



# The Meadows Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 103296  
**LEA** Birmingham  
**Inspection number** 276886  
**Inspection dates** 15 November 2005 to 16 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** David Carrington RISP

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Bristol Road South
<b>School category</b>	Community		Birmingham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		West Midlands B31 2SW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 6753203
<b>Number on roll</b>	430	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 6752242
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr David Baker
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 June 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Vicky Greggs

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The Meadows Primary School is a large primary school where the majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average. There is a language unit for 26 pupils with statements of need. The attainment of children when they start in the Reception classes is broadly average.

The headteacher started in September 2005 and the deputy headteacher was appointed more recently. The school has a new chair of governors.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides satisfactorily for the pupils, and this is the school's view too. Its strengths are to be found in how well it nurtures pupils' personal development, the work of the language unit, and a good curriculum. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory which leads to sound progress. Standards are average, although achievement in writing is not as effective as other subjects. Provision for children in the Reception classes is satisfactory and they make steady progress.

In general, the school knows itself well, which is confirmed by the inspection findings. Crucially, the new leadership team has identified the critical things to bring about more rapid progress and higher standards. There are clear and positive indications that the school is on the right track and has the secure capacity to move ahead. The school has a good curriculum that successfully promotes pupils' personal development and well-being and strengths in art and French. It gives satisfactory value for money.

However, monitoring and evaluation of provision and achievement are not yet sharp enough, nor are enough staff or governors involved in the process. The headteacher and her team have already put in place effective strategies to add rigour to assessment systems. Nevertheless, pupils' targets are not precisely focused to provide ample challenge for all pupils, especially the higher attainers.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve monitoring and evaluation in order to raise the quality of teaching and standards, particularly in writing
- ensure that targets are consistently challenging, especially for higher attaining pupils so that their progress is uniformly brisk.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Children start the Reception classes with broadly average skills and knowledge and they make satisfactory progress. Satisfactory progress is maintained in later years so that pupils leave Year 6 with average standards in English, mathematics and science.

Over recent years, the school has had mixed success in reaching its targets for English and mathematics. It has been more successful in improving the standard of mathematics than it has English, particularly writing where pupils' targets have been insufficiently challenging. Higher attaining pupils are not always set work to tax their knowledge and skills. In many lessons they complete the same work as everyone else and where harder work is set they often start it too late in the lesson. This means that, whilst their overall progress is satisfactory, it is not always brisk enough. The new leadership team is in the process of refining targets so they accurately reflect the capabilities of the pupils. There is still some way to go to ensure that each pupil reaches his or her potential, but a promising start has been made. There is good evidence in pupils' work of the positive impact that this is having on writing standards this term.

Pupils with learning difficulties in the language unit make good progress. Staff work well to encourage these pupils to learn effectively by ensuring their lessons are interesting and enjoyable. Pupils with learning difficulties in the main school make satisfactory progress.

Many more boys than girls have learning difficulties, which reduces the standards reached by boys. However, in lessons it is noticeable that the boys are generally as involved and well motivated as the girls and that they make similar progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children in the Reception classes build good social skills because they are encouraged to develop self-confidence. Throughout the school pupils show enjoyment in their learning, good behaviour and have positive attitudes. Attendance rates are satisfactory.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and helping pupils to become responsible future citizens. Pupils' appreciation of different cultures is well fostered, for example, the celebration of Diwali involved pupils in producing some lovely artwork, such as a large collage of Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of good fortune, created by Year 3 pupils. Opportunities for personal reflection are given during assembly, but these are occasionally rushed.

Pupils show a good awareness of safety. They have a growing understanding of how to stay healthy, although the lunch choices they are offered do not always help to reinforce this understanding. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community, and say how much they enjoy hosting a tea party for local senior citizens.

Pupils get along happily together. Many willingly take on responsibilities, such as becoming members of the developing school council, or acting as monitors. There are some useful opportunities for pupils to share with their teachers how well they think they are doing. They also share their own ideas for making improvements. These activities help them prepare for later life. Pupils told inspectors that they felt very proud, when asked by the city council, to name some of the new roads built as part of the housing development next to the school. They chose 'Meadow Gate' and 'School Close'.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with a number of good features. Subject knowledge is good, lessons are made interesting, and teaching assistants give effective support to their pupils. For the most part lessons now build on pupils' existing knowledge and skills. The teacher's effective encouragement in a Year 6 English lesson ensured that pupils made good progress in their use of expressive language. The pupils say that they like their teachers and that staff look after them well.

