

Meadowside Primary School

Park Road, Burton Latimer, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 5QY

Inspection dates

9–10 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is uneven across the school and historically pupils achieve better in the early years and Key Stage 1 than they do in Key Stage 2.
- Several staff changes in recent years have meant that standards have fluctuated and the previous Year 6 pupils did not make the progress expected across the key stage.
- Teachers' checks of pupils' understanding during lessons are not consistent. Pupils' progress slows where misconceptions are not addressed.
- In mathematics lessons, pupils who have shown mastery of concepts or skills are not routinely provided with more challenging work. This limits what they can achieve and slows down their rate of progress.
- Senior leaders gather assessment information which is shared with staff, but are inconsistent in helping staff to fully understand it.
- Subject leaders do not spend enough time making checks on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress.
- The school has been unable to secure continuity of external support, including from the local authority, in recent years.
- Governors do not monitor leaders' actions closely enough to check their impact against the school's improvement targets.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Reception classes make good progress. Teachers and support staff know them well and provide the right balance of care and support.
- Year 1 pupils consistently achieve above average standards in the national phonics screening check.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, they arrive on time ready to learn and attendance is high for all groups.
- The school provides good care and support and has well-established partnerships to help those with additional needs to settle and learn well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in mathematics by making sure that teachers plan more challenging work to give pupils as soon as they are ready.
- Ensure that all staff understand and make good use of new assessment tracking systems and that senior leaders share with them their analysis of the data to improve teaching.
- Sharpen governors' checks, so that they have a more strategic view of the impact of leaders' actions towards the targets set for school improvement.
- Make subject leaders more effective by:
 - ensuring that they spend enough time in lessons making checks on pupils' progress
 - making sure that monitoring information is used with a sense of urgency to direct additional activities and support and so boost pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership is not yet good because standards and achievement in the school vary across the key stages. This is because the quality of teaching over time has fluctuated and is not yet consistently good in all areas.
- Subject leaders are still in the process of developing their skills and although they have a good understanding of their subjects and have implemented new curriculum changes, they do not spend enough time monitoring the quality of teaching across the school. This means that their capacity to improve teaching and pupils' achievement in their subject is limited.
- Senior leaders analyse assessment information and have an overview of pupils' progress throughout the year. Although this is shared with staff, teachers' understanding of new assessment systems is not yet secure and knowledge of how well their pupils are performing is patchy.
- Senior leaders have good awareness of the quality of teaching in every class and partner new teachers with more experienced ones to help and support their practice. Performance management systems are used effectively to drive improvement and this contributes to raising the quality of teaching in the school.
- Staff are positive and supportive of changes in the school. So too are parents, and the majority of those responding to Parent View and informally during the inspection expressed their pleasure and pride in being a part of the school community.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The further development of leadership across the school has been identified as a priority. Partnership work with a local school and the input of an external mathematics consultant are securely established and this is raising the capacity of the school's middle leaders.
- The school has a welcoming and positive atmosphere where all pupils get along and are fully accepted and included. Pupils feel valued and respected by adults and they in turn show their respect and regard for each other. There is no discrimination and pupils learn how British values relate to aspects of their everyday life. Strong values underpin the school's ethos and pupils are proud to receive awards in assembly for exemplifying them. Topic work and trips to places of worship enhance pupils' awareness of the beliefs and cultures of others living in Britain today.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and uses a highly specialised 'SMSC' tracker to ensure that all aspects are effectively addressed through assemblies, lessons and visits. Year 6 pupils attend a week-long residential trip on the Isle of Wight and this helps them to develop their confidence and independence in preparation for the move to secondary school.
- The curriculum is rich and varied and provides good opportunities to develop and use skills of reading, writing and mathematics across different subjects. Pupils enjoy the topics chosen and this contributes to their interest and engagement in lessons. Parents are kept well informed of new developments in the curriculum and have several opportunities to attend workshops for specific year groups and subjects. The school's data show that this has already had a positive impact on the progress of their children.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to improve their academic achievements. These pupils benefit from additional adult support in class and have access to resources and trips which help them to be fully included in all aspects of school life. In turn, this raises their confidence and self-esteem.
- Funding for primary sport and physical education is used well. Pupils actively participate in a good range of sports, and dance has been particularly popular for both girls and boys. 'Young leaders' promote sports and healthy lifestyles and regularly take charge of lunchtime activities.
- Local authority support has been variable because there has been a high turnover of advisers allocated to the school in recent years. The school is now working with a senior adviser and receives good support and clear guidance to focus improvement priorities. This places the school in a strong position to continue to improve further.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors review school development plans and understand the strengths and areas where the school could improve further. However, governors' checks on senior leaders' actions to drive forward improvements lack a strategic overview and they do not always measure the impact against targets set for whole-school improvement.
 - Governors have a good understanding of new assessment systems and are asking specific and challenging questions about pupils' achievements.

