



Meads Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125964
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293415
Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006
Reporting inspector Sheila Browning

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mill Way
School category	Community		East Grinstead
Age range of pupils	4–11		RH19 4DD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01342 322905
Number on roll (school)	263	Fax number	01342 300681
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Sue Kent
		Headteacher	Rhona Perry
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006	Inspection number 293415
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most other primary schools. Most pupils are from White British families, but a few minority ethnic groups are also represented. The profile of the school is a changing one, with falling rolls and increasing numbers of pupils joining the school with learning difficulties and disabilities. Significant numbers of pupils have joined the school requiring speech and language support. The headteacher had been on long-term sick leave prior to his retirement in May 2006. In addition, there have been long-term staff absence and some significant staff changes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The Meads Primary School is a satisfactory and improving school. It has experienced a period of significant staff turbulence at all levels and is currently without a permanent headteacher. During this time the acting headteacher has guided the school well. Senior managers, teachers and governors ably support her. Together, they know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and work effectively as a team to secure improvement. To raise standards various new systems have been introduced. For example, increased monitoring of provision has pinpointed strengths and weaknesses. In response to these findings the curriculum is undergoing change to better meet pupils' needs. Creative and exciting learning opportunities are increasing such as when the 'Roman Legion' visited for the day. To better support teaching and learning the use of assessment information and the tracking of pupils' progress is being reviewed. However, it is not yet rigorous enough to secure sustained high standards. Underachieving pupils are now more carefully targeted for support early on and because of well-focused support they achieve well. Early identification and support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is a strength and they achieve well.

Children join the school with skills broadly in line with those expected for their age. By the end of Reception year they reach the expected standards because of the satisfactory provision. Standards are above average by the time pupils leave the school. In Years 1 to 4 pupils' achievement is satisfactory because teaching is uneven and ranges from satisfactory to good. In Years 5 and 6 pupils make better progress because teaching is consistently good. Achievement is satisfactory overall. The relative weaknesses in teaching have been identified and are being tackled. These actions are relatively new, and there has been insufficient time for them to have impacted significantly on raising standards, but there are some early indications of improvement.

Pupils are very well behaved and are kind to each other and say they enjoy coming to school. Almost all learners are interested in their work and consistently try hard. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive and there is sensitivity to the needs of individual learners. Consequently, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are well cared for and supported and have a good secure knowledge of how to live safe, healthy lifestyles in preparation for their future life. Academic guidance is not yet rigorous enough and few pupils know their targets. The very good environment and good quality resources contribute positively to pupils' achievement. Most parents view the work of the school very positively. One parent said, 'I feel that the school is very good at motivating the children and acknowledging their achievements, no matter how small they may appear to others.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good and reflected in good progress at all stages in the school.
- Ensure the rigorous tracking of pupils' progress using information from assessment more effectively to set individual targets and share these with pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are above average by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children join the school with broadly average skills expected for their age. By the end of Reception year, almost all children meet the nationally agreed goals because of satisfactory teaching and provision. Pupils build on this progress steadily in Years 1 to 2 to achieve average standards. Pupils' work seen in lessons, displays and the latest test results confirm that since the last inspection broadly average standards are sustained by the end of Year 2. In Years 1 to 4, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In Year 3, a significant number of pupils, largely girls who had learning difficulties when in Reception and Year 1, are beginning to make steady progress because of recent action taken. Pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6. By Year 6 girls achieve particularly well given their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Reception children settle happily. Pupils are considerate to one another, behave very well, and the trust they have in adults means they feel safe and well cared for. Pupils commented on how much better behaviour was now because of recent changes. They have good knowledge of how to live healthy lifestyles and take care of themselves. They value a balanced diet and comment 'fruit keeps you going longer but instant energy comes from other sources'. Many pupils take part in sports clubs and understand the need for regular exercise.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They reflect deeply on their experiences. Social development is particularly strong and pupils relish the responsibilities they have in school to care for one another and contribute to charitable causes at home and abroad. Pupils' contribution to and involvement in school life is good and in the local community their involvement is satisfactory. Pupils say they especially enjoy studying subjects in depth and at length and, as a result, attendance is above average. Pupils develop basic skills well, are socially adept and independent and this bodes well for their future lives. Communications with parents are good. Close links with agencies support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities effectively so that they achieve well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching in the upper part of the school is good, which accounts for the good progress made by pupils in Years 5 and 6. In these classes, teachers ensure that learning objectives are shared and understood and

lessons are brisk. They use effective questioning skills to assess and consolidate pupils' understanding. Pupils' behaviour is well managed, resulting in good behaviour and an enjoyment for learning. The quality of teaching in Years 1 to 4 is satisfactory, but varies in quality, not all teachers share the objectives of a lesson and recap at the end so that pupils know what is to be learnt and can assess their own understanding. Opportunities are missed for them to share their learning with others. On occasion, pupils waste time queuing to have their work checked or waiting to move on to the next task. Learning support assistants are not always well used to support pupils' learning. Setting in Years 5 and 6 for English and mathematics and in Years 3 and 4 for mathematics is addressing previous underachievement. Recent inconsistencies in learning literacy due to repeated changes in teaching personnel in Reception Year are being addressed satisfactorily. The quality of marking varies in quality and does not always relate to the learning objectives and spell out clearly what has been achieved and what remains to be done. As a result, few pupils are able to discuss their next learning targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Reception children experience a balanced curriculum. The school has identified and dealt with some recent lapses in standards of teaching and learning resulting from the repeated changes of personnel in Reception. This has resulted in improved lesson planning, tighter monitoring of pupils' language awareness and extra support for targeted pupils. The curriculum still requires greater development to meet the needs of all pupils to secure high achievement particularly in relation to reinforcing learning objectives and targets for differing groups of pupils. Enrichment activities support pupils' personal development and enjoyment for learning, such as themed weeks and languages. Learning German, Dutch, creative arts, sports and a residential experience are exciting elements. For example, to develop pupils' cultural experiences the whole school visited the National Gallery taking part in 'Take One Picture' and submitted some excellent work for an exhibition. Participation rates in extra-curricular activities are good. Links with local community sports officers and coaches aid learners' development. Very good links with other external agencies support pupils' learning effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with strengths in the care and support pupils receive which impacts very positively on pupils' good personal development. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Because the school has not tracked pupils' progress rigorously enough, and particularly so in the Foundation Stage, it therefore does not have a secure understanding of how pupils could achieve higher standards. Consequently, pupils are unclear about their own targets or how well they are working towards them. The emphasis on speaking and listening and the inclusive nature of the school aid learning for pupils requiring speech and language support so that they

achieve well. Links with external agencies are effective. Secure systems are in place for pupils' safety and welfare and child protection systems are robust. In the Reception year, good arrangements for children new to the school enable them to settle quickly. Central to the work of the school is the promotion of pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher, with the support of her senior managers and the core of established teachers, has maintained a good sense of teamwork and shared responsibility for improvement. The many unavoidable changes of staffing have resulted in weaknesses in the consistency of the way the school monitors and evaluates teaching and learning with the result that all pupils do not make consistently good progress. As a result of some positive changes and improved systems being introduced such weaknesses are being tackled and the school's evaluation of its own performance is now satisfactory, as is the capacity to improve. Senior managers and governors have been instrumental in bringing about such improvements but correctly realise that there is much more to be done. The school's strategic plan for example does not focus sharply enough on raising standards to sustain improvement. New teachers are well inducted in line with the determined and ongoing focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The work of the governing body is satisfactory. They have supported the acting headteacher well and are developing their role of challenging the school. They have been active and successful in developing the school's facilities, especially the information and communication technology (ICT) suite. The school's budget is used sensibly for the benefit of pupils. Good quality resources and a well-maintained building encourage pupils to respect where they work and play.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

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.

Leadership and management

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

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking and listening to you and seeing your work. We were impressed with your good behaviour and how well you get on with each other. You know how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles and this will help you in your future life.

Your school has seen many changes recently especially in staffing and has been without a permanent headteacher for quite a long period. During this time the acting headteacher and staff have worked hard together to continue to improve the school and provide a satisfactory education for everyone. Most of you are working hard and getting on fine. Those of you who have special support are doing especially well. Teachers are tracking your progress but we think this needs to be done better to help you get on. So we have asked teachers to use the assessment information to ensure that you all make the progress you should. You can help by checking your own learning targets and by working hard to achieve them.

To help you, teachers need to make sure that all your lessons are interesting and pitched just at the right level for you. We have asked them to make sure that teaching is always at least good and to expect more from you. The curriculum is being altered to better help you learn all the things you should know. We think you do some interesting and exciting things too, such as learning German and Dutch and when the Roman Legion visited and your trip to the National Gallery. Many of you told us how much you enjoyed school and all the extra-curricular and enrichment activities you do and how well the school takes care of you.