

Meadow Vale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109942
Local Authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	310151
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	459
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr E Glasson
Headteacher	Mr N Duncan
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2002
School address	Moordale Avenue Bracknell RG42 1SY
Telephone number	01344 421046
Fax number	01344 867032

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils, in this larger than average primary school, come from a predominantly white British background. The school has a specialist speech and language resource centre, and this contributes to the well above average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The school has been nationally recognised through the Healthy School Award, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark, and the Sport England Active Mark Gold Award and Arts Mark Gold Award. It is an Investor in People organisation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents are extremely supportive of the school. They correctly recognise that it is a good school, where pupils thoroughly enjoy learning. Pupils' personal development is outstanding, and they achieve well. A very inclusive school, the pupils from the speech and language unit take a full part in school life, and mix with other pupils in a natural and seamless manner. Behind this extremely caring and academically good school, is the very good and energetic leadership of the headteacher. An exceptionally clear vision for developing the school has been effectively shared with staff, and consequently teamwork is embedded. Even the school councillors are confident that they are a part of the management! The school is not complacent, and makes excellent use of a wide range of partners from outside of the school to benefit pupils.

Children make a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage, where because of effective induction procedures, they settle quickly. They achieve well and leave Reception with levels of skills and knowledge generally above those expected for their age. Here, as elsewhere in the school, the standards attained by pupils can vary year-on-year. This is because of the high number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, who achieve well. Standards in Year 6 are currently above average, reflecting good achievement.

The pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and learning. Good assessment procedures contribute to the teachers knowing the pupils' academic and personal needs well. On occasions, this knowledge does not always transfer to appropriately challenging work being planned. This results in progress slowing for some pupils, such as a small number of high attaining pupils who found aspects of literacy lessons insufficiently challenging.

Pupils' behave extremely well, are polite and willing to be involved in school life. The school has worked very successfully since the last inspection to improve attendance. This is now above average, with more parents taking the school's advice and not taking holidays during term time. The pastoral care of pupils, particularly those that are vulnerable is excellent. Pupils say they feel safe, that the school listens to them and respects their views. Careful tracking of pupils with special educational needs, including those with speech and language difficulties, helps to ensure that their needs are well met, and that they achieve well.

Younger pupils benefit particularly well from a very detailed and rigorous approach to assessment, which helps teachers to identify the pupils' individual learning needs. The school is gradually introducing this approach for older pupils. Pupils have learning targets, but their opportunities to self-evaluate and know how to improve their work is not consistently developed. Targets are reinforced more frequently in Key Stage 1 than for older pupils, and are not consistently referred to in all subjects.

The curriculum is good, and pupils speak highly of the varied activities that teachers provide for them in lessons. However, the enhancement outside of the classroom is outstanding, particularly regarding citizenship, sporting and artistic activities.

The strong leadership of the headteacher has ensured that this is an improving school. The skills of other leaders are quickly identified and utilised, for example, the ICT co-ordinator has carried out training for learning assistants. These assistants work in a wide variety of settings and have an undoubtedly positive impact on the progress, both academically and socially, of pupils. This reflects exceptional value for money. Good management of the speech and language resource unit contributes to the good progress of those pupils. Good links exist between the

