

Little Mead Primary Academy

Gosforth Road, Southmead, Bristol BS10 6DS

Inspection dates	2–3 February 2016
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The key ingredient to the school's success is the exceptional vision and direction of the executive headteacher, who has the highest expectations of staff, pupils and parents.
- The executive headteacher is extremely well supported by her senior leadership team. Together they work tirelessly to make sure that every pupil is receiving the best possible education and is kept safe.
- Teachers are highly skilled and determined that their pupils do the very best they can. Not a minute is wasted and lessons are both interesting and challenging.
- Teaching assistants are very well briefed in their role. They provide excellent support to pupils both in lessons and during small-group sessions.
- All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make rapid progress as they move through the school. Consequently, they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to their learning and enjoy all aspects of school life.
- Behaviour in and around school is exemplary. Pupils' self-discipline is striking.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school and know that they can turn to staff for help.
- The promotion of British values is at the core of all of the work of the school. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for each other's individuality and discuss sensitive issues openly and honestly.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional.
- The above-average attendance rates are testament to the value that parents place on the high-quality education their children receive.
- Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the work of the school and ensure that resources are deployed to best effect.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with an exceptionally strong start to school life. The rich environment and high-quality teaching provide the children with a successful blend of learning through exploration, play and small-group work.
- Parents are unreserved in their praise for the way in which the school works closely with them to promote their children's learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Apply the same high levels of creativity and innovation to the teaching of phonics that are evident in all other areas of the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The executive headteacher is justifiably proud of the ethos which permeates the school and instils the highest expectations for staff, pupils, parents and governors. There is no place for mediocrity or complacency and this enables all members of the school community to excel in all that they do.
- By working very closely with her extremely efficient senior leaders, the executive headteacher has carefully crafted an exceptionally strong teaching team which is motivated, reflective in practice and forward-thinking. Leaders are skilful in recognising and nurturing aspiring leaders within their school. They 'grow their own leaders' to ensure that the focus on improving pupils' achievement remains consistently high.
- Members of staff are full of praise for the leadership of the school, which they consider is 'incredibly driven to do everything possible to ensure all pupils have the opportunity to do well academically'. All staff work effectively together to ensure that pupils have the very best education.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's success but are not complacent. The focus on refining and adjusting provision to meet the changing needs of the local area is relentless. All initiatives and improvements are carefully evaluated to ensure that they have had the intended impact.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is skilfully targeted to make sure that it supports those individuals who are entitled to it. The successful deployment of this funding can be seen in the progress that these pupils are making, which is in line with that of their peers.
- Pupils are inspired to learn because the curriculum is carefully planned to ignite their interest, while still being firmly centred on the development of key skills. For example, writing about famous landmarks around Bristol helps pupils to extend their historical knowledge; it also enables them to practise different ways to record facts and use appropriate vocabulary and grammatical terms. Working with local engineering businesses supports pupils' knowledge and application of mathematical, scientific and technical skills. Singing in harmony in assemblies has an impressive impact on pupils' musical and social development. The provision for activities and the extension of learning opportunities are exceptional.
- The promotion of British values is extremely effective and permeates the day-to-day life of the school. Pupils develop a secure understanding of the principles of democracy by electing their own leadership team. Following work on the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, the school took part in a national competition to design a new flag. As winners of this competition, their flag was given pride of place as it flew in Parliament Square, London. Pupils show a detailed knowledge of the monarchy and the role it plays in our society.
- An exceptional feature of the school is the way that pupils and staff are respectful of diversity and appreciate that everyone is different. The annual 'International Week' when staff, pupils and parents share together a range of different cultures, including sampling each other's speciality foods, is a powerful vehicle in supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders, staff and pupils do not tolerate prejudiced behaviour and everyone is treated fairly.
- Parents are very positive about Little Mead and are delighted that their children attend the school. They recognise that the school is exceptionally well led and managed. As one parent explained, 'the headteacher gives strong leadership, inspiring respect and confidence'. Another parent summed up the views of many of the parents by stating that, 'I am so happy that my children are attending such an excellent and very well-managed school. My children make brilliant progress in learning.'
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are ambitious for the school and the wider community. They share the exceptionally strong vision of the executive headteacher and her staff. Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the work of the school because they are kept very well informed by the executive headteacher. They are not afraid to challenge senior leaders and assiduously check the performance of all staff and pupils.
 - Governors carefully monitor the use of additional funding, both the pupil premium and the sports grant, to make sure that they are improving outcomes for pupils. For example, governors recently reviewed and evaluated the effectiveness of the support that disadvantaged pupils receive.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and deeply rooted in the culture of the school. Rigorous recruitment systems, detailed safeguarding training and effective ways to record concerns ensure that the utmost precautions are taken to keep pupils safe. Parents are very clear about the expectations when dropping off and collecting their children. The very strong links with outside agencies enable the school to deal quickly with any issues of concern. All staff have been trained to protect pupils from all forms of radicalisation and extremism and senior leaders are very well prepared to act upon any incidents should they occur.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teachers' skills and knowledge are exemplary and they demonstrate a deep understanding of the subjects they teach. They model rich and expressive language which challenges and motivates the pupils.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught extremely well and are used very effectively to support the pupils' learning in other subjects across the curriculum, for example in history, geography and science. Key skills, such as calculation, are taught consistently effectively through the school.
