



# Meadowbank Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 135008  
**Local Authority** Stockport  
**Inspection number** 294248  
**Inspection dates** 14–15 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Dee Brigstock

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>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Councillor Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Cheadle
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Cheshire SK8 2LE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 428 6286
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	371	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 491 1330
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs H Thompson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Janine Appleton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
3–11	14–15 February 2007	294248

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

In September 2005, a local infant and junior school were amalgamated to form Meadowbank, a large primary school in an area of average prosperity. A new headteacher was appointed. The school includes a specialist provision for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including pupils with a statement of special educational need, is well above average. Almost all pupils are White British, with a below average proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language is average. The school includes several children who are looked after by the local authority.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and the standards they attain in Key Stage 2. Because of these weaknesses, the effectiveness of the school is inadequate.

Standards by Year 2 are broadly average. As children enter school with average standards this represents satisfactory achievement. Standards in Key Stage 2 are average in mathematics and below average in English and science. Two groups of pupils, the most capable and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are not making as much progress as they should. This is because some lesson planning is aimed to meet the needs of the average pupils so the work is too hard for the least able pupils and not challenging enough for the most capable ones. The school does not give value for money because the achievement of older pupils in the basic skills does not prepare them well enough for their next school or their future.

Children in the Foundation Stage have a good start to their education. They experience stimulating learning in a colourful, pleasant environment and learn well, making particularly good progress in speaking and listening and acquiring social skills. In Years 1 to 6 the curriculum, although satisfactory overall, does not fully meet the needs of all groups of learners. In science it is not well enough planned to interest and excite the pupils' sense of discovery. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily in Key Stage 1, where those within the school's specialist provision are increasingly included in mainstream classes. As a result, not only are expectations raised all round, but pupils' social development is accelerated. In Key Stage 2 pupils in the school's specialist provision are included in fewer mainstream lessons and their curriculum is very different from those of other pupils their age. Consequently, they make less progress than other pupils.

As a result of the actions taken by leaders, the quality of teaching and learning is now satisfactory. This is demonstrated in the improved progress that pupils in Key Stage 1 now make. There is some good teaching in school. Where it is good, lessons are planned using accurate assessment information. Lessons are briskly paced and completely engage pupils in their learning. Time is used well to focus sharply on what each group is learning, resulting in at least good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. However, there is still too much variation in how well lessons are planned. Some lessons, although satisfactory overall, lack the drive to accelerate pupils' progress because they are not pitched at the right levels of difficulty for all pupils. All staff have high expectations of how work is to be presented and pupils generally behave very well in classrooms.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and some good aspects of leadership have produced a change for the better. The headteacher, through accurate monitoring, quickly realised the problems inherent in teachers' planning. With support from the

local authority and the appointment of talented senior members of staff, changes in teachers' planning and curricular developments are serving the pupils' learning soundly. In addition, the headteacher engenders a sense of teamwork among staff, who now work together with a common purpose to raise standards. A new system to record pupils' progress includes targets for each pupil to achieve each year so that staff can see how well individuals are progressing. As a result more challenging targets, particularly for the most capable pupils, are set for the next two years. However, this system does not record pupils' progress during each year, so, if individual pupils are not doing as well as expected, it is too late to provide additional support until the following year. All the points raised by the inspection have been identified by leaders, who have begun work to rectify these weaknesses. This, plus better achievement in Key Stage 1, demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

Satisfactory care, guidance and support promote pupils' sound personal development and well-being. Pupils generally have good attitudes towards school and know how to stay fit and healthy. Most parents are pleased with the school and agree that their children enjoy their work, though some are unhappy about the mixed-age classes. They say that they were not consulted well enough on why this was done and how well it would work. The school has begun to communicate more with parents through regular newsletters but this has not fully allayed their worries and has adversely affected a minority of parents' relationships with the school.

