

The Meadow Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119990
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313471
Inspection date	31 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Hall
Headteacher	Kathryn Vipond
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003
School address	Meadow Way Wigston Magna Wigston LE18 3QZ
Telephone number	0116 2887227
Fax number	0116 2813610

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: standards at the end of the Foundation Stage and Year 5, the effectiveness of the school's action to improve writing, the school's view that personal development and well-being are outstanding and the effectiveness of the academic guidance pupils receive. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. The inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Children's standards are generally below the expected levels for their age when they start at this larger-than-average-sized school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the remaining few are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the number with a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Its success stems from the exceptional commitment of all staff, led by an extremely determined and inspirational headteacher who wants to provide pupils with the best education possible. Outstanding leadership, teaching and care result in pupils having extremely positive attitudes to school. Pupils' above-average attendance reflects their eagerness to be there and the very high standards they achieve show they love learning. Because pupils feel secure, happy and valued at school, they form excellent relationships, grow in self-confidence and are inspired to do their best. School leaders have been successful in establishing and maintaining what parents describe as 'a very caring, fun and supportive learning environment where teachers and support staff are all equally brilliant'.

Pupils confirm that teachers 'make learning interesting and fun'. High quality displays of pupils' work, particularly their writing, art and pottery, demonstrate that pupils of all abilities benefit from a broad and exciting curriculum, greatly enhanced by an excellent range of enrichment activities. Activities in lessons are very varied and demanding and are often completed against tight timescales so that everyone works at a brisk pace. Pupils settle to work promptly, eager to explore and investigate. They are particularly enthusiastic when they are working in groups where they can discuss and share their ideas. Imaginative themes that link work across subjects help pupils see the relevance of their learning. For example, they apply their numeracy skills in science and thus appreciate why success in one is dependent on the other.

Great emphasis is placed on identifying precisely what pupils are expected to learn and how they will know if they have done so. Every pupil has their own targets and teachers refer to these regularly so pupils can check and improve their work. The targets help pupils tackle their work with a very clear picture of what they are working towards. High quality marking, with detailed guidance from teachers as to what pupils should do next, gives them a clear idea of how well they are doing. Teachers are well aware of pupils' varying capabilities and provide work that gives the right level of challenge or support. Highly skilled support staff and many volunteers work closely with teachers to make sure pupils with specific learning difficulties can participate fully, often using additional activities and small group work to give more personalised support. As a result, these pupils achieve as well as their classmates. The more able pupils also receive additional guidance to extend their knowledge and skills. Occasionally, because of the open-plan nature of the classrooms, pupils say noise levels mean that they find concentration difficult.

By the end of the Foundation Stage, children attain above the expected levels in all areas of learning except literacy and numeracy, where they are in line with expectations. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been well above average for some years. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make excellent progress, so that Year 5 pupils are now working at well above the levels expected, with a very high proportion attaining levels normally expected of pupils at the end of Year 6. The action taken to improve writing has helped to raise standards because pupils are now more confident when writing independently and at length in all subjects.

The pursuit of high academic achievement is not at the expense of pupils' care and personal development. The school takes excellent care of all its pupils. All health and safety and safeguarding checks are secure. Parents praise the way that new pupils are integrated so effectively. Pupils moving to the high school are prepared well and say, 'We are ready for it'. Each pupil's needs are considered individually and external agencies consulted where appropriate.

Excellent systems to track pupils' progress are used very effectively to identify where pupils need specific support.

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent awareness of the need to keep safe, eat healthily and exercise. Most select healthy options at lunchtimes and dinner monitors assist staff in checking that everyone eats well. The numerous sports clubs and activities such as 'huff and puff' are very popular and 'super-leaders' inspire other pupils to develop fitness regimes. Visits and visitors introduce pupils to the wider world and diverse cultures. Pupils are very aware that differences should be valued and respected. They are highly motivated to take on responsibilities. They speak, for example, with great compassion and concern about the importance of caring for others, and the school council recently organised a talent show to raise money for Age Concern. 'Eco Warriors' supervise recycling projects by making sure fruit remains go into the composters to make compost for the school's vegetable plots. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. They are confident that on the very rare occasions that disagreements arise, 'Friends and teachers sort it out quickly'. Their high achievement and excellent personal skills prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education.

Staff and governors share the outstanding drive of the headteacher and share her determination to achieve excellence. Supported by very effective senior leaders, the headteacher has established a culture of high expectations and has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors provide good support and with everyone involved in monitoring all aspects of the school's work very closely, they ensure there is no room for complacency. While improvement planning is a team effort, it is at present largely initiated by the headteacher. Teaching and learning are monitored rigorously and staff who need support or training have excellent opportunities to develop their skills. Subject leaders share responsibility for much of this work and do so very effectively, hence, for example, the recent improvement in writing. Following careful scrutiny of pupils' lower performance in mathematics, compared to English, additional support has been targeted to address this successfully. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Several commented favourably on how much their children enjoy school and the good progress they are making. While links with other schools and the community are very good, the school recognises the need to work more closely with the local pre-schools in order to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills even more effectively.

Given that leaders have been successful in raising standards and maintaining the school's significant strengths, their capacity to improve the school further is excellent.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start in the Foundation Stage because provision is outstanding. Parents appreciate that their children settle in very quickly and how much they enjoy school, a typical comment being, 'My child says that school is fun. She always comes home happy'. Children's personal and social development is particularly strong because staff have high expectations of what the children can do. Children thrive in the supportive atmosphere where routines are well established. Imaginative activities encourage children to explore and discover as they play. For example, heavy rain did not deter any from investigating puddles and the wind. Children select from a good balance of adult-led activities and those that they can choose for themselves, and staff check that every child tries everything. Adults intervene sensitively where necessary to support individuals. Children make excellent progress and attain standards above the levels expected in all but their literacy and numeracy. Under the Foundation Stage

leader's excellent management, further improvements are in place to provide children with even more opportunities to improve these basic skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accommodation so that noise levels do not detract from pupils' learning.
- Work more closely with the pre-school providers to raise children's standards of literacy and numeracy still further before they start at 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?	1
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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?	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	1

The quality of provision

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

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?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

31 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Meadow Community Primary School, Meadow Way, Wigston Magna, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 3QZ

Thank you for making me welcome in your school on my brief visit and for talking to me about all the interesting things that you like about your school. I know that you and your parents are very proud of your school and I think you have every right to be because it is outstanding. Your headteacher and all the other staff are doing an excellent job in making sure you make a good start to your education.

I was impressed with your excellent behaviour, how well you get on with each other and how enthusiastic you are in lessons. It was brilliant to see so many hands go up to answer questions and the way you settle quickly to your work. You told me how much you enjoy all the interesting activities at the school and I can see that many of you take part in lots of clubs. I particularly loved your pottery work – it was excellent! All of you who have specific jobs as 'Eco Warriors', school councillors, 'super-leaders' and dinner monitors carry out your duties very sensibly. Staff take excellent care of you and they give you plenty of help so that you know what you need to do to do even better. I was impressed to see how many of you knew and made such good use of your individual learning targets.

You all make excellent progress. The youngest children get off to an excellent start in the Reception classes and those of you in Year 5 are working at standards that are much higher than expected for your age.

Some of you said it gets a bit noisy at times because your classes are so close to each other and I have asked the school to try to do something about this. I have also asked your headteacher and teachers to work even more closely with all the pre-schools so that children in the Reception classes can do even better in their literacy and numeracy.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and doing your very best. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you.

Best wishes,

Rajinder Harrison Lead inspector

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