Pupils with special educational needs in the main school are satisfactorily taught. Teaching in the language unit is good because teachers have a good understanding of their pupils' progress. Consequently, they plan lessons that effectively meet pupils' needs, using a variety of approaches.

The use of assessment and target setting is not as strongly developed in the main school as it is in the unit. Indeed, until recently, this shortcoming has meant that these systems have been of limited use in setting challenging targets, especially for higher attainers.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

There is a full and interesting curriculum that adds interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning. Strengths include the opportunity to learn French and the attention given to art and design. Lesson planning in English and mathematics has now been revised to include extension activities for the higher attainers and this is helping to strengthen achievement in writing. The curriculum for Reception children meets their needs successfully, and provision in the language unit is well planned to encourage the step by step development of skills and knowledge. There is a satisfactory range of activities available outside lesson times, which is a good improvement on the situation last year. A wide range of visits to places of educational and cultural interest contribute well to pupils' learning. Residential visits, including one for pupils in the language unit, are very popular amongst the pupils, and broaden their experiences well.

There is good provision made for promoting health and safety, including a visit from the coastguard to teach Years 5 and 6 pupils about safety on the beach. Pupils are encouraged to consider ways to be healthy, and to take a good amount of exercise. The school is working towards the Healthy Schools Award.

The strengths of the curriculum are being used well to improve provision across the school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall and there are strengths in the quality of personal care. The school ensures that all pupils, including those in the language unit and Reception classes, are kept safe and secure. Child protection arrangements are securely in place. The staff are good role models for the pupils. The pupils say that staff listen to them when they have problems and take effective action to sort their concerns. These successful strategies help pupils to work happily and productively.

The guidance given to pupils is satisfactory. It is good in terms of their personal development, but is satisfactory in academic matters. Because effective assessment procedures in the main school are at an early stage of development, the challenge for higher attaining pupils is not consistent. Consequently, these pupils do not always

achieve as well as they could. Pupils in the language unit receive a good level of support and guidance, built on a clear understanding of their needs.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher, new leadership team, and new chair of governors are united in their determination to move the school forward. They are concentrating their attention on the things that matter most in the drive to raise standards. Staff share the headteacher's clear vision for the future. They feel energised by her approaches that are giving them wider involvement in school decision making.

Leadership and management ensure a good quality of pastoral care. Parents rate highly the family values the school promotes. They feel well listened to, but so far have not played a major role in the school's self review.

There are sound strategies for checking the school's effectiveness, particularly in the use of data to plan improvements. However, monitoring and evaluation are not sharp enough tools to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has made a good start in monitoring lessons and her judgements about the quality of teaching are spot on. Nevertheless, the links between professional development and performance management are not tight enough. The use of assessment and target setting to speed pupils' progress is insecure. Whilst assessment has been improved this term, the challenge for pupils to do well is not consistent or rigorous enough.

Governors are supportive and fulfil all required responsibilities. They have established a good action plan to help develop their monitoring role. The budget is very finely balanced and sound financial planning has eliminated a deficit. However, tight finance has led to some neglect of the premises that pupils are concerned about. In response to the pupils' views, the school has begun work to improve the buildings, the outdoor space, and the quality of equipment

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

The School Council The Meadows Primary School Bristol Road South Northfield Birmingham B31 2SW

17 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we inspected your school earlier this week. We enjoyed talking with you, finding out what you like about school and what you would like to see improved.

You told us that you enjoy coming to school, and that your teachers look after you well and treat you fairly. We agree with you, and also think that there are other good things:

you behave well, work sensibly with other children, and play together happily

the things you study are interesting and cover a wide range of subjects, including art and French where you do particularly well

children in the language unit who have some difficulties in learning are given work that makes sure they take one small learning step followed by another.

There are two important areas where your teachers can make improvements so that you learn even better:

they can make sure your targets are hard enough, particularly in English

they can find out more about how well you are learning.

When talking to you, many of you said that your teachers were the best thing about school. They are going to make many changes to school in the next few months. You can help them make these improvements. The first step you can take is to share with your teachers how well you think you are doing, and to tell them more about your own ideas for making improvements.

We wish you good luck with your work and hope that you enjoy the new things to come.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington Lead Inspector