

# The Meadows School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110258
<b>Local Authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	310242
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Steven Hill

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	143
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mike Appleyard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Phyllis Carr
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	School Road Wooburn Green High Wycombe HP10 0HF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 521634
<b>Fax number</b>	01628 521799

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small primary school on the outskirts of High Wycombe. It maintains a high staffing ratio, so classes are all single age. There is a very high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on roll, including a high percentage with statements of special educational need. Many of these pupils struggle with basic literacy and numeracy, but significant numbers have behavioural and emotional problems, or have speech and language difficulties. A higher number of pupils than average start or leave the school at other than the usual junctures. Most pupils are of White British origin, with about a quarter coming from a range of other ethnic groups. An average proportion speaks English as an additional language, but few pupils are at the early stages learning the language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well because of good teaching and academic guidance. Their personal development is good because of strong pastoral care. A good curriculum, adapted to pupils' needs and interests, contributes positively to their learning and their enjoyment of school.

Pupils' behaviour is good and they get on well together. They work hard in class and take pride in their success. Those pupils who initially struggle to conform to expectations increasingly improve their behaviour, and hence their progress, because of the extensive help the school provides. Pupils gain a good knowledge of how to stay healthy and report that they are adopting more healthy lifestyles as a result. The school makes excellent use of a huge range of external agencies to support pupils, as well as liaising sensitively with parents and carers. Pupils who are vulnerable, either socially or academically, receive help that is carefully tailored to their needs. Systems to safeguard pupils are secure, and they feel happy and looked after in school. However, attendance is very low. It is declining, despite some extensive work by the school to promote improvements.

The school is extremely inclusive, providing very good support to pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is because the school tracks achievement well and uses a large range of effective intervention strategies to help any who fall behind. Its positive reputation for helping pupils who find learning difficult means that it attracts such pupils, many joining in different year groups. These pupils often make excellent progress in the light of their standards when they start in the school.

Pupils make good progress overall throughout the school and standards are rising at each key stage. More able pupils do well, because teachers provide them with challenging work that is matched to their needs. In 2007, the overall progress of pupils in Year 6 was in the top 16% nationally, although progress in mathematics was just average. Despite this, standards in English and mathematics remain exceptionally low because of most pupils' low initial attainment. Standards in science are better, being broadly average, and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) meet those expected nationally. Standards in mathematics have risen significantly during the current school year following a concentration on improving provision in the subject by all staff. The school has rightly identified a need to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills as a basis for further improvements across the curriculum.

Teaching is consistently good, and is characterised by positive relationships and good management of pupils. Pupils are keen to succeed and concentrate well. Lessons have a good pace, and pupils are told clearly, what they need to learn. A strong feature of many lessons is the opportunity to undertake practical work, which makes learning meaningful and interesting. There are good examples of teachers getting pupils to discuss things together, which ensures that all are involved and helps them sort out their ideas. However, on other occasions, teachers miss such opportunities.

Leadership and management are good. Strong leadership from the headteacher results in very effective teamwork from all staff. This underpins the good provision in the school and the positive outcomes for pupils. The improvements in progress and the maintenance of strong pastoral care and personal development illustrate that the school is well placed to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children in the Reception (Early Years) class make good progress, although many still fall short of expected standards by the time they join Year 1 because of their low starting points. Good teaching and an interesting, practically based curriculum mean children enjoy school and learn well. The class is well organised and adults are extremely skilled at helping children to develop their thinking and their vocabulary through careful questioning. Staff track children's progress carefully and plan experiences to match their needs. There is a good balance between teacher-directed tasks and children's independent activities. Although the latter are very effective in developing children's social skills, sometimes opportunities are missed for adults to intervene in play to develop pupils' speaking and listening. The new outside area is utilised very well to extend children's experiences. However, bad weather sometimes undermines the good planning to use it. There is currently no covered outside area, although the school has plans to develop one.

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

- Raise standards in speaking and listening, particularly by giving pupils' more opportunities to discuss their work together.
- Implement plans for a covered outside area for the Reception class as soon as is practicable.
- Improve attendance.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and all pupils make good progress. Pupils who struggle with basic literacy and numeracy do particularly well in the light of their starting points, as do those who have speech and language difficulties. Standards remain very low, partly because of pupils' initial low starting points, and partly because of the number of pupils who are struggling with their work who join the school in different year groups. Standards are rising, particularly in mathematics, because this has been a focus for development in the last year. The consistent use of ICT means pupils make good progress in this subject.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They behave well and even those who find this difficult improve their behaviour as they get older, because of the support they receive. Pupils enjoy school and have good relationships with each other and with staff. A pupil relatively new to the school said that the best thing was that the '...other pupils are nice and get on well'. Boys and girls, and pupils from all ethnic origins work and play together harmoniously. Pupils work hard and particularly appreciate that adults are always willing to help them if they are 'stuck'. They are involved well in the community, particularly through the school council. Older pupils take pride in the help they give to younger ones as 'buddies'. They know how to keep safe and follow rules sensibly. Pupils understand the school's system of sanctions, which they feel are fair, and appreciate the rewards and certificates that good behaviour and effort produce. Their positive attitudes, good achievement and their secure ICT skills mean they are well prepared for their futures in school and elsewhere. Attendance is too low, although pupils like school, and many attend well. A large minority of pupils have their

