

The Meadows Primary School

Bristol Road South, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 2SW

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2014

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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress. As a result, they do not always reach the levels of attainment of which they are capable by the end of Year 6, especially in mathematics.
- Not all teaching is of a high enough quality to secure good progress for all pupils.
- Not all teachers provide activities that are at the right level of difficulty for the pupils.
- Some of the expected outcomes pupils have been given have already been met or set too low.
- Marking does not consistently help pupils to improve their work and teachers do not always check that pupils act upon the guidance they are given.
- Pupils' work in their books varies from very good to untidy. Not all teachers insist on good presentation of work.
- Attendance for the past 2 years was below average. This year attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher knows what to do to improve the achievement of pupils and has taken rigorous actions to move the school forward.
- Teaching and achievement are improving, and standards have risen since the last inspection.
- Provision and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals do as well as or better than other pupils.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and courteous to staff and each other. They feel safe at school.
- The good teaching and support for pupils in the Resource Base ensures that those pupils make good progress and feel included in the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors watched 23 lessons or parts of lessons. Many of the lessons were joint observations undertaken with the headteacher and other senior staff.
- The inspectors had a meeting with two members of the governing body. Meetings were held with different senior leaders about the leadership and achievement in their areas of responsibility. Other meetings were held with a representative of the local authority and with a consultant who works with the school.
- Inspectors talked to a range of pupils about their work in school, and behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes. They listened to some pupils read.
- The views of parents were collected from brief informal meetings with parents before and after school and from the 44 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View). Notice was also taken of other communications from parents about the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's analysis of pupils' progress, the school's improvement plan, leaders' monitoring records, minutes and reports of the governing body, pupils' work in their books and on the walls, case studies of pupils' progress, and checks made on staff's suitability to work with children.
- Inspectors also analysed the questionnaires completed by 49 members of staff.

Inspection team

Michael Appleby, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Wendy Hanrahan	Additional Inspector
Roisin Chambers	Additional Inspector

Information about this school

- The Meadows is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is average. This is additional government funding provided for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. Known as The Meadows Resource Base, it has capacity for 26 pupils with statements of special educational needs, primarily for speech, language and communication needs. The pupils are taught within three classes and, as appropriate, they integrate with mainstream lessons within their weekly timetable.
- Within the school as a whole, an average proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs are supported through school action. An above-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been a number of staff changes in all Year groups since the last inspection. The school has appointed nine new teachers since September 2013, four of whom are newly qualified and one is training on the job under the Teach First scheme.
- The leadership of the school has had several changes recently. The school has appointed new leaders of English and special educational needs, and the deputy headteacher is leading mathematics while the teacher is on maternity leave.
- There is a breakfast and after school provision on site run by a private Ofsted registered business called 'Mini Meadows' and was not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - that work is set at the right level for pupils all abilities, especially the more able
 - marking shows pupils how to improve their work and teachers check that pupils act on this advice
 - any expected outcomes set are appropriate to pupils' abilities.
- Help teachers to learn from things that are working well in other classes, with a particular focus on:
 - raising expectations of what pupils, especially the most-able pupils, can achieve in every lesson
 - ensuring that all pupils' work in all classes is well presented and is always their best
 - ensuring that all teachers follow the school's new system for marking.
- Improve attendance by building on strategies already in place to secure good attendance and by working more closely with individual families.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress across the school is not consistently good, and shows too much variability between year groups. The overall progress made during Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 was similar to the national average in 2012. However, in 2013 reading and writing attainment improved to be in line with the national average, but attainment in mathematics was 1 term below.
- In 2013 progress made in Key Stage 2 in reading and writing was average when compared to national standards, but progress was significantly below average in mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is now average.
- Pupils' skills in phonics (knowledge of the sounds letters make) at the end of Year 1 in 2013 were broadly average overall, although the attainment of those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium was much lower than that of their classmates. Phonics standards for all pupils, including those supported by the pupil premium funding, are higher in the current Year 1.
- In Key Stage 2, the gap in attainment between those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and their classmates is closing, due to the support provided through the pupil premium funds. In 2013, Year 6 attainment of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals was broadly the same as their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of this group of pupils through most of the school is now the same as or better than their peers.
- Most pupils start this school with knowledge and skills below the typical expectations for their age. Good progress is achieved by most pupils in the Reception classes, especially in reading, because of effective teaching. As a result, pupils join Year 1 with broadly average attainment.
- The pupils who attend the Resource Base make good progress from their low starting points because provision is characterised by good teaching, careful tracking of progress and effective individual help. Other disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates in the school.
- Leaders have now introduced a more effective system for tracking pupils' progress more frequently and this is highlighting where progress is strongest and where it needs to be improved.
- Pupils' engagement in sports and physical education, including swimming and participation in local sporting tournaments, has been improved. The additional sports funding has been used to enhance the pupils' experiences, through the input of a sports coach, and to develop teachers' skills.
- Interest in reading has been promoted well in the school, including by the improvement in the library and book provision, and the appointment of a senior librarian.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good or better across the school. It is improving but there is still too much that requires improvement, especially in mathematics.
- Some of the work given to pupils is too hard or too easy, especially for the more able, so pupils

do not make as much progress as they could.