challenging targets the school sets, development planning, and the provision for the professional development of staff. There is a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with the expected levels of skills and knowledge for their age. Weaknesses vary year on year, but currently include aspects of communication and social development. Effective, early assessment has resulted in more emphasis being placed on pupils' taking turns and sharing. The Foundation Stage leader has established an outstanding assessment strategy that enables the school to provide very well for the individual developmental needs of the children. Any intervention is well tracked for impact. At the heart of the good achievement of the children is an effective combination of good teaching, a good curriculum, and very good management. Relationships are very positive, and children thrive in a safe and caring environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teachers use assessment information to plan appropriately challenging work for different abilities, particularly high attainers.
- Ensure that older pupils know their long-term learning targets, and that they are referred to in class and in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at the end of Year 2 have generally risen from below average in 2003 to well above average in 2005 and 2006. A slight dip to average standards in 2007 reflected the impact of an increase in numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, together with a number of late arrivals into the school. Currently, standards are average. Standards at the end of Year 6 have similarly improved in recent years, although they dipped from well above to broadly average in 2007. This, again, reflects the wide range of ability in the year group. The school's focus on improving the data handling and aspects of reading skills are contributing to improved standards, which are currently above average in Year 6. Pupils achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school because, 'There is always something exciting to look forward to'. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is excellent, although there is scope to strengthen their first hand experience of other cultures. Behaviour and relationships are exemplary. Visiting senior citizens confirmed, 'Not a single child had behaviour that was wanting and their welcoming smiles were healing to us!'. The very active school council say that, 'We feel we are in charge of making the school better, and we have helped design the new toilets, and suggested the stairwell be carpeted to reduce noise'. This, together with their support for charities reflects their outstanding contribution to the community. Their knowledge of how to keep safe is outstanding, and includes aspects such as internet safety. They have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles, participating particularly well in a wide range of physical activities. Their good basic skills and co-operative attitudes to work prepare them well for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are motivated to learn because of very positive relationships, but also lessons have pace, and teachers make activities interesting. Teachers have high expectations, and pupils know what they are going to learn, because teachers explain this clearly to them. Skilful open-ended questioning and the imaginative use of ICT enrich pupils' learning. Very good subject knowledge is evident in some outstanding teaching in the speech and learning unit. Pupils have good opportunities to think about their learning, talk to partners and subsequently improve their work. Most tasks set meet the wide range of pupils' abilities. However, this is not always the case: the progress of some high attaining pupils slows because sometimes they are insufficiently challenged.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Enhancement of the curriculum is outstanding. High numbers of pupils benefit from, and enjoy, the first class extra curricular activities in music, sport and the arts. Well-chosen visits, visitors, and theme weeks that motivate pupils supplement these activities. Parents are very well involved in supporting such activities. The well-planned curriculum in English, mathematics and science is under constant review, and takes good account of pupils' differing needs and abilities. Whilst good steps are being taken to develop opportunities for creativity across the curriculum there are still too few opportunities for investigative and cross-curricular approaches to learning. A strength is the transition from Reception to Year 1. Here, in response to thorough assessment, provision changes year by year, and is extremely well matched to individual needs. Pupils benefit from discussing issues of interest through the good quality personal, health, social and citizenship education programme. Pupils from the speech and language unit have full access to the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good, and contribute well to pupils' excellent personal development and well-being. Parents and pupils recognise that pastoral care is outstanding. One parent wrote, 'Staff are great and very helpful and all the children seem to enjoy school very much.' The school is a harmonious community where pupils' efforts and creativity are celebrated in assemblies, and colourful displays. The speech and language unit is a strength of the school. The very good arrangements for the deployment of learning assistants, contributes to very good support for pupils with special needs. The school works very well with external agencies to support pupils' educational, social, and emotional well-being. Some pupils know and understand their literacy and numeracy targets, although this is variable across subjects and classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has established a 'can do' culture, ensuring high quality care for pupils. Staff are enthused by his determination to meet the school's motto of 'success for all'. One pupil commented that one of the best things about the school is, 'the headteacher - if something needs to be done, he does it'. In this friendly and cohesive community, the adults share a clear commitment to continued improvement. There are clear roles and an acceptance of accountability by all leaders. Good emphasis is placed on developing the potential of staff, and professional development is well matched to both individual and school improvement. Monitoring and evaluation are well established for more experienced managers, whilst newer staff are benefiting from the professional development support they are receiving. There is a strong focus on achievement, with high aspirations for the success of all the pupils. For example, through rigorous monitoring, teaching and learning has improved, whilst effective leadership of English, mathematics, science and ICT has resulted in improving pupil achievement, and standards. Governors provide the school with a considerable amount of expertise, and give good support to the school.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	1
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

12 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meadow Vale Primary School, Bracknell, RG42 1SY

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. You were very eager to talk, and we listened carefully to you. We agree with you that it is a good school, but we also believe it does many things very well indeed. You are very polite and behave extremely well. You care for each other and get along together very well. You told us that you like being involved in the good, varied activities that the school provides. We thought that the sports, arts and music opportunities you have are outstanding.

You do well in your school work. This is partly because of your good attitudes, but also the result of the good teaching that you receive. Whilst many of you feel that the work is hard enough, we have asked the school to make sure that you are all challenged to do your best.

You told us that the adults care very well for you, and that they listen to you. Certainly, your school councillors believe that the school acts upon their suggestions. We judged that you all make an outstanding effort to be active in the school and the local area - well done for the charity work!

Many of you, especially the younger pupils could talk to us about your literacy and numeracy targets. We have asked your school to make sure that you all get the chance to use these targets, and that your teachers remind you of them more often.

The school runs so smoothly because it is well led by the adults who are determined that you get the best. You told us about the very good work of your headteacher. He has made sure that the school has outstanding links with people outside the school who can give you extra help when needed.

Thank you again. On behalf of all the inspectors, I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Pye

Lead Inspector