attendance affected by family difficulties and personal problems. The school invests considerable effort in supporting families who have such difficulties, including liaising extensively with other agencies. The school is successful in raising attendance for many pupils, but too many others still miss too much school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Lessons are orderly and well managed, so pupils make good progress. Pupils like their teachers and are keen to please them by working hard and behaving well. Teachers are good at involving pupils by providing interesting activities. They explain things clearly, so pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards to clarify their explanations and to make lessons more exciting. Pupils are given clear feedback about how they are getting on and how they can improve. Marking in English is particularly effective in this regard. Teachers successfully plan work at varying levels of difficulty to meet the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment. They make good use of extra adults, particularly in supporting pupils who would otherwise struggle with their work, or in helping those with behavioural problems to conform. Occasionally, the match of work to pupils' need is not accurate enough, so progress can slow somewhat. However, adults generally keep an eye on how everyone is doing, so that such problems are addressed promptly

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

There is an interesting and wide-ranging curriculum, which the school continually modifies to match the needs of the pupils. Good links between subjects help make learning more meaningful to pupils. Good use is made of ICT to support learning in a variety of subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 improved their understanding of both ICT and geography when planning a multi-media presentation about a mountainous region. There is good work in art and in design and technology (DT) on display throughout the school. There is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs that promote both learning and interest. A strong programme of personal, social and health education contributes to pupils' good personal development. Learning is enriched by a variety of visits and the use of visitors to school. Work with an artist in residence, for example, resulted in work of a high calibre, and much appreciation from pupils.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Very good pastoral care is a continuing strength of the school from the last inspection, supporting pupils' good personal development. Staff ensure that all pupils are safe and happy, so they can learn in a calm and orderly environment. A pupil in Year 6 commented, 'If you're worried, teachers will talk to you.' Outstanding use is made of outside agencies and partners to provide help and support to vulnerable pupils. Behaviour is managed firmly but sensitively. Pupils' academic progress is tracked well and the school is quick to help any who start to fall behind. Pupils are provided with good information about how they are getting on, and know what they need to do to improve. Pupils who struggle with literacy or numeracy get extra help, which is very effective in boosting their progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

As at the last inspection, very good leadership from the headteacher is a major factor in the school's success. Supported by her senior colleagues, she has developed an effective team of staff who are continually striving to improve things for the pupils. Good management is based on the careful monitoring of provision and outcomes, and taking effective action to address issues that arise. Monitoring of each other's lessons by teachers results in clear feedback to colleagues, which helps them improve their practice. Any shortfalls in pupils' progress are addressed with similar rigour. For example, the reasons for pupils' slower rates of progress in mathematics in 2007 were carefully analysed, and a thorough programme introduced to address them, with the help of the local authority. Current data shows significant improvements in mathematics as a result. Subject leaders play a full part in driving improvements in their areas of responsibility, and there are good systems for them to share information with allocated governors. This helps the governing body to have a clear idea of how the school is doing, so it can hold the school to account.

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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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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	1

### 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	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?	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

<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.

## Annex A

**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 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	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

26 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Meadows School, High Wycombe, HP10 0HF

Thank you for your help when I inspected your school recently, and for talking to me about your views. You all told me you enjoy school, and I could see why. I agree with you that The Meadows is a good school.

You are making good progress because the teachers are good at helping you to learn. Last year, some of you did not do as well in mathematics as in other subjects, and the staff have worked very hard this year to help you improve. You get plenty of exciting things to do in school, especially in art and DT, with interesting clubs to go to, and visits out and visitors to help you learn. You are doing particularly well in using ICT in different subjects. I have agreed with the teachers that they are going to concentrate next on helping you to improve your speaking and listening skills, particularly by giving you lots of chances to talk about your work. We think this will help you do better in all the subjects you study.

I was very impressed by how well you behave and how well you all get on with each other. You work hard in class, are sensible and are keen to learn. The only disappointing thing is that some of you are absent from school too much, and this gets in the way of your learning. I have asked the school to help you improve this. You can help a lot by making sure you always come to school when you should, unless you are too ill.

The adults are very good at looking after you and keeping an eye on how you are getting on. They make sure that anyone who needs extra help gets it, so those who start off struggling with their work, make a lot of progress.

The youngest children, in the Reception class, enjoy learning, particularly now they have a new outside area to work in. They miss this when the weather is bad, so I have asked the school to push on with the plans to build a covered area as soon as they can.

I hope you all carry on enjoying your time at the Meadows.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector