

Meadow Primary School

High Street, Balsham, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB21 4DJ

Inspection dates

26–27 January 2017

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership. Alongside her committed and enthusiastic senior leadership team, she has led marked improvements to pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching and learning.
- The quality of the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is good. Teachers plan well together, ensuring that pupils make clear progress across the year groups and key stages.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively, preparing them to become enlightened citizens in twenty-first century Britain.
- Governors are well informed about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, they hold leaders to account for the standards achieved by pupils.
- Children achieve well in the early years. Innovative and challenging teaching means that children make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in most areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils develop their writing, reading and mathematics skills well in many areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils enjoy learning and behave well in the classroom.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress. Teaching assistants contribute to this effective support to meet these pupils' individual needs.
- Teachers develop pupils' language skills, including subject-specific vocabulary, very effectively in all areas of the curriculum.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of science teaching across the key stages. Leaders have strategies in place to address this.
- All pupils make the progress needed to reach the expected levels of achievement for their age, but the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not sufficiently challenged to exceed the expected standards and reach their fullest potential.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and assessment for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - ensuring increased challenge in the teaching of writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers are accurate and confident in their assessment of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the science curriculum offers pupils opportunities to systematically build on their knowledge and skills
 - rigorously evaluating the impact of additional challenge and support methods so that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, reach their potential.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads the school well. She is well supported by her senior leadership team. Together, they have established clear and high expectations of staff.
- Leaders and governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school accurately. They continually monitor, evaluate and provide well-focused training, coaching and mentoring to enable teachers to improve their practice. As a result, most pupils are making good progress in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils and regularly review the impact of the support that has been put in place. In addition to providing support in subjects such as English and mathematics, there are a range of activities to enrich pupils' understanding of the arts and the wider world. Additional activities include theatre visits and the opportunity to play musical instruments. Consequently, most disadvantaged pupils make good progress, academically and socially.
- Leaders make effective use of the physical education and sports premium. Pupils develop a love of sport and fitness through activities such as specialist coaching in football.
- Leadership of reading and writing is strong. Clear, systematic approaches have been embedded, ensuring that pupils develop a robust love of reading. Texts that inspire and excite pupils in all year groups are employed to nurture pupils' reading and writing skills.
- In general, the curriculum is broad and balanced. It provides pupils with opportunities to explore places and subjects that extend their understanding of the world around them. For example, as part of a study of the Arctic and Antarctic, pupils visited the Scott Polar Institute in Cambridge. In addition, pupils at key stage 2 learn French and all pupils learn computing. Nevertheless, the science curriculum does not enable pupils in every year to build systematically on their skills and understanding.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding. For example, all pupils in Year 6 are given school-wide responsibilities, such as anti-bullying mentors. The school council and class representatives system allows pupils to experience democracy and engage in decision-making about school life.
- Leaders have not instilled a consistently rigorous focus on challenging and accelerating the achievements of the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, these pupils do not exceed national standards in some areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics and writing.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide good support and challenge to leaders. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and offer appropriate challenge.

- As part of the Chilford Hundred Education Trust, the school's governing body is part of a larger structure that ensures consistent monitoring and evaluation of standards and resources. The governing body can draw on a range of specialists to reinforce its understanding of budgeting, performance management and pupil progress.
- Governors receive regular training and updates from staff at the school, ensuring that they have a current understanding of pupil progress and attainment. In addition, governors visit the school regularly to conduct learning walks and to talk to pupils about their experiences of school.
- The governors carry out the headteacher's performance management effectively. They set challenging targets and the headteacher responds to the targets diligently and successfully.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Robust processes are in place to ensure the safety of all pupils. The designated safeguarding lead knows the pupils extremely well and is tenacious in ensuring their well-being. She takes prompt action when necessary.
- All staff, including governors, receive regular training to safeguard pupils. Staff apply their training to ensure the safety of pupils.
- Robust processes for recruitment and safeguarding checks are in place and are continually monitored and reviewed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers promote positive attitudes towards learning. In all classrooms, there is an excitement about the themes that pupils are studying. In a Year 5 class, for example, pupils worked in groups to prepare presentations about a range of subjects linked to the theme of Africa. The pupils' enthusiasm for learning and intellectual curiosity was palpable. As a result, pupils developed and extended their understanding through sharing their knowledge.
- The teaching of cursive handwriting is securely embedded throughout the year groups and key stages. An inspector observed Reception children commenting on the importance of cursive writing when forming their letters. As a result, the presentation of pupils' work is exemplary.
- Effective teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is evident across the school and the great majority of pupils make good progress. Joint planning among teachers in key stages ensures that teachers are aware of the skills that pupils need to develop at different stages. The reading of high-quality texts informs the development of pupils' reading and writing, and speaking and listening. Consequently, pupils that inspectors spoke to were very animated about the books that they were reading in class.
- Teaching assistants receive high-quality training. As a result, they are able to provide good support to disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in most areas of the curriculum.

