

The Meadows School

School Road, Wooburn Green, High Wycombe, HP10 0HF

Inspection dates

8–9 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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

- Achievement requires improvement. Although improving, it is not rapid enough in Key Stage 1. Too few pupils make good progress in writing at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Teaching requires improvement because as pupils move through Years 1 to 6 they do not receive consistently good quality teaching.
- Outstanding and good practice is not successfully shared with other teachers to improve their practice.
- There is not enough focus on developing punctuation, spelling and presentation whenever pupils write.
- Teachers' comments, when marking pupils' work, are not ensuring that pupils know what they need to do next step to reach their targets. In addition, pupils are not given enough time to act upon these comments.
- Teachers' planning is not always set at the right level for the wide range of abilities within their classes.
- Behaviour and safety require improvement. A few pupils and parents feel that behaviour is not always good. At times, in classes, pupils do not respond promptly enough to teachers' instructions.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Although there is a system to monitor the quality of teaching, it is not successfully identifying and rectifying issues to ensure that all pupils receive at least good teaching and achieve well.
- Pupils do not develop an adequate awareness of the diverse cultural society in which they live and have a limited understanding of the different religions they have been taught.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in Reception are taught effectively and achieve well.
- Relationships between all adults and pupils are good.
- In lessons where they are taught well pupils' behaviour is good.
- Pupils enjoy learning and say they feel safe in school. If they have any concerns they are confident an adult would help them.
- Governors are well informed and involved in the work of the school and so are able to support and challenge the school effectively.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice and took place over two days.
- The inspectors observed 15 parts of lessons, taught by nine teachers. Six lessons were jointly undertaken with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and staff, pupils and representatives from the governing body. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to Parent View, the on-line questionnaire, and 24 responses from a school parents' survey which was sent out earlier in the year.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, for example the school's data relating to pupils' past and present performance, the school's own self-evaluation and improvement planning and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Nina Bee, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Meadows is smaller than most primary schools.
- Just over two thirds of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The remainder are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion who speaks English as an additional language 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 above average.
- The number of pupils who are eligible to receive pupil premium funding is above average. This includes pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the standard of teaching so that all pupils make at least good progress, in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, by ensuring that:
 - the good and outstanding practice in school is shared by all staff
 - teachers' place more emphasis on developing and applying basic writing skills, such as punctuation, spelling and presentation, whenever pupils write
 - activities are planned at the right level to take account of pupils' varying abilities so that all are fully engaged and do not waste valuable learning time
 - marking gives pupils clearer guidance on what they need to do to improve and reach their targets, and they are given time to act upon their teachers' comments.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - checking teaching in classes and learning over time more rigorously so that improvement points are not only identified but also successfully acted upon
 - ensuring that pupils develop a better understanding of the diverse cultural society and the different religions in modern Britain.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Weaknesses in teaching, in Key Stages 1 and 2, do not ensure that all pupils learn well in every lesson and make good progress over time. As a result, achievement requires improvement.
- In 2013, national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 showed an improving picture in reading and mathematics. In these subjects, in relation to their starting points in Year 3, all pupils, including those eligible for additional funding, made good progress. However, too few pupils made good progress in writing. Standards were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- School performance information shows a similar picture for the current Year 6. Progress is good in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing requires improvement because there is not enough emphasis on developing basic writing skills. Standards are broadly average.
- The gap between the progress of pupils eligible for additional funding and the others is minimal because every pupil's progress is carefully tracked. Additional in-class support or intervention groups target all pupils who are identified as not being on course to reach their targets.
- In 2013, teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. In relation to their starting points, not enough pupils made good progress and a few did not make expected progress in mathematics.
- The most recent teaching assessments, for 2014, for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, show an improving picture. School performance information shows that standards have risen in mathematics and are broadly average. Standards, when compared with those in 2013, are higher in reading and similar writing. In relation to pupils' starting points, at the start of Year 1, achievement is still not consistently good and requires improvement.
- In Reception, children achieve well from starting points below those that are typical for their age. Adults plan activities that are suitable for the children's ages and stages of development. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the time they start in Year 1 is improving year on year.
- Staff ensure that all pupils are treated equally and none are discriminated against. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are suitably supported, either by receiving additional support in class or through intervention groups. Consequently, they make similar gains in their learning to the other pupils. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language are well known by staff and receive the support necessary for them to make similar progress to their classmates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there are still pockets of teaching that are not good as pupils move through Key Stages 1 and 2.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, weaknesses in teaching affect pupils' learning. Activities are not always accurately planned at the right level for the wide range of abilities in each class. This results in pupils not always being fully engaged and valuable learning time is wasted.
- Not all pupils in a lesson in Key Stage 1, learnt well. When a number of them finished the activity and they wasted time because a suitable extension activity had not been planned for them. Lower attaining pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, in Key Stage 2, were seen trying hard to complete an activity that was too difficult for them. Teachers did not plan or modify the activities to match the levels they were working at and so their learning was not good enough.
- Teachers' expectations are not consistently high when pupils write. There is too little emphasis on developing and applying basic writing skills, such as punctuation, spelling and the presentation of pupils' work. Checks during lessons or comments in teachers' marking do not always give pupils adequate guidance on how to improve their writing.
- Teachers' marking is not always well focused on what pupils need to do to improve and reach

their targets. Pupils say they are not always given enough time to act upon the comments their teachers write in their books and this is evident when looking at pupils' previous work.

