

# Meadowhead Infant School

Shorrock Lane, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 4TT

**Inspection dates** 27–28 January 2015

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- By the end of Year 2 pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough.
- Teaching has not ensured that pupils have made consistently good progress over time across the school.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough, and the work set is not always challenging enough.
- Pupils are not always given clear enough guidance in teachers' marking about what they need to do to improve their work and there are too few checks to make sure that pupils respond to this advice when it is given.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to write in different styles in different subjects. Pupils have too few opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve practical problems.
- There are too few opportunities for staff to observe or share outstanding teaching in order to improve their own practice.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully accountable for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their areas.
- In the early years, information about children's progress is not used effectively enough to plan activities to extend learning. Outdoor learning activities lack focus and purpose.
- Governors have not always held the school to account as effectively as they should have done. Their understanding and use of data about pupils' performance are not as strong as they should be.
- Changes introduced by the headteacher, school leaders and governors have not had sufficient time to have a full impact and ensure that teaching is consistently good and pupils achieve well over time.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. They have positive attitudes to learning, and feel safe and well cared for in school.
- Pupils who are most in need, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported in a caring and nurturing environment.
- Parents are strongly supportive of the school.
- The school promotes effectively pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- School leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of what the school needs to do to improve, and are working well to bring this about as quickly as possible.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons, or part lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also met a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met two groups of pupils and also spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and in their books over time. They listened to pupils in Year 2 read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents concerning pupils' current achievement and progress, development plans and information about teachers' performance. They also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. Minutes of governing body meetings were also considered.
- Inspectors took account of 22 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, and 26 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

## Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kirsty Haw

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to an average primary school, but is relatively large for an infant school.
- Pupils are taught in nine classes from the Reception Year to Year 2. There is also a part-time Nursery.
- A very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is approximately twice the national average. These are pupils supported by the pupil premium which is funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The headteacher took up post in the summer term of 2014. Four newly qualified teachers joined the school this year.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better, in order to raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, by making sure that:
  - expectations of what pupils can achieve are always high enough
  - the work set is always hard enough so that pupils are consistently challenged to make the best possible progress and achieve the highest standards
  - pupils are always given very clear guidance in teachers' marking about what they need to do to improve their work, and that checks are made that pupils respond to this advice
  - pupils have more opportunities to write in different styles in different subjects
  - there are more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve practical problems
  - staff have more opportunity to observe and share outstanding teaching in order to improve their own practice.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - middle leaders become more involved and accountable for making checks and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their areas
  - governors hold the school to account more effectively for improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and improve their knowledge and skills in the use and analysis of pupils' performance data.
- Improve the quality of provision in the early years by:
  - using information about children's achievement and progress to plan activities that challenge children to extend their learning and make more rapid progress
  - ensuring that there is more focus and purpose to children's outdoor learning.

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

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are not good, although they are improving.
- Following the disappointing results in 2014, the headteacher has taken effective action to raise standards. She has been well supported by school leaders and staff. This is beginning to have an impact on improving achievement. However, this has not led to consistently good teaching and good progress over time throughout the school.
- Systems to check and monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and pupils' progress and achievement, have been strengthened. School leaders effectively analyse data about how well pupils are doing. They have a clear view of how well the school is performing and where it needs to do better.
- School improvement planning correctly identifies the key priorities and focuses firmly on improving teaching in order to raise achievement.
- School leaders monitor closely the quality of teaching and learning. The role of middle leaders is developing and they are becoming more skilled in checking and evaluating pupils' performance. However, they are not yet fully accountable for making checks and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their areas.
- Information about pupils' performance is used to provide pupils with extra help and support if needed. As a result, disadvantaged and pupils most in need, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are now making more rapid progress. Consequently, any gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils are closing. This shows the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils.
- School leaders use information about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to check how well teachers are performing and to identify where further training or support are needed. This is helping to improve the quality of teaching. This information is also used when making recommendations about teachers' pay.
- Staff are working increasingly effectively in the school to share good practice but there are too few opportunities for them to observe or share outstanding teaching in order to improve their own practice.
- The curriculum is well planned, engages pupils effectively in their learning and promotes good behaviour. It is enhanced by a variety of activities, clubs, trips and visits covering sport, drama and culture. For example, Year 2 pupils spoke about visits to a museum and the theatre.
- These activities, together with a variety of assemblies and a focus on the school's core values, including kindness, friendship, teamwork and respect, promote effectively pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a growing knowledge of other cultures and religions. For example, the school held an India week, pupils have been to Blackburn Cathedral and will shortly visit a mosque. Consequently, the school promotes British values successfully, as well as fostering good relations and preventing discrimination. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school uses pupil premium funding effectively to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils, either in the classroom, in small groups or individually. In addition, it is used to provide extra support for pupils most in need and to improve links with parents through the work of the pupil well-being coordinator. As a result, attendance has improved, and any gaps in the performance of disadvantaged pupils are closing.
- The additional primary school sports funding is used successfully to enhance provision. A specialist teacher takes lessons, runs activities and trains staff, and there is a stronger link with the local school sports partnership. As a result, the range of sporting activities in the school has widened, and more pupils take part in sport and competitions.
- Procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully in place and actively followed.
- The local authority is providing increased monitoring and support, and this is helping the school to move forward.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - There have been several changes on the governing body recently and the quality of governance is improving. Governors are developing a better view of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They are undertaking training to improve their skills but their understanding of data about pupils' progress and achievement, and how this is linked to the quality of teaching, is not as detailed as it should be. They are beginning to hold the school to account more effectively by asking more searching questions about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. However, they recognise that they are not as active in this area as they should be. They would welcome an external review of governance.
  - Governors make sure that pupils' performance is considered when making decisions about teachers' pay