- Marking of pupils' work is not consistently good across the classes and so not all pupils have the full benefit of learning from their mistakes or improving their work as quickly as they should. Sometimes, marking shows pupils how to improve, but teachers do not consistently follow it up to ensure that pupils act on the guidance, do the corrections or practise the tasks given to them.
- The more-able pupils are not always given work that stretches their capabilities. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, more-able pupils practised multiplication sums which they could do easily.
- In some pupils' writing and mathematics books, the areas pupils are asked to improve are out of date or too easy, especially for the most-able pupils. As a result, pupils are not being challenged enough by expectations that make sufficient demands on their ability. However, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson about percentages, the teacher's high expectations were evident from the outset through the use of clear instruction and probing questioning, and the pupils worked with concentration and determination on the task. The teacher gave timely support to pupils who needed help so that all made good progress.
- The recent focus on improving pupils' handwriting and presentation skills is evident in the pupils' books in some classes, but this is not the case in every class. Some teachers' expectations of pupils are not always high enough and they allow poor work and presentation to continue.
- The teaching of phonics has improved this year, but is not yet consistently good. Lessons do not always ensure that all pupils fully take part and the teaching of sounds is not always accurate, so pupils make slower progress than they should.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively throughout the school, both in classrooms and in learning support groups, because they are well briefed and know what pupils should learn. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teaching assistant gave effective support to the most-able pupils working on two- and three-step problems.
- In the Reception classes, the adults know the children well and provide well-planned activities that enable them to develop new skills quickly and with confidence. The records showing pupils' achievements, school data and the inspection observations show that teaching and learning are good in these classes.
- Where teaching is engaging, pupils respond very well, such as in a mathematics lesson where pupils were creating pie charts to record data about their favourite computer games and favourite flavours of ice-cream. The level of involvement and concentration resulted in a high standard of work and a clear improvement in understanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school has been successful in improving the behaviour of pupils over the past two years. Pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to school, and have good attitudes to learning. Both pupils and staff now think that behaviour is managed effectively.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and show respect to each other and to staff. Pupils cooperate well with each other in lessons when working in pairs or small groups, which enables lessons to proceed without interruption or delay. Any occasional minor disruption is quickly dealt with by the teacher.

- The number of exclusions has been reduced considerably over the past two years. There have been no permanent exclusions in the past three years and fixed-term exclusions have been reduced due to the effective behaviour management strategies and support that have been provided.
- At playtimes, pupils were observed to be happy, with no instances of poor behaviour. Pupils enjoy playing games together and enjoy the equipment provided by the school. Some Year 6 pupils are trained 'play leaders' who provide play activities for the younger pupils.
- Parents of pupils who attend the Resource Base were full of praise for the staff's ability to manage and improve the behaviour of their children.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Child protection training has been completed for all staff and governors, and procedures for recording disclosures and concerns are rigorously followed. This view was confirmed through a review of case studies, school records, discussions with staff, and the staff questionnaire.
- Pupil safety at school is ensured through diligent practices to maintain the security of the building and site, and the careful monitoring and recording of such things as accidents to pupils, fire practice drills, and risk assessments for trips.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They know about the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and they understand the importance of e-safety (safety when using computers to communicate).
- Although some parents on Parent View indicate that bullying was a problem at the school, pupils who spoke to inspectors do not share this view. Records of bullying and racist incidents show that these are recorded correctly and effectively followed up with the pupils concerned and with their parents. The number of incidents has fallen over the past two years. Pupils say that incidents of name-calling happen occasionally, but that these are always dealt with after they tell an adult and that they do not happen again.
- Attendance was low in 2013 but is improving due to the robust actions taken by the school to ensure the children come to school and are punctual. The level of persistent absences has fallen considerably. The school has a wide range of strategies, including rewards and certificates, to promote good attendance, but acknowledges that it has more work to do with some individual families.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has shown sustained determination to drive forward the improvement in pupils' achievement and progress. A rapid turnover in staff has made it difficult to work with individual teachers over a sustained period but, despite this, teaching has improved and achievement is rising; the school can point to significant improvement where leaders have been able to provide steady support.
- Staff have clear and challenging targets which are related to improvements in pupils' progress and achievement. Pay rises depend very clearly on these targets being met.
- The management of teaching and its impact on learning is good. Joint observations during the inspection confirmed that the school's judgements on the quality of teaching are accurate. The

results of the checks on teaching are used to provide targeted training and support for staff.

- The senior leadership team is effective. Together, leaders have eradicated the weakest teaching and increased the amount of good and better teaching, so the school is set up to improve further. Leaders have also had a good impact in improving behaviour and attendance, and they have acted effectively to improve the teaching of phonics.
- Despite being new to their roles, subject and other leaders have a good knowledge of the attainment and progress in the different year groups in school.
- Leaders' assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate, and the action plans to address areas for improvement – for example, in mathematics – are ambitious but achievable.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity effectively. The Resource Base is managed well and is an integral part of the school.
- The wide range of subjects and topics taught gives pupils a broad and interesting set of learning experiences. The inspectors saw an impressive range of quality work produced by pupils on topics such as the Ancient Egyptians, Ancient Greece and story writing based on Mulan.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through all aspects of its work with pupils. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on their relationships and to promote respect and cooperation.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's current performance through regular monitoring, and has provided some helpful support and guidance.
- The school has worked very closely with a private School Improvement Partner which has been very effective in both identifying areas for improvement and providing whole-school and individualised training and support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the school and its data. They know how well pupils are doing compared to those in other schools. They fully support the headteacher in her drive to improve the outcomes for all pupils.
 - Governors know about the quality of teaching and understand how the performance management process is used to improve pupils' achievement and to reward staff for achieving the targets set for them.
 - The governors challenge senior leaders to justify and provide convincing evidence for their own evaluation of the school's performance.
 - The governing body has ensured that all requirements for the safety and safeguarding of pupils are met.
 - Governors have been fully involved in discussions about the use of the pupil premium and sports funding and keep a regular check on their impact on pupils' achievement.

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	103296
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	426928

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	469
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Philpot
Headteacher	Liane Barton
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2012
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