- Governors make frequent visits to see how well pupils are achieving and look in their books to check that newly introduced 'learning ladders' and teachers' feedback are helping them to improve.
- Governors keep a close check on the performance of staff and how performance management is used to develop and support staff further so that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements improve.
- Additional funds to boost the uptake of sport and promote healthy lifestyles are closely monitored and governors see how the wider range of new activities, such as tag rugby and cricket, have raised pupils' enjoyment and participation in sports.
- Questions are raised by governors about how effectively pupil premium funds are being used to boost the achievement of disadvantaged pupils through the deployment of additional support staff in classes. Governors link the strategies used with the cost of extra resources and outcomes and so know that the money has been well spent.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders have developed strong partnerships with pupils' families and external agencies and respond quickly to early signs of vulnerability or concerns. They follow current guidelines to make sure that all pupils are supported and feel safe. Governors have reviewed school practices through an external audit and the named safeguarding governor makes thorough checks of safeguarding in the school. Staff and governor training is up to date and governors understand the importance of keeping pupils safe. The school's pastoral support adviser keeps close surveillance on popular social networking sites and this strengthens the school's actions to keep pupils safe online. Governors know precisely what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern and recognise their role in maintaining a high level of vigilance in this area.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school varies and although there is some good teaching, not enough leads to consistently good progress in all subjects and key stages.
- The dislocation associated with several changes of teaching staff in recent years has had a negative impact on pupils' achievements, particularly across Key Stage 2. This is seen, for example, in time wasted with pupils repeating work they can already do.
- In too many mathematics lessons, teachers' focus on ensuring that all pupils gain a secure understanding of key concepts prevents those who already understand from developing further; learning time is lost while they wait for a more challenging task to be set.
- Many teachers make regular checks on how well pupils understand and are quick to identify and address misconceptions. However, this is not consistent across the school; where pupils flounder they lose focus and this occasionally leads to loss of concentration. As a result, progress slows.
- Teaching assistants receive good direction from class teachers and are effectively steered to support disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and disability and other pupils who require extra help. They have good skills and subject knowledge and their work is closely checked by the special educational needs coordinator. This enables disadvantaged pupils and those with additional learning needs to make good progress.
- Teachers know their pupils well and increasingly provide activities and tasks which interest and stretch them. For example, good use is made of practical mathematics resources and in a Year 5 lesson groups of pupils learning about fractions used them successfully to resolve some tricky equivalent fraction problems.
- Teachers know who the most-able pupils are and frequently plan activities which stretch their thinking and extend their knowledge and skills, particularly in writing. For example, a group of most-able Year 1 pupils involved in sequencing and rewriting a story were given just a few illustrations as visual reminders; they put great thought into creating sentences without adult help and correctly used punctuation to make their work accurate.
- Pupils develop early reading strategies well because the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) in the early years and Key Stage 1 is good. Pupils enjoy reading both in school and at home and make good use of the school's well stocked libraries. Parents make regular comments in their children's reading books and are invited into school to encourage them further. School guides to help parents develop their children's reading have contributed to improved standards and accelerated reading progress.
- Pupils are developing effective skills to assess their own work because adults provide good-quality written

and verbal feedback which helps them to improve. Books are neatly presented and pupils' comments show their determination to get things right and raise achievements even further.

- Pupils understand the importance of homework when it is set and older pupils appreciate being given revision guides to help them to prepare for their final assessments and their move to secondary school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know about being safe on the internet from their e-safety work in computing lessons and from assemblies. 'Young leaders' planning sports activities take into account potential risks for people with different needs and are highly safety-conscious, applying what they learned about sports safety from a visit to Loughborough University.
- Pupils show good awareness of the different forms of bullying, and pupils on the anti-bullying team keep a close eye on behaviour and are well placed to step in and support others. The school treats bullying very seriously and carefully records any incidents which occur.
- Pupils say that they feel well supported and know that there are several staff who they can talk to, as well as 'worry boxes' to use if they have any concerns. The pastoral support adviser works with vulnerable pupils and their families. The lunchtime 'sunshine' club provides a nurturing environment for those in need of a quieter space; this helps pupils to settle and focus on their schoolwork. Well-established partnerships with a good range of external experts provide highly effective support for pupils in need of additional help.
- Pupils know the school values of respect, responsibility, reflection and resilience (the '4 Rs') and make great efforts to embody these in their interactions with each other and staff. Pupils get along well and are noticeably polite and well-mannered. Pupil council members from each year group collectively play a part in making improvements in the school. They say that their job is to listen to the views of their classmates and take these forward to council meetings where they can be heard.
- Pupils' views are welcomed by school leaders and this makes them feel appreciated and valued.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in class and move easily around the school without incident. On the few occasions where pupils lose focus and concentration in class, adults are quick to follow the school's policy and use behaviour sanctions effectively so that learning can continue uninterrupted. School records show that behaviour is typically good.
- Records show a small number of incidents where pupils have used derogatory language. Leaders are aware of this and tackle each incident on an individual basis to ensure that pupils understand how this can be upsetting to others who hear it.
- Pupils are keen learners and have positive attitudes to their studies. They enjoy coming to school and arrive on time ready for the day ahead. Pupils' attendance has risen and remains high for all groups. Pastoral staff rigorously follow up all absences and make sure that the school's most vulnerable pupils are in school.
- Staff, parents and pupils who responded to questionnaires all unanimously agreed that behaviour in the school is good.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Standards and progress across the school are variable. Early years children get off to a good start in the Reception classes and continue to make good progress through Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 their progress slows and recent Year 6 pupils failed to make the progress expected in reading and mathematics compared with their peers nationally, although progress in writing was closer to national figures. A lower proportion of pupils than nationally exceeded the expected rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment has remained slightly below average by the end of Year 6 for all subjects except grammar, punctuation and spelling. This contrasts with the rise in attainment by the end of Year 2 in reading and

writing to above average levels, writing significantly so. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is also rising, but remains just below the national average.

