

The Meadows Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 123452 |
| Local Authority | Shropshire |
| Inspection number | 314600 |
| Inspection dates | 20–21 February 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Susan Walsh |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 264 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Graham Barker |
| Headteacher | Sandie Pare |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 April 2003 |
| School address | Harlech Road Oswestry SY11 2EA |
| Telephone number | 01691 656080 |
| Fax number | 01691 676169 |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a little larger than the average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average. The school has Healthy Schools' Gold award, Active Mark Gold, Arts Mark Gold, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People Status.

Key for inspection grades

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|---------|--------------|
| 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 combined with a very stimulating curriculum. Pupils are cared for well. Most parents are very happy with the quality of their children's education typically saying, 'Our experience of the school is a good one.' Pupils' achievement is good and by the end of Year 6 pupils reach standards that are above average. Achievement has improved significantly in Years 1 to 2 and accelerates as pupils move through Years 3 to 6 because of good teaching. Work is very carefully matched to pupils' needs and this ensures that pupils of all abilities make equally good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are well supported. There are missed opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning because marking does not always tell them how to improve their work and they are not sufficiently involved in setting learning targets. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is excellent but the curriculum for Reception pupils is only satisfactory. In Years 1 to 6 the use of topics linked with interesting visits ensures that lessons are motivating and relevant and greatly adds to pupils' enjoyment of school. In addition to making very good use of the rich local heritage to promote many areas of learning including geography and history, the school ensures that pupils have experiences of busy cities such as Liverpool and Manchester. This widens their horizons and helps them to develop their understanding of their own and other cultures. The good attention paid to personal, social and health education ensures that pupils are well informed about how to stay healthy and safe. A terrific range of enriching opportunities, which include residential visits, a wide variety of after school activities, and very good provision for art, music and sport, makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and ensures that pupils really enjoy school. The volunteer helpers who come into school to help with reading exemplify the good partnership with the local community. Pupils themselves are very keen to contribute to the school community through doing little jobs and involvement in the playground squad, and they are developing an increasing awareness of topical issues in the local community. They are keen to be good citizens. This is reflected in their good behaviour and good attendance at school. The headteacher's vision, which includes developing the whole child through the use of themes within the curriculum and instilling good discipline, has helped to promote good achievement. The leadership team work extremely well together, each member bringing their particular strengths. The effective leadership of subjects has contributed well to the robust analysis of data and rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress. The hard work and commitment of the teaching staff, combined with continuous professional development and an active partnership with other local providers of education, has secured good quality teaching. Significant improvements to achievement and standards in Years 1 and 2 together with continuous development of the curriculum demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Pupils start in the Reception class with standards that are broadly similar to national expectations but they are very confident and talk well. They make satisfactory progress because of satisfactory teaching. Parents are pleased with the provision in the Foundation Stage. Very good care is taken of children, and parents really appreciate the good induction procedures that ensure their children settle quickly into school. Relationships between children and staff are especially warm and supportive. Parents say that their children 'love their teachers'. Children's attitudes and behaviour are very good and they make good progress in their personal development.

