

Meadowhead Infant School

Shorrock Lane, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 4TT

Inspection dates

4–5 October 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Meadowhead has greatly improved since its previous inspection. The passion and determination of the headteacher have driven the improvements in the school.
- The school's values of kindness, teamwork, ambition, respect and friendship are at the very heart of the school and are central to all that it does.
- Raised expectations and improvements in the quality of teaching throughout the school have resulted in all pupils making good progress.
- Governors know the school well and make a valuable contribution to school improvement.
- Pupils rise to the high expectations that teachers successfully model and they benefit from the good teaching they receive. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and lessons are well resourced.
- Parental involvement is a strength. Parents are very positive about how well the school teaches, supports and looks after their children.
- The provision and support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very effective.
- Leaders are very diligent in carrying out their responsibilities for safeguarding. As a result, pupils feel very safe in school.
- The school's work in supporting the care and welfare of pupils and their families is excellent.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well around school. Their behaviour, kindness and care for each other shine through.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are very effective. As a result, children have a very good start to school life and make strong progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are not always challenged to think more deeply and practise their reasoning skills.
- Pupils sometimes lack confidence to work on their own.
- Assessment information in writing and mathematics is not robust enough for leaders and governors to pinpoint pupils' learning needs precisely.
- The number of pupils who are persistently absent is too high.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers:
 - challenge pupils in lessons, including the most able pupils, to think more deeply about their work and practise their reasoning skills
 - encourage pupils to develop confidence in working independently.
- Improve leadership and management by refining the information collected on pupils' attainment and progress in writing and mathematics during the year, so that leaders and governors have enough information to examine pupils' progress robustly and pinpoint learning needs accurately.
- Continue working with parents to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school, so that they are given every chance to become successful learners.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Meadowhead has improved considerably since its previous inspection. This has been down to the determination of the headteacher, other senior leaders and the governing body to raise standards. Their focus, vision and hard work have led the way so that, together with staff, they provide good opportunities for pupils to achieve and develop as well-rounded individuals.
- Through the school's values of friendship, ambition, respect, teamwork and kindness, leaders have promoted equality and diversity well. This has resulted in pupils who are caring, considerate and respectful of each other and the wider community.
- Leaders have the commitment of staff, parents and pupils. Staff are motivated to make sure that there is continuing improvement. Relationships between staff are positive; they are proud to work at Meadowhead. The very large majority feel well supported and that the school is led and managed well.
- Senior leaders know their school well. The strengths of the school and areas for improvement are clearly identified in their self-evaluation, which is accurate, honest and reflective. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning are thorough. Where needed, follow-up action is immediate, yet sensitive and supportive. Staff are encouraged to work together to develop the school, resulting in staff that feel motivated and part of its growing success. The school benefits from a stable, happy and dedicated team.
- The growing confidence of other leaders in the school creates a sense of enthusiasm for continued school improvement. Leaders have regular opportunities to check that agreed strategies to secure improvement are being applied by all staff. This has led to a growing consistency of approach in classrooms, for example in the drive to raise expectations, in improved presentation in pupils' books and in the use of the agreed marking and handwriting policy.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to reduce any barriers to learning that may be experienced by disadvantaged pupils, including the most able of them. This enables disadvantaged pupils to be successful and be part of everything the school has to offer. The progress of pupils supported by this funding is monitored well. The impact of pupil premium funding is evaluated regularly by the headteacher and the governing body.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding is also used well. Pupils benefit from a high-quality specialist sports teacher and say how much they enjoy sport and find lessons fun. Pupils of all ages recognise the value of physical activity as a part of being healthy.
- There is a constant focus on accelerating progress and improving standards for pupils. Senior leaders and the governing body have worked hard to improve the way pupils are assessed, and how the information is used in the classroom to maximise learning. Assessment information is collected regularly by senior leaders and used to discuss pupils' learning with teachers and to plan opportunities to help pupils catch up if needed.