- In Reception, teaching is good. Children learn well because adults skilfully communicate with them and activities are interesting. Children excitedly looked for lost 'treasure' in the outside area or wrote lists of what might be in a treasure chest in the classroom. In all they do, adults encourage children to think carefully and then explain their ideas. Children respond positively, showing good attitudes to learning and a good awareness of the need to be respectful and listen whilst adults and other children speak.
- The teaching of reading is good. In Reception, children eagerly choose reading as their activity. They show much enjoyment and read with confidence, sounding out simple words and using the pictures to guide them. By the end of Year 6, because of a good focus on reading, pupils speak enthusiastically about reading. They say they enjoy choosing books from the library and many identify their favourite authors.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is thorough. The phonic screening check for pupils in Year 1 shows that the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard exceeded the national figure for the last two years.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Behaviour requires improvement because when teaching is not good, pupils have difficulty staying focused and their learning slows down. Behaviour is rarely disruptive, but pupils were observed doodling on their whiteboards or chatting quietly to one another when teaching did not, for whatever reason, enthuse them. At other times pupils were seen not listening to the teacher and, on a few occasions, did not respond promptly enough to teachers' requests.
- Not all pupils say that behaviour is good. Pupils in Year 6 say that they know how to behave but not everyone does in the school. A few parents have concerns about behaviour.
- Behaviour is always at least good in lessons where teachers have planned a range of activities, including, for example, discussions which enthuse and interest all abilities. When pupils move around the school, their behaviour is safe and considerate.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils show that they have confidence in their teachers and the staff who look after them during lunchtime. They say there are always adults around who would help them if they had a problem. Pupils say that bullying is not an issue and that any incidents are sorted out quickly.
- The school has a clear system that is used by all staff to record any incidents of poor behaviour. No racist incidents or those related to bullying have been recently recorded.
- Most parents feel that their children are well looked after, but a very small number of parents have concerns.
- Attendance has improved although continues to be below average. Procedures and practices to check attendance have been developed but have not yet had a full impact on the overall attendance figure. School information on pupils' attendance shows that the number of persistent absentees has fallen.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership requires improvement. The quality of teaching is not checked well enough so that improvement points are accurately identified and remedied in Key Stages 1 and 2. Outstanding and good teaching is not successfully shared to improve the practice of others.
- Although leaders keep a check on learning over time through looking at pupils' previous work, they are not identifying certain weaknesses. These include the lack of correct punctuation, poor presentation and marking not adequately informing pupils how to improve their work. Consequently, not all pupils consistently receive good teaching.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development requires improvement.

Pupils are polite and respectful and get along well with each other. However, their cultural awareness is weak. By the time they leave, in Year 6, they do not show a good understanding of the culturally diverse society in which they live. Their understanding of different religions is exceptionally limited.

- Since the previous inspection, the local authority has supported the school in a number of ways, including developing the role of subject leaders. As a result, they are more involved in their areas of responsibility.
- All staff and governors are involved in school development planning and appropriate priorities are identified. However, self-evaluation is slightly over generous.
- The headteacher and staff diligently track pupils' progress in all classes. All teachers are now accountable for the progress that pupils make. As a result, more Reception children are reaching a good level of development; attainment and progress are slowly improving in Key Stage 1; and pupils are making good progress in reading and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2. The school is showing the capacity for further improvement.
- Additional funding for eligible pupils is used wisely. Staff and governors are aware of how these pupils are performing and that the attainment gap between them and the others is minimal.
- The primary sport funding allows all pupils to benefit from extra sporting activities and competitive sports. Those who are talented at sports have opportunities to take part in competitions. All staff have opportunities to participate in training and develop their practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is a mixture of experienced and new governors. It is well informed about the school's activities through reports, presentations and visits into school. As a result, governors understand the policies, procedures and systems that are in place.
 - Governors are knowledgeable and involved in what the school is focusing on and why priorities have been identified. They have a developing understanding of achievement data, and know where improvements are necessary and that teaching is regularly checked. They are clear about the management of teachers' performance, which is linked to the salary structure and training programme.
 - Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Governors regularly check that pupils learn and play in safety.

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	110258
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	442441

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	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Leighton
Headteacher	Brendan Aspell
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 October 2012
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