who is also training other staff. Leaders have already evaluated the impact of this initiative and found that it has boosted pupils' enjoyment of physical activity.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent in Years 3 to 6. It varies from inadequate to outstanding. Features that are strong in some lessons are weak in others, leading to variations in achievement because pupils do not make consistently good progress.
- The writing work given to a Year 3/4 class, for example, was too easy. Pupils had to simply use a word, such as 'mixing', to describe what they saw on a cooking video. The pupils became bored and restless, and started to misbehave. In contrast, a Year 5 class were captivated by a lesson on Hinduism, where they were made to think hard about the deeper meaning of symbols.
- The most-able are often given work that is not sufficiently challenging. Sometimes, such as in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, they repeat work that they have completed in a previous lesson or start from the same point as a pupil of lower ability. A check on spelling tests this term, for example, showed some pupils getting 100% correct on every test, while others were scoring 0%.
- In some lessons pupils' progress is not checked carefully enough. The teacher asks questions that test pupils' understanding, but only expects those with their hands up to answer, so others can simply sit quietly and 'hide' from the teacher. The teacher and teaching assistant often work with a single group and do not check the progress of other groups, so errors they make go uncorrected.
- All teachers mark books frequently and accurately. However, some provide advice on what pupils need to do to improve, while others do not, or do not check that pupils have acted on the advice they have been given.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is showing clear signs of improvement. Teachers plan good quality lessons that focus on the basics of reading, writing, physical development and number work. Progress in these aspects is good. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to research or investigate topics for themselves, so progress in these aspects requires improvement.
- Teachers in Years 1 and 2 give their classes demanding work, such as learning about fractions. Pupils enjoy the challenge and learn to persevere when the going gets difficult. Teachers and teaching assistants are constantly moving around the room, checking pupils' work and providing support whenever it is needed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not always pay attention to the teacher in Years 3 to 6. When teaching is less than good, they lose interest. They do not always listen to their teacher and start to fiddle with pencils or doodle instead. On very rare occasions, pupils' attitudes deteriorate and they start to distract others.
- Attendance is below average. It has not improved for the last three years and remains at 95%, placing the school in the bottom 40% of schools nationally. Staff spend a lot of time and effort

encouraging good attendance, but parents are not contacted until their child's attendance falls below 90%, by which time bad habits have set in.

- Pupils' behaviour around school is usually good. They get on well with one another and say that bullying is almost unknown. Staff tackle discrimination well by taking swift action to deal with the very few racist incidents which ensures that pupils' learn from them and do not offend again.
- The number of exclusions has fallen significantly over the last two years and is now average. The school has a strong track record of improving the behaviour of pupils who have been permanently excluded from other schools, so that they continue their education and do not need to be excluded again.
- Pupils feel very safe at the school and have complete confidence that staff will take any concerns seriously. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, especially when dealing with strangers or using the internet.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The school's leaders, including governors, do not always set sufficiently demanding targets for improvement, and some conflict with others. There are two targets for the amount of progress pupils are expected to make in a year, for example. One is challenging, but the other expects no more than 'average' progress. The target for attendance remains at 95%, which would not be an improvement on the last three years. Attendance is not a priority on the school development plan.
- There is confusion over the progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, because the data held by the special needs coordinator and the senior leaders do not match.
- Most teaching is evaluated accurately, however there are some discrepancies where teaching is evaluated as good despite the impact on pupils' progress requiring improvement and leaders are unable to explain why. On the whole though, teaching is improving and the degree of variation in Years 3 to 6 is reducing. Teachers receive good quality feedback and clear guidance on how to improve.
- There are clear signs of improvement across many areas of the school's work that demonstrate that leaders have the capacity to take the school forward. Teaching has improved in Years 1 and 2 and is now good; standards are improving faster than the national average in Year 2 and are already above average in Year 1; exclusions have fallen sharply; the gap in attainment between pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium and others has closed significantly. Much of the weakest teaching has now been eliminated and more lessons of good quality are being taught.
- The relatively new managers of literacy and mathematics have drawn up and implemented comprehensive plans for improving their subjects, and the management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is improving rapidly as the leader gets to grips with the new curriculum.
- The curriculum has a good focus on teaching pupils right from wrong, and promotes equality well by teaching respect for others. Pupils have lots of opportunities to practice their writing and mathematics in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, but this is not always the case in Years 3 to 6.

■ The local authority has provided good support for the school. It has reviewed the quality of teaching and advised on how it can be improved.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors do not have the skills to analyse data for themselves to be fully informed about achievement and teaching. Instead they rely on the senior leaders' interpretations and do not question the reports they receive in sufficient depth, in order to hold the headteacher to account for the school's performance. Nevertheless, governors know how teachers' performance is being managed and are clear that weaker teaching is being tackled, while better teaching is rewarded.
- Governors meet their statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding pupils. They keep a tight grip on finances and have used the extra monies available through the pupil premium and sports funding to good effect.

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	134999
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	428901

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	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Vellacott
Headteacher	Anna Sydenham
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2012
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