- Teaching assistants work in close partnership with the class teachers. They support groups of pupils and individuals effectively. Lessons are highly effective and not a minute of learning time is wasted. Working relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally productive.
- Teachers' assessment of what pupils can and cannot do is accurate and used effectively to spot individuals who are not progressing as fast as their classmates. Pupils are very clear about what they are learning and know exactly what they need to do to improve. All teachers adhere strictly to the school's marking policy, which is fully understood by pupils.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) are taught well and children make good progress. However, teachers do not always use the same level of creativity and innovation in phonics lessons which they use to promote learning in other subjects. This means these sessions have less 'sparkle' to them and do not always create the excitement seen in other lessons.
- Parents are appreciative of the high level of involvement they have in their children's education. Every morning parents join their children in the first learning activity of the day. This is very effective in helping them understand what their children are learning and how they can support them at home. Parents consider this session as 'invaluable'. Expectations are clear because, when the music starts to play, parents know that this is time to go.
- Regular homework activities are completed on time. Families very much enjoy termly homework projects, such as the making of three-dimensional models, and take an active part in the design and construction process.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability are taught extremely well in small groups or are very well supported in class. Sessions are tightly planned with high expectations and effective questioning to extend their learning. Pupils who use English as an additional language also receive the right level of support so that they make rapid progress in their language acquisition.
- Parents who responded to the online parent questionnaire or spoke to inspectors during the inspection were unanimous in their praise for the school. As one parent reported, 'my children love coming to school and the progress they make is fantastic. I always feel well informed about my children's progress and all staff are very approachable and professional.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe are fully embedded in all aspects of the school's work. Staff take the greatest care of their pupils and ensure that their safety is never compromised.
- Pupils are very clear about e-safety and are supported well in their understanding of this by guidance they receive from other children who act as 'digital leaders'. Pupils are knowledgeable about 'stranger danger' and have an appropriate awareness of the use of safe medication. Older pupils demonstrate a mature awareness of how their body changes as they grow up. Healthy lunchtime choices and high levels of engagement in sporting activities reflect the pupils' secure knowledge of the need to keep healthy and fit.
- 'Friendship buddies' help their classmates in and around the school when they are lonely or would like someone to talk to. There are very effective programmes planned around the needs of each individual. Those who experience difficulties in developing their personal and social skills get the support they need to take a full part in the life of the school.
- The breakfast club ensures that all pupils who attend it have the opportunity to eat something nutritious before the start of school. The after-school club keeps pupils safe until their parents are available to pick them up.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are exceptional. The pupils show deep levels of concentration and are always eager to do their very best.
- Pupils know that they must always move around the school silently so that others are not interrupted. Every child from Nursery to Year 6 achieves this with aplomb.
- Pupils are in no doubt about the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. No type of antisocial behaviour, including bullying, is tolerated and the consequences of such behaviour are firmly understood by the pupils. For example, one pupil described the repercussions of bullying, explaining that 'you will certainly not be walking back from the headteacher's office with a smile on your face'.
- The school has the highest expectations, of both parents and pupils, of pupils' regular attendance. Consequently, no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance. Attendance is above average and improving because pupils and parents value the education they receive.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- A high proportion of children start Nursery with poorly developed speaking and listening skills and limited vocabulary. Many have not had the opportunity to develop their creative skills and lack an awareness of the world around them. As a result of outstanding teaching in both Nursery and Reception, children make very good progress. Nevertheless, by the time they are ready for Year 1, they fall slightly short of the national average for children achieving a good level of development.
- In 2015, there was a dip in the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check. The school has put in extra help to provide specific support for this cohort, which includes a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. This has helped to accelerate their progress and is preparing them well for the Year 2 phonics check.
- Pupils enjoy reading because teachers model their love of books very effectively by reading stories to their classes on a daily basis. Current assessment information shows that pupils not only use their phonics skills well to decode unknown texts but also recognise key words and read on to gain a sense of what makes a sentence.
- Over the past five years, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 has been steadily improving. In the most recent tests in 2015, they matched national averages. This demonstrates the consistently strong progress they are making from their very low starting points.
- Outcomes at the end of Year 6 in the 2015 national tests were significantly above average overall. Particular strengths were noted in mathematics and in spelling, punctuation and grammar. For the past three years a significantly higher proportion of pupils than nationally exceeded the expected rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This included disadvantaged pupils who did as well as their peers.
- There is no gap in the progress made by different groups of pupils. This is because pupil premium funding is used effectively to support eligible pupils. The school also deploys funding well to provide support for other groups including pupils with disability, those with special educational needs, and pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- The assistant headteacher leads and manages the Nursery and Reception classes exceptionally well. They begin every day by greeting children and their parents; this ensures that a very strong bond develops between home and school.
- Teaching staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage understand very well how young children learn, and provide them with a wide range of exciting activities which develop their curiosity and love of learning. For example, teachers use favourite stories, such as 'Goldilocks and The Three Bears' extremely well to help the children grasp key mathematical vocabulary, such as 'full and empty' and 'below and above'. It also encourages them to demonstrate their early mark-making skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work seamlessly together and enjoy exceptionally positive relationships with the children. They work skilfully alongside the children, modelling learning and posing questions to stimulate the children's thinking. This enables the youngsters to thrive and develop very well in the safe and secure environment. Children's progress is regularly checked and shared with parents. Specific

activities planned to support individuals' particular needs are carefully fed into the programme to consolidate their learning.

- Children's behaviour in the Early Years Foundation Stage is impeccable. Routines are extremely well established and consistently applied by all staff. The safety of every child is paramount and this is clearly reflected in the vigilance of the well-trained staff.
- Parents are delighted with how quickly their children settle into school and with the excellent education they receive. One parent explained that she has 'found the staff to be friendly and kind and feels respected and encouraged as a co-educator'.

School details

Unique reference number	138900
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	10011151

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	464
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Hobbs
Headteacher	Barbara Daykin
Telephone number	0117 377 3279
Website	www.littlemead.bristol.sch.uk
Email address	little.mead.p@bristol.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2011

Information about this school

- Little Mead Primary Academy has not previously been inspected. When the predecessor school, Little Mead Primary School, was last inspected, it was judged to be good.
- This is a large primary school with a nursery which offers 30 full-time places.
- Two thirds of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- One third of the pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups.
- One quarter of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above the national average. However, there are fewer pupils than the national average who have statements or education, health and care plans for their special educational needs.
- An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for pupil premium. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care.
- Nursery children are taught in two groups, each attending for two and a half days each week. There are two full-time Reception classes.
- In Years 1 to 6 there are two classes per year group.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.
- Little Mead Primary Academy is part of the Little Mead Academy Trust. It works very closely with its sister school Henbury Court Primary Academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed class, group and individual learning sessions. Most of these were joint observations with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, middle leaders, teachers and governors.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised during the inspection. This included the improvement plan, the school's evaluation of its performance, and information relating to the pupils' current achievement.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and looked at their books. They also considered 34 pupil questionnaire responses which had been completed online.
- Inspectors considered the views of 26 members of staff who had completed the online questionnaire.
- The 49 responses to the online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. Inspectors also spoke to parents informally at the start of the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Faye Bertham	Ofsted Inspector
Marion Borland	Ofsted Inspector
Lizzy Meadows	Ofsted Inspector
David New	Ofsted Inspector

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