

The Meadows Primary School

Bath Road, Bitton, Bristol BS30 6HS

Inspection dates

24–25 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders, including governors, have failed to tackle areas that were identified as requiring improvement at the previous inspection.
- Strategic leadership is weak and many of the teaching staff do not have confidence in the way that the school is led and managed.
- Governors do not challenge the work of the school sufficiently well. They have not held the headteacher rigorously to account for a decline in the school's effectiveness.
- Frequent staff changes to the leadership of mathematics have had a detrimental impact on rectifying pupils' inadequate achievement in this subject. Girls consistently make poorer progress in mathematics than boys.
- Senior leaders do not regularly check and evaluate the progress of all groups of pupils as they move from key stage 1 to key stage 2.
- There has been a continual change of teachers' roles and classroom responsibilities. Leaders have failed to invest time and resources to ensure that teachers' professional development needs are met.
- Inconsistencies in teaching are not picked up by leaders. For example, not all teachers adhere to the agreed marking policy and this has gone unnoticed by the headteacher.
- Equality of opportunity is not promoted effectively. Not all staff and pupils feel that they are treated fairly. Leaders do not draw well enough upon the cultural diversity within the school to prepare pupils for life in a diverse society.
- Anti-social incidents are not recorded accurately. Leaders do not check for any emerging patterns or trends.
- The outdoor learning area for the youngest children does not provide opportunities for them to develop and extend their key skills.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in reading and writing is above average. Leadership in English has been a consistently strong feature of the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and the school meets statutory requirements to keep pupils safe.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - urgently addressing the lack of strategic direction and leadership of the school and setting clear priorities for improvement
 - improving governors' ability to challenge school leaders, check the progress being made against the priorities set for improvement and evaluate independently the effectiveness of the school
 - evaluating the progress of all groups of pupils from their starting points so that leaders can be held to account for pupils' outcomes
 - improving the way that mathematics is led and managed so that teachers have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve pupils' achievement, particularly that of girls
 - developing a systematic approach to evaluating the performance of teachers
 - ensuring that all staff and pupils have equal opportunities and are treated fairly.
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - providing training for all teaching staff and providing opportunities for them to learn from good practice in other schools
 - ensuring that all teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in mathematics and for the most able in all subjects
 - regularly checking that all teachers adhere to the agreed marking policy and respond appropriately to pupils when supporting their next steps in learning
 - using pupils' own experiences to celebrate the diversity of modern Britain, show respect to one another and prepare pupils for their future
 - improving the outdoor area for Reception children so that they can develop and extend their learning experiences.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The headteacher and governors are failing to provide effective leadership. The school's self-evaluation is inaccurate. Areas requiring improvement at the time of the previous inspection, such as the strategic leadership of the school, achievement in mathematics, and pupils' understanding of cultural diversity, remain seriously weak.
- The headteacher and governors do not demonstrate any capacity for securing improvement. Too many members of the teaching staff have no confidence in the senior team's ability to lead the school strategically. They are particularly concerned about the way in which initiatives are never carried through and major long-standing weaknesses, such as achievement in mathematics, have not been rectified.
- Development planning is vague and does not identify what needs to be systematically done to improve the effectiveness of the school. There are no measures in place for leaders and governors to measure the impact of any of the initiatives on school improvement.
- The continual changing of those responsible for key leadership areas, such as mathematics and overall pupils' assessment, has resulted in an erratic and fragmented approach to school improvement. Consequently, teaching staff have not been aware that some pupils have not made sufficient progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2. Leaders have not taken action to rectify this underachievement.
- The headteacher does not have a clear understanding of the performance of difference groups of pupils within the school, such as those who join the school mid-way through their primary education or those who are most able. There is no clear evaluation of the use of pupil premium funding to support the small group of disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers do not get enough opportunities to develop their classroom practice and keep abreast of educational changes. Those members of staff who have taken on additional leadership responsibilities have not been given sufficient training to carry out their role confidently.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.
- Although the curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn modern foreign languages, and includes lots of opportunities to develop pupils' creativity, the school does not offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Consequently, pupils do not have enough opportunities to play competitive sports. It is also unclear how the additional sport premium funding has been used to encourage physical activities and pupils' well-being.
- The headteacher and governors have failed to promote equality of opportunity. Racist incidents are not recorded and appropriate terminology is not always used when referring to different ethnic groups. Some staff, pupils and parents report that not everyone in the school community is treated fairly.
- The leadership of English, and the provision for special educational needs and early years, are effective because those responsible know what needs to be done and have a clear focus on the improvements needed. Nevertheless, they are frustrated by the lack

of opportunities and funding available for staff development and essential resources. This includes outdoor equipment for the youngest children and specialist electronic equipment to help individual pupils with their learning.