- Leaders are still getting to grips with the best way to keep track of pupils' progress in writing and mathematics. As a result, they are less able to follow the progress that pupils are making in these subjects precisely and are missing opportunities to pinpoint learning needs and successes.
- The leadership and organisation of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are highly effective. Identification of need is thorough and resources are of a good standard. Staff have an excellent understanding of these pupils' welfare needs and every effort is made to remove any social or physical barriers to learning. This ensures that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities succeed in their learning and their personal and social development. Good-quality systems and procedures are in place to check regularly on the progress of individual pupils.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that engages pupils and contributes to their enjoyment of learning. PE, art and music are strengths and pupils make particularly good progress in these subjects. The curriculum is also enriched by additional opportunities for pupils to have a wide range of experiences, including visitors to school, trips to museums and walks in the woods. Reading and writing are woven across the curriculum effectively, to strengthen pupils' opportunities to practise their skills, add richness to their reading and provide a sense of purpose for their writing.
- Well-promoted spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that the school is a calm and considerate environment where pupils mix happily together. Through assemblies and the curriculum, pupils learn about the wider community, raise funds for charities and learn about tolerance, respect of differences and the rule of law. Pupils also enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being members of the school council and serving food to younger pupils in the dining hall.
- The local authority has a productive relationship with the school. It has provided appropriate and helpful support when needed. The school is an active member of a network of schools. They support each other, for example by providing opportunities for curriculum leaders to meet and discuss teaching and learning. The school also works closely with the local junior school. Many transition activities are arranged during the year, as well as opportunities for staff and senior leaders to share practice and develop a consistency of approach across the two schools.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Governors know the school well. Their range of expertise is used very well to ensure that it benefits the school. They are conscientious in their responsibilities and take part in all relevant training.
- The governing body has a good understanding of performance management procedures and, as well as supporting the headteacher in holding staff to account, it ensures that the management of teachers' pay is effective.
- Governors question the leaders of the school but some of their questions are not challenging enough. This is because they are not provided with sufficient information to have a thorough understanding about the progress pupils are making.
- The governing body makes sure that the pupil premium and the primary PE and sport funding are spent effectively and make a difference for pupils.

- The governing body is extremely diligent in its responsibilities to safeguard pupils and, to this end, has appointed a safeguarding governor to oversee and monitor safeguarding and welfare-related matters. The governing body also understands its responsibilities with regard to internet safety, has an e-safety governor, and has ensured filtering measures are in place for the school's internet and online services.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Meticulous and robust systems are in place, which are understood by staff. Up-to-date and appropriate training for staff is undertaken and is regularly revisited. Safeguarding is a very high priority in school.
- The comprehensive work carried out around the care and welfare of vulnerable pupils and families is exemplary. The support and dedication shown to families is much appreciated. One parent summed it up as 'they never stop giving, they are brilliant'. This sentiment is typical.
- Leaders are persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare and often champion a pupil or family. There are highly effective relationships with other agencies who respect their meticulous records and their knowledge, which they use to ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and it is now consistently good. This has led to pupils making good progress.
- The teaching at Meadowhead is characterised by warm relationships between staff and pupils and well-organised lessons.
- Staff model high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. The vast majority of pupils rise to this by working hard and behaving well. Pupils enjoy their learning and say they particularly like their 'challenge activities'. They also say that one of the best things about school is the 'grown-ups' in it.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Some ask the right questions to aid pupils' thinking, draw out learning, and help them move on. However, sometimes teachers do not ask the right questions or plan activities that are sufficiently demanding. In these situations, pupils are not offered a chance to develop their thinking and deepen understanding of what is being taught. As a result, some pupils, including the most able, are not always learning as much as they could.
- Teachers and leaders check on pupils' learning regularly. This makes an important contribution to the progress that pupils make. Good-quality learning resources make lessons interesting and fun. However, in a few instances, the engagement and concentration of some pupils wane.
- Where pupils struggle with their learning, an effective range of learning opportunities help them catch up. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Most teaching assistants are knowledgeable and skilled and make a good contribution to the progress of the pupils with whom they work. This is particularly evident in their support of those pupils who have challenging behaviour. In these instances, they play

an important role in ensuring that the teachers' and other pupils' attention is not diverted from the focus on learning. The number of adults available in classes means, however, that pupils are sometimes reluctant to work independently and can often rely on adults to guide them rather than being confident in their own ability.

- For those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the support they are offered is broad, clearly targeted and of a very good quality. Additional support is planned well. As a result, these pupils make good progress in lessons.
- In line with the school's policy, teachers are consistent in their approach to marking pupils' work and on insisting on high standards of presentation throughout the school, and across all subjects. They make clear to pupils what they have done well and offer helpful guidance so they can improve their work further. Pupils are keen to get feedback and to respond to the comments made in the time provided for this. Pupils are regularly encouraged to evaluate their own or each other's work. For example, teachers often use an electronic tablet to photograph a pupil's work. It is then projected on to a screen so that the whole class can discuss and evaluate it.
- The development of reading, writing and mathematical skills is a high priority in the school and this is evident in classrooms, corridors and shared areas. Leaders' insistence on a consistent approach has had a positive overall effect on pupils' progress.
- All parents who responded to Parent View or spoke to inspectors in the playground felt that their children were taught well and most felt that their child made good progress in school. However, a small number felt that the quality of information given to them about their children's learning could be improved.
- Homework is given to pupils in line with the school's teaching and learning policy. Pupils said they enjoyed homework and particularly liked it when their homework was praised and rewarded. Most parents felt that the homework their children received was appropriate for their age.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are woven into all aspects of school and are considered of great importance. Staff and governors are extremely diligent in carrying out their responsibility to ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment in which pupils in their care can flourish and succeed. As a result, pupils develop as thoughtful and compassionate citizens.
- The vast majority of parents who spoke to inspectors, and those that responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, praised the school and the work of the staff. All parents felt that their children were happy, safe and well looked after.
- Pupils are increasingly confident learners and most are able to talk about their learning. The pupils told inspectors how proud they were of their school and how well looked after they are by adults. They also talked with pride about their school's values, which they could name easily and give many instances of how they lived by them. For example, they used 'friendship' and 'teamwork' to help each other if they fall over and to applaud when a pupil does well.

- The provision for pupils who are vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a strength of the school. There is a prompt focus on early identification of need or concern and support for the pupils is put in place quickly. This reduces the barriers to learning that these pupils might face and ensures that they make good progress. A classroom has been set up to support those pupils who are particularly vulnerable or who are struggling to cope in large class groups. These pupils thrive in a very nurturing environment. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities participate fully in all that the school has to offer.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection were unsure what bullying was. When this was explained to them, they said that incidents did not often happen and were always dealt with promptly by an adult. They were confident that teachers dealt quickly with any unkind or negative language towards pupils and said that this was very rare as it was against the school's value of 'kindness'. All parents who responded to Parent View felt that bullying was dealt with appropriately or that they were not aware of any bullying towards their child. Other inspection evidence confirmed that this is the case.
- Pupils were unanimous in their view that they felt safe in school and could share with inspectors examples of how the school kept them safe. They talked about assemblies and lessons where they had been taught about how to keep themselves safe, personally and online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well. They are polite and well mannered. Staff and pupils know each other very well and are friendly, supportive and encouraging. As a result, the school is a calm, orderly and purposeful place to learn. For example, at lunchtime adults and older pupils actively encourage younger ones to develop good table manners and to say 'please' and 'thank you'.
- A productive atmosphere in classrooms means that pupils have a positive attitude and visibly enjoy their learning. They are attentive and eager to participate in lessons and generally work well and support each other.
- Pupils consider behaving well to be very important and are delighted when they are recognised for their good conduct. As a result, they are fully aware of how to behave and the consequences of poor behaviour. They say that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare, dealt with quickly by teachers and responded to by pupils sensibly.
- A number of pupils have behavioural needs. They are extremely well supported and very skilfully managed to ensure their behaviour does not get in the way of their learning and does not distract others.
- The systems for checking absence are rigorous and conscientiously applied. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in school. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved over the last three years. However, it is still just below the national average and persistent absence remains a significant issue for the school. The leadership team has worked hard with this group of pupils and their parents and has had some notable successes, but too many pupils still do not attend school regularly enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement throughout the school has improved and, overall, their achievement is now good. This is because of the determination of senior leaders and governors to raise expectations and to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- Pupils start school with skills, knowledge and understanding below those typical for children of this age.
- Achievement has greatly improved in 2016 at the end of key stage 1, with a higher proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. A number of pupils also achieved higher than the expected standards under the new national curriculum.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the national screening check for phonics at the end of Year 1 has improved year on year. It is now just below that typical for children of this age.
- The teaching of phonics is consistent and strongly linked to the good development of reading skills. As a result, pupils enjoy reading and talk excitedly about books. Pupils who struggle with reading have very good support to practise their skills and are proud of the progress they make.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, they make good progress throughout key stage 1. The most able disadvantaged pupils achieve well and make good progress. This group of pupils do well in school because teachers monitor their progress effectively and ensure that they are supported well in class.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. The support offered by teachers and teaching assistants is effective and ensures that pupils succeed in their learning.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2016, the most able pupils made at least the progress expected in reading, writing and mathematics and many attained higher levels in all three subjects. Leaders are aware, however, that the most able pupils in school could achieve even better standards. To this end, they have put strategies in place to ensure that the school's most able pupils make the further gains of which they are capable.
- Pupils' progress in a number of subjects other than English and mathematics is good. Pupils are consistently assessed in all areas of learning. This is most developed in music, art and physical education, where it is clear that pupils are making good progress. Other subjects such as science, modern foreign languages, history and geography are developing to a similar standard.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start school with skills and knowledge below, and some well below, those typical for their age. Their skills are particularly low in communication, reading, writing and number. However, by the time they leave the early years the vast majority are making good progress.

