



# Meadowside Infant School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 121901  
**Local Authority** Northamptonshire  
**Inspection number** 292253  
**Inspection date** 6 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Helen Barter

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	Park Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Burton Latimer
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-7		Kettering NN15 5QY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01536 723985
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	129	<b>Fax number</b>	01536 723985
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Melville Smith
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Diane Perry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 June 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Children attend this smaller than average infant school from the small town of Burton Latimer. It has two Reception classes and three mixed-age Year 1 and Year 2 classes. Nearly all children are of White British heritage and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly higher than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is lower than average but increasing. Attainment on entry to the Reception Year is broadly average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

From the moment one arrives at Meadowside Infants it is easy to see why parents say, 'They don't just teach here, they care'. This is a good school where children thoroughly enjoy learning and achieve well as a result. Its most exceptional feature is the outstanding curriculum which helps children to develop a genuine love of learning and to make excellent progress in their personal development and well-being. The ethos in which children are keen to learn and parents want to help them to do their best owes much to the good quality care, support and guidance provided by all of the staff.

First-rate teamwork is at the heart of the school's good leadership and management. The continuation of the good quality of education previously reported, and improved standards in all areas of its work, clearly indicates that the school has the capacity to improve even further. Parents praise the school for being 'a happy, friendly place where everyone works together to ensure that the children's needs are met'. Excellent relationships between staff and children result in children's exemplary behaviour. They simply know what is expected of them and say that 'school is a happy place to be'.

Children get off to a good start in Reception and nearly all reach the standards expected by the end of the year. Whilst some exceed these, a few children need extra support at the start of Year 1 to help them securely know their sounds and letters. In Years 1 and 2, children continue to do well. The well above average standards reached by children at the end of Year 2, and their excellent personal qualities, mean that they are exceptionally well prepared for their move to junior school. Children of all abilities develop particularly good reading skills through well-structured teaching and a great deal of help at home. Whilst they also do well in writing and mathematics, there is scope for the most capable children to do even better in these subjects. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities do particularly well, due to the well planned support provided for them in the classroom.

The key factor which contributes to the children's good achievement is the good quality of teaching and learning. They enjoy school because teachers make lessons interesting and provide them with a rich variety of activities which benefit their academic and personal development. Children confidently tackle work because activities are clearly explained to them and they know that they will be helped if they get stuck. Teachers are beginning to make good use of the new system for tracking children's progress and to plan work for those who need help to stop them falling behind. The school knows that this system could be used even more effectively to boost the challenge for the most capable children so that they achieve at the highest levels.

The school has an accurate view of its work through improved assessment procedures and well-focused monitoring of teaching and learning by senior staff. There is now scope to develop the skills of other subject leaders in checking the quality of teaching and learning so that all staff have a clear view of what needs to be done to help children make even better progress.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Embed the new system for monitoring and tracking children's progress so that teachers have a clear view of how to help the most capable children to achieve as well as they possibly can.
- Strengthen the skills of subject leaders to check on and further improve the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children start school in Reception with skills and abilities which are broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress and nearly all meet the goals expected of them by the end of the Reception Year. Whilst a few of the youngest children, particularly boys, take a little longer to develop in maturity than others, the great majority make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. A well-structured approach to teaching letter sounds means that children make good progress in their language development, although a few still need extra practice in Year 1 in linking their sounds and letters together. A good focus on developing children's ability to use number through practical activities has improved their mathematical skills.

Children continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2. With some slight variation, standards have been well above average in reading, writing and mathematics over the last four years. Children's current work suggests that they are well on track to match these standards and to meet their challenging targets. The teaching of reading is a significant strength in the school and results in all children achieving very well. Whilst more reach the higher levels than nationally overall, comparatively fewer do so in writing and mathematics than in reading.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Children have a real zest for learning and attend well because they thoroughly enjoy their time in school. Children's behaviour is exceptionally good and is a spontaneous response to teachers' very high expectations. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their awareness of other cultures and faiths and their spiritual awareness have improved well since the previous inspection. Children quickly grow in confidence and independence and readily assume responsibilities, such as being on the class and school councils and having special jobs. Children have played an important role in improving their school community by requesting a quiet area at playtimes. They feel safe and care for one another very well. They know that they should walk sensibly 'so that people don't get bumped'. They have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives and most try to bring healthy food in their lunchboxes. Their good levels of literacy and numeracy and their confidence and self-esteem ensure that children are exceptionally well prepared for life ahead.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The parent who said that 'children are encouraged to be thinkers, not just learners' is right. Teachers have a very good understanding of how young children learn. Lessons are planned in great detail, with varied activities for children's different abilities and ages within the class. Teachers use questioning very well to develop children's thinking and speaking skills and to check their understanding when giving responses. Teaching assistants give good support to groups and individuals with particular needs and help to reinforce the positive ethos of learning together. Children's extremely positive attitudes to learning are a significant factor in helping them to achieve well. The assessment of children's work has improved well since the previous inspection, and teachers have a better grasp of the levels at which children are working. The new system for tracking children's progress across the school is beginning to help teachers to understand better how well children are doing. This now needs to be developed so that all staff are clear as to whether children of all abilities, but particularly the most capable, are doing as well as they can.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The creative curriculum brings learning alive and contributes significantly to children's achievement and personal development. Imaginative activities entice Reception-age children to learn. They learn about the world of work as well as practise their literacy and numeracy skills through role play in the 'post office', for example. Throughout the school, there is a focus on developing a love of learning and the skills needed for life ahead. This is achieved not only through everyday lessons, but also through a good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. The Meadowside Savers give children experience of working together and saving money towards a shared goal. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well to stimulate children's interest in learning and to develop their good ICT skills. Links between subjects such as history and literacy are very well planned, and have led to much improved opportunities for children to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. Specialist teachers, including those from the local arts college, ensure that children receive a rich education in music, sport and drama.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The fact that parents describe the school as 'one big family' where 'the door is open at all times' is an indication of the high standard of pastoral care provided for children. Procedures for safeguarding children and for ensuring their health and safety, such as staying safe on roads and in the sun, are rigorous. The school understands the needs of young children and their families very well and makes excellent use of its links with

outside agencies to support the most vulnerable. It provides a high level of support for children with learning difficulties or disabilities to make sure that they achieve as well as others. The school has clear plans to develop the academic guidance given to pupils so that they make even better progress. Children know what their 'learning intentions' are and are beginning to assess for themselves how well they have achieved these. Although they value the 'little clues' that teachers give through marking, there is scope to make the next steps more clear for children, particularly for the most capable who regularly complete work correctly.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and her deputy have been the driving force behind the school's good standards and continued improvement since the last inspection. Together, they have assembled a good staff team who work together with a sense of purpose to provide children with the best education they can and to iron out any areas of weakness. Governors make a strong contribution to the school's success because they have a good understanding of its strengths and are sufficiently well informed to hold it to account for areas which need improvement. For example, they have made carefully reasoned decisions, based on the impact on children's learning, to maintain mixed-age classes until pupil numbers and the school's budget increase. Parents have been kept fully informed of this decision and are wholly supportive.

The school's self-evaluation processes, which include very good consultations with parents, children and staff, clearly indicate that the school knows what is effective and what can be improved further. The school recognises that subject leaders, other than the headteacher and deputy, now need to develop their roles in checking on the quality of provision in the areas that they oversee to ensure that children do as well as they possibly can in all subjects. The school is forward-thinking and strives to meet the needs of the local community by forging links with, for example, other schools, pre-school settings and local churches. The planned opening of a Children's Centre later this year demonstrates the school's good capacity to manage change and to continue to work to meet the needs of local children.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

What a lovely time I had when I came to visit your school recently! You were all so friendly and welcoming when I visited your classrooms, talked with you about your work and had my lunch with you. You did a really good job in helping me to find out how well you are learning and what you think about your school. You told me that you go to a good school, and you are right! These are some of the best things:

- Right from the time you start to when you leave to go to the Juniors, you all learn very well. You reach standards which are quite a bit higher than most other children in the country, so well done!
- You are exceptionally well behaved and are growing up into really sensible, confident and helpful young people.
- Your teachers know just how young people like you think and how you learn. They make lessons interesting and really help you when you get stuck.
- You really enjoy school because you are given so many exciting things to do in lessons, in clubs and after-school. I know you really enjoy gardening and I'm sure you can't wait to see the spring bulbs that you planted start to flower.
- All the adults in your school care very much about you. They make sure you are safe and healthy and listen to you when you have any worries.
- The school is organised very well indeed. Your parents think it is too!

Even though you are all doing so well, the school wants to help you to do even better! All the adults know the right things to do and are working really hard to make sure they happen. To help them a bit more, I have asked them to do these two things:

- Keep checking that you are all learning as well as you possibly can. Then give you work which makes you have to think really hard, especially those of you who find work easy.
- Help all of the teachers to become even better at looking at how well you are learning so that you do your very best in absolutely everything. With very best wishes for everything you do in the future.