- Visits to the Houses of Parliament, a visit by the local Member of Parliament to the school, and an in-school vote at the same time as the general election, have all helped pupils to understand the basic principles of democracy.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about the 'faith weeks' they hold in school and describe visits to different places of worship, such as a synagogue, mosque, gurdwara, and church. However, teachers do not make good use of pupils' rich cultural diversity to prepare them sufficiently well for life in modern Britain.
- About half of the parents who responded to the online Parent View inspection questionnaire reported that they were happy with the leadership and management of the school. A very small proportion did not agree and almost half said they did not know.

Governance of the school

- Governors do not have an accurate view of the effectiveness of the school and have failed to provide rigorous challenge to the work of the school. They rely too heavily on the information that the headteacher provides and do not check this against pupils' outcomes. Very recently a governor was appointed to oversee the use of pupil premium funds but governors still do not have a secure understanding of how effectively this money is spent. Governors do not check or evaluate the use of the sports funding. They do not rigorously manage the performance of the headteacher and have failed to challenge how decisions about teachers' pay rewards have been made.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and the school meets statutory requirements. However, some aspects of the paperwork required for recruiting staff lack rigour and detail.
- Staff are fully up to date with safeguarding procedures, including those who have recently joined the school. Staff and governors have been trained to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism in accordance with the government's 'Prevent' strategy.
- All adults who work in the school know what to do if they are concerned about a child. The school works closely with relevant external agencies to ensure that children are safe and given the help that they need.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the online Parent View questionnaire felt that the school keeps their children safe and looks after them well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- A lack of investment in teachers' professional development, coupled with an absence of regular checks on classroom practice, has had a negative impact on pupils' learning over time.
- In some subjects, pupils' books show that pupils are too reliant on their teachers to help them complete their work. Pre-prepared frameworks heavily direct pupils' activities and pupils are not always given sufficient time by teachers to work things out for themselves. This is particularly noticeable in some pupils' topic work, which is not used well enough to develop key skills, extend their learning and challenge the most able pupils.
- Not all teachers follow the school's agreed marking policy. This is not picked up by senior leaders when they review books.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well in some classes, especially in Reception and in Year 1. However, this is not a consistent feature across the school. Best use is made of teaching assistants when they model learning with the youngest children or support older pupils to deepen and extend their thinking.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge in reading and writing and teach these skills well. Continual changes to the deployment of teaching staff in Reception and Year 1 over the past few years have had a detrimental impact on the quality of phonics teaching.
- Good use is made of modern foreign language specialists to promote the pupils' learning in French and Spanish, laying down strong foundations for pupils' linguistic skills prior to starting secondary school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have statements of special educational needs or educational, health and care plans are fully included in classroom life and provided with adult support to meet their needs.
- The vast majority of parents feel that their children are taught well by 'very hard working teachers'.
- A small number of parents raised concerns about issues they had raised in the past about the quality of teaching which they felt had not been dealt with appropriately by the headteacher. A few other parents highlighted the poor-quality communication from the school about their children's progress, and late notifications of events and upcoming activities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- A small proportion of pupils talked to inspectors about discriminatory attitudes displayed by a minority of staff towards some groups of pupils. Girls, in particular, explained that they felt marginalised.

- There are very few sporting activities for the pupils to keep themselves fit. Some pupils feel that only the best sportsmen are chosen to participate in such activities.
- A specialist programme supports those pupils who need help with their social skills and mental well-being. However, it is not always used effectively to tackle issues which arise in school.
- Most pupils enjoy coming to school and generally feel safe. They report that there are some staff whom they feel confident in approaching if they have a problem. Pupils talk confidently about using electronic devices safely.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Attitudes to learning are not consistently good. At times, pupils take a while to settle down and start activities. They quickly lose interest when explanations are too long and start to fidget or chat to their friends.
- Conduct in and around the school varies considerably because expectations from adults are not always clear. The lack of activities available for pupils during breaktimes does not support their social skills and pupils become bored or too excitable. This does not contribute to a positive start to lessons.
- Pupils explained very clearly to inspectors that there have been anti-social incidents in school, such as racism and bullying. These are not always dealt with swiftly enough. This was confirmed by comments submitted by some parents during the inspection.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and take turns when speaking in a group.
- Attendance is in line with national averages.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' outcomes in mathematics, particularly those of girls, were noted as a weakness. Although there was a slight improvement in the 2013 national tests, leaders have not consistently tackled pupils' underachievement in this key subject.
- In the most recent national tests, progress from Year 2 to Year 6 was significantly below average. The progress of disadvantaged pupils and girls was particularly poor. Leaders have failed to track and check pupils' progress from key stage 1 to 2.
- Not all pupils make consistent progress in mathematics in key stage 1. In the most recent national tests for Year 2, pupils' attainment was well below the national figure for girls. Compared to their good level of development in mathematics at the end of Reception, their progress was inadequate.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected level in the 2016 phonics screening check was below average. Although this specific cohort has a small proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, outcomes at the end of their Reception Year for reading and writing were above average. This indicates that they did not make sufficient progress in their phonics during their time in Year 1. Outcomes in the phonics screening checks have been in decline for the past few years and this has not been tackled by senior leaders or checked by governors.

- Outcomes in reading and writing are better. In the most recent Year 6 national tests, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard was above average, although fewer reached the higher standard than nationally. Pupils say that they read widely at home and this helps them to gain confidence.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, achieved well in the Year 6 reading tests. A higher than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils were assessed by teachers as working at a greater depth than expected.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and /or disabilities make steady progress because they receive individual support which is tailored to their needs.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter the Reception class well prepared to start school. They listen carefully to adults and respond well to instructions. Children hold pencils correctly and form letters accurately. Most count up to five and beyond, recognise basic shapes and handle equipment, such as scissors, with care.
- Children make good progress during their Reception Year. An above-average proportion reach a good level of development before they move into Year 1 and they are generally well prepared for the next stage of their education. Nevertheless, the proportions reaching this good level of development have been declining over the past three years. Senior leaders have not analysed in detail the reasons for this.
- The early years team has identified that girls achieve better than boys, and this has been identified in their improvement plan for immediate attention.
- The outdoor area does not support the development of the children's skills. It is sterile, dreary and has lacked investment from senior leaders for too long. Teachers have raised concerns about this. The equipment, some of which is more suited to toddlers, does not help the children to extend their physical, social and emotional skills. There are no opportunities to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills and make links with their classroom-learning experiences.
- Reception teachers plan their topics in conjunction with Years 1 and 2. The Reception teachers moderate the topic themes to meet the needs of the younger children and use stories to help them develop and understand new concepts. However, topics such as 'Thanksgiving' and 'New Zealand' do not always relate well to their stage of development.
- Children play alongside each other well and demonstrate growing levels of independence. Behaviour is good and they are always keen and eager to please.
- Following recent training, phonics is systematically taught and children quickly grasp key sounds. This enables them to read and write simple words accurately. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories.
- Parents report that their children settle well into school life. However, a significant minority of parents explained that they would like their first parents' evening with the class teachers before the start of the spring term in January.

School details

Unique reference number	109010
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10019459

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Wakefield
Headteacher	Fran Harding
Telephone number	0117 932 2203
Website	www.themeadowsps.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@meadowsps.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	September 2011

Information about this school

- This school is slightly smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic families is well below average and very few speak English as an additional language.
- There is a below average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs but three times the national average have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans.
- In 2016 the school did not meet the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

- Early years children are accommodated on a full-time basis in one class and taught by two part-time teachers.
- At the start of the inspection, the school did not meet the publication requirements on its website. The school's most recent key stage 2 results had not been included, the complaints policy was not clearly accessible and there was no reference to the school meeting its duties under the 2010 Equalities Act. The missing documentation was uploaded onto the website and, by the end of the inspection, it met requirements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the pupils learning in all classes. Some lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the two acting deputy headteachers, middle leaders, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. At the time of the inspection, the substantive deputy headteacher was on maternity leave.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised during the inspection. This included the development plan, the school's self-evaluation of its performance, the single central record and information relating to pupils' progress.
- Inspectors talked to pupils and looked at their current books. They also looked at some books from the last academic year.
- The 38 responses to the online survey, Parent View, were taken into account along with 32 comments made by parents and discussions held with them on day two of the inspection. Views from nine completed staff questionnaires were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sarah O'Donnell	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Mirams	Ofsted Inspector

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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.

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