

Meadowhead Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119122
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	291327
Inspection date	20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Mark Williams HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Narayan
Headteacher	Mrs Glenys Purchase
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002
School address	Shorrock Lane Blackburn Lancashire BB2 4TT
Telephone number	01254 202600
Fax number	01254 207877

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Meadowhead Infant School is larger than average. Nearly all pupils are White British. Forty two per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has Healthy Schools status and is part of a national project to support Traveller pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school in which pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, consistently make outstanding progress in their learning and personal development. This is the result of excellent leadership and management, particularly from the headteacher, high quality teaching and outstanding levels of care, guidance and support. Consequently, this is a successful and inclusive school that knows itself well, has great expectations of what pupils should be able to do and has highly appropriate plans for the future. It gives outstanding value for money. It is very well placed to improve even further.

From starting points that are below and often well below those found nationally, particularly in the areas of speaking and listening and social skills, pupils make outstanding progress in their learning. They reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are generally above average and have done so for several years, although for 2007 the school has quickly identified that girls have not achieved as well as boys at the higher levels of writing and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make equally outstanding progress. This is the result of high quality teaching and support throughout the school. Each pupil's progress is rigorously checked to ensure that no one slips through the net. The school also checks groups of pupils so that it has a very clear picture; for example, of how well Traveller pupils and those with social and emotional difficulties are progressing.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. Pupils enjoy school a great deal, are very enthusiastic and behave very well. They have excellent attitudes to healthy and safe living and this is enhanced by the school's 'Healthy Schools' status. Overall, their spiritual, moral and social development is very good, although their understanding of cultures other than their own is satisfactory. Attendance is improving and is in line with national averages. It would be higher but is skewed by a small number of pupils who are regularly absent. The pupils love to take responsibility; for example, on the school council and through acting as play leaders. They contribute very well to the community and, through their outstanding progress in developing basic skills, they are very well placed to continue their education in the junior school.

Children make a very good start in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes). They are introduced to school life very well and benefit from high quality teaching, which continues right through the school. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well to make learning fun. A strong feature of teaching is the way in which teachers and their assistants question and encourage the pupils to think and give that little bit more. The curriculum is good. It promotes pupils' speaking and listening skills particularly effectively and supports their social, moral and health development very well. It does not, however, ensure that all pupils gain an appreciation of the cultural richness of our society. A key strength of provision from the Nursery through to Year 2 is the outstanding care, guidance and support pupils receive. The school knows its families extremely well, has high expectations and seeks to and succeeds in developing the whole child.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enhance the curriculum to include opportunities for pupils to appreciate the cultural richness of society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress in their learning and personal development. They reach standards at the end of Key Stage 1 that are generally above average. This is the result of the very good start they make in the Foundation Stage and the high quality teaching and support they receive throughout the school. Expectations of what pupils should be able to do are high. Each pupil's progress is rigorously checked and, if there are signs that they are falling behind, support is quickly organised. These measures include continuing the practical activities of the Foundation Stage into Year 1 so that children who do not meet national goals at the end of the Reception class do so quickly in the first year of compulsory schooling. They also include checking by group so that the school has a very clear picture of how well Traveller pupils and those with social and emotional difficulties, for example, are progressing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of the pupils are outstanding and reflect the excellent care, guidance and support they receive. Pupils enjoy school a great deal and this is seen in their enthusiasm for learning and very good behaviour. Attendance is satisfactory overall, although this is skewed downwards by a few regular absentees.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good: they support each other well, are proud to be a part of this school community and show an increasingly mature understanding of what is right and wrong. They value greatly the opportunity to be 'lunchtime VIPs' or receive 'golden awards'. Their understanding of cultures other than their own is satisfactory.

Pupils display excellent attitudes to healthy and safe living. They show careful regard to each other in the play ground, Foundation Stage outdoor play areas and in physical education lessons in the hall, so that these areas appear to be more spacious than they actually are. Their excellent awareness of the need for healthy living is enhanced by the school's Healthy Schools' status. In one lesson observed, pupils packed a healthy lunch box and explained clearly that too much sugar in chocolate bars can be bad for you. In the outdoor play area, one pupil clearly understood fully her observation that smoking around babies damages more than one life.