- A good proportion of the most-able pupils reach the higher levels in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. In Year 6 they are very successful in writing, but less so in reading and mathematics.
- School leaders accept that a legacy of poor teaching and high turnover of staff have had a negative effect on previous Year 6 results. Current tracking information and pupils' work indicate that there are signs of improvement and more pupils in Key Stage 2 than previously are now making good progress. The school's assessment records suggest that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach standards expected for their age in all subjects by the end of the year.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress. They receive good support in and out of class and are fully included in activities. The special educational needs coordinator monitors their progress closely and checks that support is having a positive effect on raising their achievement.
- In recent years, by the end of Key Stage 2, disadvantaged pupils have successfully narrowed the in-school attainment gaps with their classmates in all subjects and edged ahead in grammar, punctuation and spelling by half a term. Their progress has been variable when compared with their peers. In mathematics and writing, similar proportions of disadvantaged and other pupils made the expected progress. In writing, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils exceeding the expected progress was higher than that of other pupils in school. Additional funding is used effectively to provide targeted support in class and forge closer links with their parents and carers. This has had a positive impact on their attendance, which is now above the national average, and has contributed to this picture of rising attainment.
- The teaching of phonics is particularly good; in Reception and Year 1 pupils have achieved above-average results in the national phonics check each year.
- Pupils' achievements are rising because teachers are increasingly identifying gaps in knowledge and these are being addressed through new curriculum changes. Leaders have a clear focus on raising the quality of teaching and pupils engage positively with learning and show their desire to improve.

Early years provision

is good

- Children enter the early years with a range of skills which are generally in line with those typical for their age. Results in the last two years show that increasing proportions of children reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year and are well prepared for learning in Year 1. Children eligible for the pupil premium are making rapid progress and the proportion achieving a good level of development is higher than that seen nationally.
- Early years staff get to know the children and their families well and quickly organise support where needed so that children get off to a good start. Teachers plan together and make sure that activities capture children's interest and also stretch and challenge all abilities and needs. The quality of teaching is good and this underpins the good progress which all groups of children make.
- The early years leader has established a thorough assessment system and colleagues consistently record children's achievements across the different areas of learning to make sure that they are making the progress expected. Teachers know who the most-able children are and keep a close eye on them to ensure that they remain on track to exceed the development typically expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year.
- Children enjoy learning and know what their teachers expect of them. Behaviour is good and children often show their patience and kindness towards each other. Children share the resources set out inside the classroom and in the well-equipped outdoor space and understand how to move around safely. They learned about fire safety from a visit by local firemen and were keen to talk about where smoke alarms should be at home and why they should be tested regularly, further developing their early communication skills. There are good opportunities to practise phonics and early writing, which helps children to reach a good standard by the end of the year.
- Parents are welcomed into class each morning and they say that communication is excellent and they are kept well informed. Children's books show the same marking and feedback symbols as higher up in the school and this prepares them well for their move up to Year 1 work.

School details

Unique reference number	121901
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10001811

This inspection 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	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Walters
Headteacher	Jim Balmbra
Telephone number	01536 723985
Website	www.meadowsideprimary.org
Email address	head@meadowsideprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	3–4 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school is an above-average-sized primary school and the number of pupils has increased slightly since the last inspection. Six new teachers joined the school at the start of this academic year.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and, therefore, supported through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons. They observed support in and out of class for pupils who need additional help with their learning. A review of additional support in eight lessons was carried out jointly with the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in class and attended a school assembly for Key Stage 1 pupils.
- The inspection team looked closely at pupils' work in every class and spoke with pupils about their work.
- Inspectors spoke informally with parents at the start of each day and took note of their views through the 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils around the school and met with two different groups: school councillors and 'young leaders' together; and a group with additional needs. An inspector also joined pupils for lunch and the inspection team asked pupils about their experiences of life in the school.
- Staff returned 40 questionnaires during the inspection and pupils returned 10. These were analysed to gain their views of the school.
- Inspectors met with three governors, had a telephone discussion with a senior school adviser and held discussions with school leaders responsible for checking English, mathematics, early years, assessments and for coordinating special educational needs.
- Inspectors checked school documentation on attendance and behaviour and looked closely at pupils' current progress and the monitoring of safeguarding. They looked at records of governors' meetings and how the school manages staff performance.

Inspection team

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Peter Strauss	Ofsted Inspector
Joanne Ward	Ofsted Inspector

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