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

- Raise achievement and standards for the most able and least capable pupils in Key Stage 2 in English and for all pupils in science.
- Use assessment in planning and throughout the delivery of all lessons so that the learning needs of all pupils are met.
- Ensure parents are fully informed about their children's progress and developments in school.
- Increase opportunities for all pupils in the school's specialist provision to be included in mainstream lessons.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with average standards. By Year 2 standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. This is an improvement on previous years. Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 is inadequate because the most and least capable pupils are not making as much progress as they should in English and science. In 2006 in Year 6, pupils' progress and attainment were broadly average in mathematics, where teachers use national guidance on how to plan for mixed-age and mixed ability classes. However, the pupils' performance in English and science was below average. Currently, some of the most and least capable pupils are still making inadequate progress because not all teachers' expectations are focused enough on the learning needs of these groups of pupils. Pupils at an early stage of learning English achieve satisfactorily as a result of effective support.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in this aspect of their education, in part because teachers set such good examples for them. The school promotes healthy lifestyles well through a range of physical activities and suitable healthy food options such as in the tuck shop. Pupils enjoy school and most behave well in lessons and around school. However, the behaviour of a small minority of pupils, mostly boys, is challenging at break times and lunchtimes and requires extra support from staff. As a result of the school's actions the level of attendance has improved recently and is close to the national average. The school council contributes to improving the school and older pupils enjoy taking on extra responsibilities such as being play leaders. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory and promoted through assemblies and other learning activities. Pupils support a good range of charities and are beginning to learn about a wider view of democracy through, for example, visiting the town hall to speak to the mayor.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is variable, but is satisfactory overall. Most pupils are learning satisfactorily, but the new planning systems are not yet having sufficient impact on learning for the most and least capable groups of pupils in Key Stage 2 in English and science. They are working better in mathematics, where teachers utilise national guidance. In the best lessons, teachers use assessment information accurately to plan lessons which are lively and meet the needs of all pupils. For example, in an English lesson in Year 6, each group of pupils, sometimes supported by a teaching assistant and sometimes by their class teacher, worked hard to improve their understanding of how to construct interesting sentences. Each group had work specifically planned for them, which together with the right amount of support, enabled them to make outstanding progress. The assessment of pupils' progress is beginning to be documented carefully and in some classes pupils have a clear idea of where they are up to and what they need to do next to improve their work. This good practice is not yet applied consistently. Nonetheless, teachers use interactive whiteboards well to focus pupils' attention on what they are learning and relationships between staff and pupils are good.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The Foundation Stage curriculum stimulates children to learn well. In Years 1 to 6 the curriculum is broad and balanced but does not meet the learning needs of all groups of pupils well enough. This is particularly so in science, where the curriculum is dull. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to plan their own investigations and, on occasion,

work is repeated unnecessarily. There is a satisfactory range of enrichment activities including educational visits, for example to Wigan Pier and Manchester museum, as well as a Year 6 residential visit to Keswick. Specialist teachers increase pupils' enjoyment and give additional opportunities for success, particularly in sport. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and safe. Pupils in the school's specialist provision are included in more school activities than previously. However, this is more successful in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2 because the younger age groups have more opportunities to work within the mainstream curriculum alongside other pupils of their own age.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils say they feel safe in school because it is secure and there are appropriate procedures for dealing with any instances of bullying which may occur. Pupils trust staff and know who to turn to if they need help. All the required procedures to safeguard pupils and to vet staff are followed and reviewed regularly. The school works well with external agencies to care for the most vulnerable pupils. There are good arrangements for settling new children into school through the use of a 'buddy' system. Links with the local high school include regular use of the computer suite by Year 6 pupils. This makes the transition to their next school easier. The school caters well for pupils outside the school day by providing a breakfast club, which ensures that pupils who attend are refreshed and ready to learn. Individual records of pupils' academic progress are not consistently used to set targets to aid the achievement of older pupils and those who are the least or most capable in English and science.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership group works effectively as a team. Significant efforts have been made to establish a common purpose across the school and this is beginning to bear fruit. In this work, the team has been well supported by the local authority. Leadership, including that provided by the increasingly active governors, is keen to get this process right. It is realistic about the challenge and accurate about much of the progress which has been made. The school has evaluated its current position as satisfactory and the inspectors agree that teaching, curricular arrangements and leadership and management are judged accurately. However, the school overestimates other aspects of its work, including its effectiveness, since standards are not yet high enough and some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

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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>	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### The quality of provision

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

<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>	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	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

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

Thank you for being friendly and helpful when we visited your school. The displays of your work in the corridors looked very attractive. We would like to share with you what we found about your school.

These are some of the things we liked the most:

- seeing how the older children cared for the younger ones, especially at lunchtimes
- finding out that you know about how to stay fit and healthy
- understanding that the headteacher, teachers and governors are working hard to improve your school
- the really interesting activities that the youngest children do.

There are some important things we want your school to do now to improve further because we think you could do much better. These are:

- make sure that you all do as well as you can in lessons so you reach higher standards by the time you leave
- try to include all the children in the units more in lessons
- let your parents know what is happening in school and why.

Although you work hard not all of you do as well as you should and so inspectors will visit again in the next two years to see how much more you are learning.

Best wishes for your future.