Pupils relish opportunities to take responsibility; for example, on the school council, which suggested new playground surfaces and markings, and through acting as play leaders at break and lunchtimes. Their outstanding progress in developing basic skills, including ICT, means they are very well placed to continue their education in the junior school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is outstanding throughout the school. It is typified by a number of very strong features, including: high expectations of what pupils should achieve; very good levels of support from teaching assistants; well planned lessons that make clear what pupils are to learn; and activities that are interesting and matched to need. Information and communication technology is used very well to support teaching and make learning fun. Pupils participate well and particularly

enjoy the opportunities to discuss with their talking partners what they are learning; for example, clock times. A key feature of lessons is the way in which teachers and their assistants question and encourage pupils to think and give that little bit more. As a result of these strengths, lessons are pacy, develop speaking and listening skills well, and ensure that pupils make excellent progress in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and designed to meet pupils' needs well. It promotes pupils' speaking and listening skills particularly effectively and supports their social, moral and health development very well. It does not, however, ensure that all pupils gain an appreciation of the cultural richness of society.

Resources, including ICT, are used very effectively to support teaching and learning and enhance opportunities for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to make the best progress possible. The curriculum is further enhanced by a good range of visits; for example, to local zoos and bird sanctuaries, and visitors to the school. Lunchtime VIPs enthused about the visit of two firemen earlier in the school year. The very good outdoor play areas enhance Foundation Stage provision well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school knows its pupils and families extremely well. Its outstanding levels of care are reflected in its high expectations and the excellent range of guidance and support measures that succeed in developing the whole child. Induction procedures ensure a good start to life at school and parents appreciate this. Pupils, including the most vulnerable, are looked after very well. Clearly understood policies ensure that the school is safe and the rigorous checking of each pupil's progress ensures that no one slips through the net. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are catered for sensitively in this caring, inclusive school. Pupils' behaviour is managed very well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has set the tone and ethos for this successful school. Very ably supported by senior leaders and governors, there is a 'nothing is impossible' approach that is understood equally well by all staff and pupils. Nearly all parental responses received during the inspection confirmed that the school is held in high regard. The result is a very well led and managed school that ensures pupils make excellent progress in their learning and personal development.

The school does not stand still. Its work is regularly scrutinised by the headteacher, leaders and governors and, where necessary, improvements are made. Governors hold the school to account very well. Financial management is very good and has the interests of the pupils at its heart. Curriculum teams, for example in literacy, despite being relatively new, are very effective and know how well pupils are achieving. Leadership is widely delegated, ensuring that the school has a very good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Consequently, its plans for the future are highly appropriate to the needs of its pupils.

The current headteacher retires at the end of this term. She will be greatly missed. However, she has created a team in which all have responsibility. This, the excellent rates of progress, and the improvements made since the previous inspection mean this school has outstanding capacity to improve even further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meadowhead Infant School, Blackburn BB2 4TT

Thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed speaking with you, listening to what you had to say, seeing you dance in the playground and playing catch. I have to say, you are much better at catching than I am!

Well what did I find out? Let me tell you that you go to an outstanding school. Very well done! I can almost hear you cheering now!

Your school is outstanding because the adults care for, look after and teach you very well indeed. This means you make excellent progress in your learning. The adults give you lots of very good opportunities to join in with lessons. It was good to see you speaking clearly and listening to each other carefully. I particularly like the way you get on with each other and behave very well. You are well mannered and considerate.

You know all this could not happen without the adults. Your headteacher, staff and governors lead your school very well. Your headteacher, who I know you will miss when she leaves in a few weeks time, has built a very good team. I have asked that the team makes your school even better by providing you with opportunities to know about different cultures. I know you will all work hard together and wish you all well for the future.

Keep up the good work and, again, well done to you all!

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector