

The Meads Primary School

Mill Way, East Grinstead, RH19 4DD

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well because they make good progress from their starting points.
- Attainment improved to average levels at both key stages in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Senior leaders ensure that teachers are clear about what they are doing well and how to improve their practice. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' work have increased. As a result, pupils' progress has accelerated.
- The most able pupils in the school make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels increased in all subjects in 2014.
- Children in the early years make good progress. Warm relationships and clear routines mean that children behave very well and quickly grow in confidence.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders, including the governors, are ambitious for the school's future. They have high expectations of pupils and staff.
- Governors consistently hold leaders to account for pupils' achievement. They know what has been done to improve teaching and understand how this is ensuring that pupils make faster progress.
- Subject leaders make a valuable contribution to school improvement. Their roles have developed rapidly since the last inspection. This has substantially strengthened the school's capacity to maintain and build on recent improvements.
- Effective teamwork has been key to securing important improvements in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Staff morale is high.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous. Pupils say that they feel very safe and that staff look after them well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet resulting in pupils making outstanding progress.
- The tasks set are not always matched sharply enough to the needs of pupils other than the most able. On a few occasions, pupils find the work too difficult and their progress slows.
- Teachers do not always adapt activities quickly enough during lessons when pupils' progress slows.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or part-lessons, including two joint observations with the headteacher. They also observed pupils working with adults other than their teachers.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff, parents, carers and pupils. Discussions were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and two additional governors. The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 55 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, they considered the views expressed by parents informally at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of 23 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and considered a range of policies and documents. These included the school’s improvement plan, information about pupils’ progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils’ work provided by the school, as well as in lessons. They also listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 6 read.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kim Rogers	Additional Inspector
Vanessa Tomlinson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. There are very few eligible pupils in each year group. Pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Children in the early years are taught in two Reception classes. All early years provision is full time.
- 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?

- Improve pupils' achievement so that it is outstanding by making sure that all teachers:
 - consistently plan tasks which are sharply matched to pupils' differing needs
 - regularly check pupils' progress during lessons and adapt tasks if pupils are finding the work too difficult.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides clear and determined leadership for teaching and learning. She has very successfully steered the school through an unsettled period, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the leadership team. Substantial developments in the role played by all leaders, including governors and subject leaders, have resulted in rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievement.
- Effective plans have sustained the focus and pace of improvement during a period of rapid development. Plans are shared and understood by all staff so that they know the part they play in the school's progress. This cohesive and coordinated approach has been very effective. Leaders have successfully addressed the weaknesses identified during the last inspection.
- Leaders have eradicated an element of weak teaching and strengthened systems for checking pupils' progress. Teachers and leaders discuss pupils' progress every six weeks. Meetings are used to identify pupils who are on track, to discuss any pupils who are falling behind and to plan support. Comparison of progress information at the time of the last inspection with recent data indicates that pupils' progress has accelerated substantially as a result. Staff morale has improved since the last inspection.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers know the features of effective teaching. For example, teachers have opportunities to work with each other during lessons, to analyse what is working well and to identify what needs to improve. Systems for observing lessons have been improved to sharpen the focus on pupils' learning. Staff confidence has improved and the quality of teamwork has been strengthened considerably. Increased expectations of all staff mean that they are more accountable for pupils' progress.
- Subject leaders have regular opportunities to observe and discuss the quality of teaching and to lead meetings with senior leaders to discuss pupils' achievement. They also contribute to review meetings with the local authority. As a result, they have an accurate picture of how well pupils are learning across the school.
- The school is an inclusive and cohesive community. Pupils of differing abilities and backgrounds are valued. Relationships are good and pupils respect adults and each other. The school does not tolerate discrimination and ensures that pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
- Parents' confidence in the school's work has improved since the last inspection. Most parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents, are positive and would recommend the school. Parents who spoke with inspectors said that they felt the school was approachable and responsive to queries or concerns.
- Pupil premium funding is used carefully to support eligible pupils' achievement. Leaders and teachers regularly check the progress made by eligible pupils and are responsive to their changing needs. For example, they recognised that some eligible pupils were not sufficiently secure in basic mathematics skills. They established a daily lunchtime club which enables pupils to practise basic skills. Their work in class is more accurate as a result, and they are catching up with their peers. Leaders ensure that teachers know which pupils are eligible and how to support their needs.
- The curriculum is stimulating, well balanced and enriched well, so that pupils are interested in learning. Teaching successfully contributes to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is evident, for example, in the sensitive and perceptive poetry about the First World War produced by Year 6 pupils. Pupils know and understand the school's values of independence, collaboration, creativity and challenge, because they are considered regularly in aspects of school life, such as assemblies. Pupils perform responsibilities, such as serving on the school council, with maturity and pride. Such activities help pupils to appreciate their place in modern Britain.
- The local authority provides good support. For example, coaching for subject leaders and training for the deputy headteacher have contributed very well to substantial improvements in the quality of leadership and management. The local authority's confidence in the school's effectiveness is reflected in the fact that teachers from the locality are referred to the school to learn from its successes.
- The school is making good use of the primary sports funding. It is used well to provide training for teachers and to improve teaching. Membership of a local sports partnership has increased the number of pupils involved in sport, as well as providing more opportunities for the pupils to compete in events with other schools.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding policies are robust and effective, so that pupils are secure.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed and ambitious for the school's future. They have high expectations of staff