- Children benefit from a vibrant and stimulating environment in which to learn. This is coupled with high expectations by adults to make sure that children thrive and enjoy a very positive start to school life.
- There have been steady improvements in children's achievement since the last inspection. Children are well prepared and confident to start in Year 1.
- The leadership of the early years is strong. Firm foundations have been laid by the previous early years leader. The new leader is building on these and is already having a noticeable impact. She has a clear view about the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Where actions have been taken to tackle issues, these have been successful. A focus on the importance of teamwork, sharing practice and the good quality development of staff has ensured that adults are skilled and are confident to get the best learning from children.
- Provision is well organised to create a rich and varied learning environment for all children. Activities are fun, capture the children's imagination and allow them to practise their skills. For example, children were enthusiastic about cutting 'three-dimensional shapes' out of a slice of bread and butter. When successful, they excitedly ate their 'shapes'.
- Outdoors, children have plenty of opportunities to explore, using a range of equipment that encourages them to build, create and try out their ideas. Learning and activities are often led by children. As a result, children, whatever their ability, are absorbed in their learning. For example, children were immersed in finding ways to stop Goldilocks getting into the three bears' house. They spent a long time intently building walls and tying string across table legs, then wrote 'keep out' signs.
- Additional funding is used well to provide resources and support for disadvantaged children. Leaders have a good understanding of the impact this has on children's learning. Children make similarly good progress to that made by other children and achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Although the inspection took place early in the term, routines were already well established, as was a high level of expectation of what children will achieve. Adults demonstrate good subject knowledge and there is a strong consistency of approach and manner across the four classes.
- The importance placed on reading, writing and mathematical skills is very evident, with regular chances for children to write, practise their letters and sounds, and use number. The development of language and speaking is also a high priority, along with building self-confidence. Adults engage with children very well and are skilled at asking questions to draw out children's understanding, encourage them to talk and feel self-assured.
- Teachers' assessment and the tracking of children's learning are of a good quality. The information they gather is used effectively to plan a curriculum for children that is both interesting and relevant. Adults regularly use electronic tablets to take photographs and record speech – documenting children's learning. They also create beautiful, big books that are full of pictures, snippets of ideas and things said. These record important events and moments through the year.

- Safeguarding is effective. Risk assessments are thorough and the classroom is a safe environment for children. Children's behaviour is good and adults are quick to provide support to children to help them understand the importance of being polite and treating one another with respect. Children play and learn together well and are very motivated to learn.
- The strong emphasis on creating a caring and nurturing environment is evident from the very positive relationships adults have with children, and children have with each other. There are also very positive relationships between staff and parents; parents describe the adults in the early years as 'friendly and approachable'. Staff encourage regular communication with parents and they invite them to events such as story reading and phonics sessions. These are helpful in supporting parents in their child's learning. Parents feel very positive about how well their children have settled into school and the progress they have made.

School details

Unique reference number	119122
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10022009

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	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Jones (Acting Chair)
Headteacher	Sue Mellor
Telephone number	01254 202600
Website	www.meadowheadinfants.co.uk
Email address	office@meadowheadinfants.blackburn.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 January 2015

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in nine classes from the Nursery to Year 2.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- A breakfast club is run by the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and in the learning journals of children in the early years.
- An inspector listened to a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, pupil well-being coordinator, early years leader and curriculum leaders.
- An inspector met four members of the governing body including the acting chair. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with an inspector, and inspectors also spoke informally with pupils in the playground and around the school.
- The inspectors took account of responses to a questionnaire by 33 staff.
- Inspectors considered the 15 responses from the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also talked briefly with parents before school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: minutes from meetings of the governing body; information on pupils' attainment and progress; the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tim Lucas

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016