- In some classes, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are not always challenged well through the activities and tasks set in class. Their thinking is not always extended and they do not make accelerated progress in some areas of the curriculum.
- The Year 6 curriculum, on the other hand, is innovative and challenging, resulting in most pupils making very good progress in all areas of the curriculum, including science. However, in other year groups, the science curriculum, and teaching, learning and assessment of science, are not as well developed. The newly appointed science lead has recognised the fact that key scientific skills are not taught effectively and has devised a strategic plan to raise science achievement.
- The school's feedback policy, where teachers assess pupils' work and achievement, is not always consistently applied. In some year groups, feedback is responded to by pupils, resulting in them making progress. However, this is not consistently applied and some pupils do not receive the feedback that they require to progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and welcoming. The 'pupil voice' panel expressed how welcoming their school was to pupils from other countries.
- The school has created a very positive learning climate in which pupils feel empowered to explore their understanding and knowledge without fear of failure.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well throughout the curriculum. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils explored Darwin's theory of evolution in light of different religious beliefs.
- Pupils like learning and are focused and engaged throughout their lessons. They support each other's learning through talk and collaborate well. For example, pupils in a mathematics class were developing their understanding of fractions through collaborative talk.
- Pupils are safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe when online.
- Every Year 6 pupil is given a whole-school responsibility, thereby developing their decision-making and leadership skills.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons. Their conduct, both within the classroom and in the playground, is orderly.
- Leaders work effectively to support pupils who make bad behaviour choices. These pupils receive additional support, which has ensured the eradication of school exclusions. However, some pupils are not fully aware of the school processes for

reporting poor behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current pupils are making good progress in a wide range of subjects. The work in pupils' books and the school's assessment data demonstrate that most pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils' progress in reading is good, with some pupils making exceptional progress at both key stages in the 2016 national tests. This is testament to the robust reading curriculum that the literacy lead has embedded across the school. Together with developing pupils' love of reading, pupils' language skills are developed well, which supports their ability to access more sophisticated texts.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in line with the national average in reading. However, their progress in writing is below the national average. One-to-one support is in place to support these pupils, but the impact is not rigorously evaluated.
- The school has recognised the issue with some underachieving pupils and has provided one-to-one support alongside a range of strategies to accelerate their progress. Leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully and frequently, ensuring that their needs are addressed effectively.
- Improvements in teaching, learning and assessment have been made swiftly, resulting in the marked progress of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of pupils' science work in Year 6 is good. However, there is inconsistency throughout the rest of the school. Leaders are aware of the inconsistency and are assessing the science curriculum to ensure that it meets the academic needs of all pupils.
- The most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make expected progress, but do not exceed national standards in some areas of the curriculum, particularly in science.
- All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, have consistently achieved above the national standard in the Year 1 phonics check. The teaching, learning and assessment of phonics is strong across the early years and in key stage 1. A systematic approach that is employed by all teachers has ensured uniformity and consistency in pupils' learning.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is well led and managed. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision.
- Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning and development and are kept well informed about the progress that their children are making. Good relationships are established prior to children starting school, through events held in school and through visits to pre-school settings to meet key workers. Parents are encouraged to contribute to initial assessments that provide useful information about

their children's interests and development.

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years is good. For example, the early years teachers recognise the difficulty with manual dexterity that many boys have on entering Reception, and focus on developing fine and gross motor skills prior to writing. Case studies of current children demonstrate the progress that they make in their ability to form letters.
- Children are very well behaved and maintain concentration for long periods. They explore the carefully constructed activities well and develop their communicative skills alongside their embryonic phonics, mathematics and writing skills.
- The school provides a safe and caring learning environment. Children behave well and enjoy the company of others. They work and play well together, showing that they can take turns and share sensibly. They listen carefully to adults and to each other. Their good behaviour suggests that they feel safe in school.

School details

Unique reference number	140622
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10023340

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The Chilford Hundred Education Trust
Chair	Clare Gorman
Headteacher	Nichola Connor
Telephone number	01223 894400
Website	www.themeadowbalsham.co.uk/index.asp
Email address	head@meadow.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is

below average.

- The school is a part of the Chilford Hundred Education Trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons, including lessons in key stage 1 and key stage 2, jointly with the headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher; deputy headteacher; assistant headteacher; the leaders of mathematics, English, science, the early years, special educational needs and/or disabilities and other subject areas; seven governors; the executive principal of the Chilford Hundred Education Trust; pupils and teachers.
- Pupils' books and records of their progress were scrutinised.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their reading experiences with them.
- Account was taken of the responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's development plan and analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, safeguarding policies and records, and records made by leaders on the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

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