and set challenging targets as part of the headteacher's appraisal. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent but are less sure about the impact it is having. They ensure that the school's finances are soundly managed and that the school meets its statutory duties, including those related to safeguarding.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They are polite and considerate and get on well with one another. There are good relationships between pupils and adults in the school.
- Pupils say that lessons are interesting and that they are 'hard, but not too hard, and teachers help us if we get stuck'. As a result, pupils enjoy learning. They say that lessons typically run smoothly with no interruptions to learning.
- Inspectors observed good behaviour around the school. Pupils play sensibly and safely on the playground during break times and behave well in the hall at lunchtime. Pupils say that behaviour is usually good but that 'sometimes pupils can fall out, but they soon make up again. Everyone is really nice and we show kindness.'
- School records show that there are relatively few instances of poor behaviour, including racist or discriminatory incidents. If pupils do misbehave, staff act appropriately, consistently and effectively.
- A small number of pupils sometimes show challenging behaviour but the school manages this consistently and well. These pupils are supported in a caring and nurturing way and this leads to improvements in their behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are proud of it. Attendance has improved and is now much closer to average.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and well cared for. They have a good knowledge of the school's core values and know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet and when on roads.
- Older pupils especially know about bullying and the different forms it can take. They say that bullying is rare in school and that teachers would sort it out if it happened.
- The school works very well with parents and outside agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils. The pupil well-being coordinator is very active and effective in this area.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View survey thought that their children are happy, safe and well looked after in school.

## **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not ensured that pupils make consistently good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics over time. School records and inspection evidence show that teaching is improving and that this is beginning to raise achievement and improve progress.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough and the work set is not consistently hard enough to challenge pupils to reach the highest levels and make the best possible progress. Consequently, progress has been too slow and pupils have not achieved as well as they should.
- The quality of marking and assessment is variable. Staff mark pupils' work regularly and use praise effectively. However, pupils are not always given clear enough guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. There are too few checks that pupils respond to this advice when it is given.
- Where pupils learn well, staff have high expectations and set challenging work that engages pupils fully in their learning. For example, in English, Year 2 pupils were developing their reading comprehension skills. Different pupils had different and challenging texts, and questioning was used skilfully to check their progress and to challenge them to deepen their understanding. As a result, pupils had to think hard about what they were doing and made good progress.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to support the learning of pupils who need extra help. This includes those who are disadvantaged or who are disabled or have special educational needs. Pupils who

are most in need are particularly well-supported and this enables them to achieve as well as their classmates.

### **The achievement of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress across the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough.
- The standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 were rising up to 2013, when they were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there was a sharp fall in 2014 and they were well below average in all subjects.
- Inspection evidence from observing learning in lessons, the work in pupils' books and the school's most recent data shows that all groups of pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are now making better progress and reaching higher standards, but that achievement is not yet consistently good.
- Pupils have a sound and improving knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) because teaching is improving and they have regular opportunities to read. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics check improved in 2014, although it remains well below average.
- Work in pupils' books shows that pupils make steady and improving progress in writing. However, there are too few opportunities for them to write in different styles in different subjects.
- Pupils' basic skills in mathematics are increasingly secure, but there are too few opportunities for them to use and apply these skills to solve practical problems.
- Disadvantaged pupils have not achieved as well as other pupils. In 2014 the standard reached by these pupils was below that of other pupils in the school and nationally. School data shows that this gap is beginning to close as achievement improves.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress similar to that of other pupils in the school. Their needs are identified accurately and they receive effective support from teachers, teaching assistants and support staff.
- The most able pupils achieve higher standards than their classmates, but too few of them reach the highest standards and make good progress. This is because, in common with other pupils, they are not always given work that is challenging enough.

### **The early years provision**

### **requires improvement**

- Most children join the early years, either in the Nursery or the Reception Year, with skills and knowledge that are generally below those typical for their age, especially in communication and language. They make progress from their individual starting points, but the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception Year is lower than that found nationally. As a result, not all children are as ready as they might be for the move into Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good. Learning activities do not always challenge all the children sufficiently to enable them to make good progress. In particular, there is insufficient focus and purpose to children's outdoor learning.
- The recording and assessment of children's progress have improved, but staff do not use this information as effectively as they should to plan activities to challenge children further and so they make more rapid progress.
- However, the early years provision does meet the particular needs of individual children. This includes disabled children, those who have special educational needs, those most in need and those for whom the school receives additional funding.
- Children behave well and show good attitudes to learning in a safe and nurturing environment. The early years provision makes a good contribution to children's physical and emotional health, safety and well-being, as well as to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There are close working relationships with parents and with other nursery providers and outside agencies. These ensure that children make a smooth transition to the Nursery or Reception classes, and are looked after well.
- Leaders now have a much more accurate view of how well children are doing and what needs to be improved further. Improved practice is leading to rising achievement, especially in the Nursery.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119122
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	453356

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	G Strong
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Mellor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 202600
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