and pupils and are determined to secure further improvements in pupils' achievement. They have the skills, knowledge and commitment to ensure that the school continues to improve. Governors attend meetings with the local authority so they have a good understanding of the school's development. They have attended training to help them to consider information about pupils' achievement. Consequently, they have a better understanding of pupils' progress than at the time of the previous inspection. They have an accurate view of how well the school is performing in relation to other schools nationally. Governors have a thorough understanding of performance management procedures. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and know how leaders have challenged and supported improvements in teachers' practice. Governors are well prepared for meetings so that no time is lost. For example, they read documentation and prepare questions in advance of meetings. This ensures that the sharp focus on achievement and the effectiveness of teaching is sustained. Governors give safeguarding a high priority. They are, for example, alert to the potential for radicalisation of pupils and have agreed a sensible policy should concerns about individual governors arise.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are courteous and well behaved in lessons. They move around the school in a quiet and orderly way.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and complete work with care. Pupils are quick to settle to work, so that no learning time is lost.
- Pupils are well supervised during playtimes. They enjoy being with their friends, get on well together and behave sensibly. They respect adults and respond promptly to their instructions.
- Attendance has improved and is above the national average. Leaders analyse the attendance of different groups and provide additional support where it is needed. The attendance of those pupils eligible for support from pupil premium funding has improved as a result.
- Most parents consider pupils to be well behaved and those who spoke with inspectors said that any inappropriate behaviour was dealt with quickly. Almost all parents say that their children are happy and safe in school.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because occasionally a few pupils lose concentration in lessons and make slower progress.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils are well informed about what bullying is and about the damage this can cause. They are clear about what they should do if it happens to them and trust adults to provide help if they have any worries. They are confident that it is not a problem in the school.
- School records show that incidents of bullying are rare and that leaders respond promptly and appropriately to any concerns which may arise.
- Pupils know about e-safety and understand the potential dangers of using the internet.
- The school's involvement in initiatives such as the cycling proficiency scheme help older pupils to understand how to behave sensibly and responsibly on the roads.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers plan interesting lessons so that pupils enjoy learning. Classrooms have a calm and purposeful atmosphere where most pupils make good progress.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved significantly since the last inspection and teachers are increasingly confident about their practice. Mathematical skills are taught in meaningful ways so that pupils understand how mathematics can help them in everyday life. Activities are engaging and fun. As a result, pupils enjoy mathematics and are able to maintain interest and concentration for extended periods of time.
- Successful developments in the teaching of reading include the use of more challenging texts to engage and extend pupils' reading skills. 'Story sacks' provide good quality books and activities to help parents to support their children's reading at home.
- Daily reading sessions before and after school provide opportunities for pupils and parents to read and discuss books together in a quiet and welcoming environment. These sessions are well attended and the

pupils involved are more confident and fluent readers as a result.

- Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes and in different subjects so that learning is purposeful. Pupils of differing abilities present their work with care. They quickly develop a legible, cursive script because handwriting is taught consistently from the early years to Year 6.
- Teaching assistants play an effective role in supporting pupils' learning, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They work closely with class teachers and are knowledgeable about how to help pupils.
- Teachers regularly discuss and review pupils' learning and use this information to plan work which is stimulating and challenging, including for the most able pupils. However, while most tasks are matched carefully to pupils' needs, at times activities are too hard for some pupils. Most teachers quickly recognise this and make changes to the work, or provide extra help. However, this is not always the case.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Leaders have successfully halted and reversed a downward trend in standards over the past three years. Pupils' progress in different subjects is more even than it was at the previous inspection and better teaching is strengthening achievement across the school. In 2014, most pupils reached age-related expectations by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved because of a concerted whole school focus on developing the quality of mathematics teaching. Regular opportunities to use mathematics to solve problems ensure that pupils use a wide range of calculation skills. By the end of Year 6, pupils confidently select and use appropriate methods and are increasingly resilient when tackling tasks. In 2014, the proportion of pupils achieving standards expected for their age was in line with the national average.
- Reading has a high priority in the school and is taught effectively. In 2014, attainment increased at both key stages to above average levels at the end of Year 2 and to average levels at the end of Year 6.
- The teaching of phonics (the sound letters make) has improved in the past year. In 2014, the results of the Year 1 phonics check were below average. Increased expectations and a consistent approach to teaching phonics mean that pupils are now acquiring basic phonics skills more quickly. Pupils confidently use phonics knowledge to help them to read unknown words.
- The progress made by the most able pupils has accelerated since the previous inspection. They now make sustained and rapid progress across subjects and year groups. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics have risen dramatically at both key stages since the previous inspection to match national averages in 2014.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs generally make similar progress to their classmates. Teaching meets their needs well and teaching assistants provide good quality support.
- A very small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. In some year groups, a high proportion have additional needs. In 2014, their attainment at the end of Year 6 was about 10 months behind that of their classmates and other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics. In writing, the gap was about six months. While the gap increased slightly in 2014, current information indicates that these pupils make good progress and are catching up with their peers as the impact of improved teaching takes effect.
- Occasionally during lessons, the tasks set for some pupils other than the most able are too difficult. When this is the case, these pupils sometimes remain stuck for too long and their progress slows.

The early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress as a result of effective teaching and a stimulating learning environment. As a result, the majority are well prepared for Year 1 by the end of the Reception Year.
- Teaching is good across all areas of learning. Adults plan activities well, so that children are keen to participate and have fun while learning. Children settle quickly because routines are consistent so that children feel secure. Warm relationships and clear expectations ensure that children behave well.
- Adults understand children's individual needs very well. They focus appropriately on the development of children's language and social skills at the start of the year and provide plenty of opportunities for children to practise language skills. Children copy and learn from the consistently good speaking and listening skills modelled by adults.
- Adults liaise well with agencies to support children who need extra help. For example, they put into practice recommendations made by speech therapy services to assist children with speech and language needs. As a result, disabled children and those with special educational needs make the same good

progress as their classmates.

- Reading and writing skills are promoted well. Key words are helpfully displayed to support children's work and their writing is displayed with care. The children's learning journals demonstrate the good progress they make in developing literacy skills.
- Leadership and management of the early years provision are good. Leaders work closely with senior and subject leaders and contribute well to the school's improvement.
- Leaders ensure that children are safe. Training is up to date; indoor and outdoor areas are carefully organised and resources are well maintained.

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	125964
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	453442

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	264
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Smith
Headteacher	Rhona Perry
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 January 2013
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