Opportunities to work together are enjoyed, as they like to help each other with their school work and other little things like putting on and zipping up their coats. Steady progress is being made in linking sounds and letters. Most children cope with the very formal curriculum because of their emotional maturity. However, there are too few opportunities to learn through well planned play and the outside is not used effectively. The over direction by adults restricts opportunities for creativity and imagination. Parents appreciate that the Sunshine Room is a tremendous asset, and in this nurturing environment less confident children can blossom because they have access to a play based curriculum that meets their needs. Leaders in the Foundation Stage are relatively inexperienced and have not yet developed their skills in planning a curriculum where pupils have the opportunities to explore through play. Inexperience has also resulted in assessment procedures that lack detail and precision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that children in the Foundation Stage have sufficient opportunities to learn through purposeful play both in the classroom and outside.
- Develop more effective assessment procedures so that staff can monitor children's progress more carefully.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning including involving them in setting learning targets and ensuring that marking tells them exactly how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils usually start Year 1 with standards that are around the national expectation. Pupils achieve well and their progress accelerates as pupils move through the school and by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 standards are significantly above average. Standards at the end of Year 2 improved significantly in 2007 and were above the national average. A good proportion of pupils exceeded the nationally expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6 pupils produce lively writing, some of which is of a very high standard and includes sophisticated imagery and moving poetry. An increasing proportion of pupils are reaching the higher levels in mathematics, reflecting the school's recent focus on the subject.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong and are developing empathy for others. This is reflected in the way that pupils care for and support each other. They report that there is very little bullying and say they feel very safe in school. Pupils enjoy school a great deal as illustrated by good levels of attendance. One child expressed the feelings of many when she said, 'We think this school is really, really good.' Although the pupils have good opportunities to contribute to the school community, these very responsible young people could do even more, including developing a better understanding of their own learning and having a greater voice in school. Pupils know how to keep fit and healthy. They take part enthusiastically in sport and enjoy the healthy choices of food available at lunchtimes. Good standards in literacy and numeracy, combined with confident use of information and communication technology (ICT) and good work habits, result in pupils being well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities make good progress because teachers plan work carefully to match a wide range of needs. Interactive whiteboards are used well to illustrate lessons and to help develop understanding. Teachers are skilled at managing pupils' behaviour and there is a strong emphasis on discipline. Relationships are good and encourage pupils to develop confidence. Although the quality of teaching and learning is good overall there is more good teaching in Years 3 to 6 than in Reception to Year 2. Teaching assistants often make a good contribution to pupils' learning. However, they are deployed more effectively in Years 3 to 6 than in other years. Teaching assistants are good at helping groups of pupils in Reception to Year 2 but tend to listen passively during teacher-led introductions rather than continuously assisting pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Outstanding use of themes and well thought out links between different subjects in the curriculum increase pupils' enjoyment and ensure that work is pertinent to pupils. The choice of activities such as writing instructions for making robots ensures that boys are consistently interested and involved. The locality is used very well for a whole many visits that make learning immediate, relevant and fun. ICT is used very well to support learning. A wide range of clubs and activities from golf to cheer leading provides outstanding enrichment. Although there are many elements of the curriculum that are outstanding in Years 1 to 6 there are some shortcomings in the curriculum for Reception age children including insufficient opportunities to learn through play.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Very good pastoral care contributes extensively to pupils' enjoyment of school and personal development. The school is a caring community where relationships between adults and pupils are usually very good. Consequently, pupils feel respected and secure. Parents typically say that 'The headteacher and teaching staff are very approachable and supportive when issues arise.' Child protection and health and safety arrangements are in place. The school works very effectively with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are well supported. Checks on pupils' progress are very thorough and pupils at risk of falling behind often have access to booster classes that help them catch up, and this is an important factor in securing pupils' good achievement. When marking pupils' work, teachers frequently make very positive comments but rarely tell pupils how to improve their work, and the use of learning targets is both limited and inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior leaders work very well together as a team and have high aspirations for both pupils' academic achievement and personal development. They are ably supported by effective subject

leaders who assist the senior leaders in carefully monitoring teaching and learning. A watchful eye is kept on achievement, and data are analysed carefully in order to provide challenging targets. Rigorous checking of the school's work results in accurate self-evaluation, particularly of provision in Years 1 to 6. The school is aware that provision in the Foundation Stage is not improving fast enough because of inexperienced leadership and management. Governors are extremely supportive of the school but do not always provide effective challenge, particularly regarding achievement and standards.

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Inspection judgements

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| 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

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|---|-----|
| 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? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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| 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 | 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 | 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 |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 February 2008 Dear Children Inspection of The Meadows Primary School, Oswestry SY11 2EA It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. The inspection team really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. You go to a good school. It is clear that you have a great time at school because of all the interesting things you have to do. It was good to hear about your visit to a local Indian restaurant; you told us that you enjoyed the food and wearing Indian clothes. It sounded very exciting. We also thought you were very well informed about how to keep healthy and safe. Your behaviour is good. You have good manners and make visitors very welcome. The playground squad are doing a good job helping at playtimes. You are making good progress and by the end of Year 6 many of you reach higher standards than other children of your age. We very much enjoyed reading the poems you had written about the Second World War and found some of them very moving. We also liked looking at your super artwork. Your teachers work very hard, and teaching is good. You also work hard and are very conscientious, but we think you could be even more responsible for your own learning. When we looked at your books we noticed that teachers do not always tell you how to make your work better so we have asked teachers to improve their marking and to work with you to develop learning targets. Although the older ones amongst you have lots of wonderful things to do, the younger ones do not have enough opportunities to learn through play, including playing outside, and there are not enough checks on your learning. The managers in your school are doing a good job and are making sure that your school gets better all the time. Thank you again for being such good company. I wish you well for the future. Yours sincerely Susan Walsh Lead inspector

Annex B



22 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of The Meadows Primary School, Oswestry SY11 2EA

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The managers in your school are doing a good job and are making sure that your school gets better all the time.

Thank you again for being such good company. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh
Lead inspector