

Meadowside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131782
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	315868
Inspection date	28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Coombes
Headteacher	David Zeal
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	Elmore Lane East Quedgeley Gloucester GL2 4LX
Telephone number	01452 721767
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following:

the recent and current progress by pupils, especially those who are more able

the capacity of the leadership team and others to improve standards and provision

the quality of teaching and learning.

Evidence was gathered from observations around the school, discussions with pupils, staff and the chair of governors, a scrutiny of pupils' books, questionnaires received from parents and analyses of the school's working documents. Other aspects were not inspected in detail.

Description of the school

Numbers have risen significantly since the first inspection but the school remains a little smaller than average. Pupils are taught in seven single age classes. Pupils come from a modern residential area surrounding the school. Most are White British with none being at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school has stabilised after a period when some aspects declined as it expanded. It is now in a stronger position to improve, having begun to share the roles of leadership more widely and responded well to support from the local authority. It has some good features, particularly related to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. It also has a number of important aspects in need of improvement.

Pupils enjoy school a lot and their attendance is above average. They feel valued and safe in school and are confident that if they had a problem an adult would help sort it out. Vulnerable pupils, some with complex problems, are supported well by the staff. Parents appreciate these strengths. One reflected the views of others by commenting, 'It is a very happy and friendly school'. Another wrote, 'My child has become a confident, independent and happy child within the school'. The school has recently received national quality marks for its work related to promoting pupils' personal development and their awareness of environmental issues, including the Eco Schools Green Flag, Activemark and Healthy Schools awards. The pupils are very proud of their roles in contributing to these.

Achievement is satisfactory. Children get off to a sound start in the Foundation Stage, although relatively few exceed national expectations at the end of the year. Older pupils, often those who are more able, do not make as much progress as expected. The school has recently improved its systems for tracking pupils' progress and these are providing a clearer picture about where additional support is needed. Academic standards, previously significantly above average, have fallen. Standards at the end of Year 2, although lower than in previous years, remain above average, particularly in reading and writing. Pupils currently in Year 2 have made good progress since leaving the Foundation Stage and are on track to maintain these above average standards with an increase in the proportion of pupils expected to exceed national expectations for their age in reading and writing. Older pupils are making satisfactory progress. The fall in standards in Year 6 has been halted and standards are set to rise again by 2009. Pupils currently in Year 6 have not made consistent progress through the school. However, they are responding to additional support, for example, in mathematics, and are on track to meet their reasonably challenging targets and maintain broadly average standards. Pupils in Year 5 are working at levels above those expected for their age and on course to attain above average standards by the time they leave the school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good because, although the headteacher and leadership team have provided an effective and clear lead in promoting pupils' personal development, leaders were slow to respond to the fall in academic standards. Previous inadequate systems for tracking pupils' progress have been corrected and the school is now making satisfactory use of increased information to identify variations in progress between certain groups and provide additional support where needed. This is leading to more realistic and yet challenging targets and improved progress by pupils, a few of whom had previously made inadequate progress. Leadership has also been strengthened by the recent creation of task groups involving middle managers, who are responding well to both the guidance from the local authority and increased opportunities to take responsibilities for promoting school improvement. These groups are introducing good procedures for checking aspects of work, for example, planning in mathematics or the consistency of assessment practices, but managers are not entirely clear about their precise roles or the expectations on them for sharing and using the information. Despite a lack of a systematic approach to monitoring the performance

of the school, particularly the quality of teaching, the school has a mainly accurate view of its performance. It has a well structured plan with priorities clearly focused on raising standards. The school's view of its capacity to improve as 'good' is over generous. It is only satisfactory because some checks lack rigour and not all the information gained is used when considering how to improve. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and are developing improved systems for being informed about the school but they are not provided with sufficient information about the school's performance and what needs to be improved.

Although there is good teaching and learning at times in all three key stages, the level of challenge and expectation of pupils is not consistently high enough in all classes and lessons, especially for the more able pupils. Consequently, from time to time, the pace of learning slows. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and pupils respond positively to the interesting activities provided. They collaborate well, for example, when investigating fractions in mathematics or discussing features of myths in English. Marking of work frequently celebrates effort, but often misses opportunities to reflect on the learning or how to improve. Pupils have short-term targets but are not entirely clear about their next steps in learning or helped enough to assess their own work and, for example, understand what is required to attain a higher level in writing. These features of academic guidance contribute to the overall satisfactory care, guidance and support, in which the care and support is very effective. Statutory procedures designed to safeguard pupils are fully implemented. The school works well with external professionals to help meet the specific needs of vulnerable pupils and those with complex difficulties, and parents appreciate this greatly.

The national quality marks are very strong features of an otherwise mainly satisfactory curriculum that is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but less so for the more able pupils. The school is working to develop more creative approaches to how subjects are linked. Pupils enjoy and are keen to participate in the extra activities such as clubs, workshops and residential visits and these enrich the curriculum well. The focus on 'green' issues is very successful. The school grounds are used exceptionally well to provide imaginative opportunities for pupils to manage some of these, for example, the recycling. Pupils are very clear about the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. They behave well and have opportunities to take on many responsibilities around the school, which they do conscientiously, for example, as school councillors, play rangers or members of the eco committee, and when raising money for local and national charities. These opportunities are helping to equip the pupils with a good range of skills needed for the next stage of their education and adult life.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Recently extended accommodation and a new designated outdoor area have contributed to improvements in provision for children in the Foundation Stage. There are good systems for introducing children to school and they settle quickly, feeling contented and secure. Children experience a range of activities with a good balance between teacher-directed and independent activities. They make satisfactory progress with most attaining the learning goals expected for their age at the end of the year. Relatively few exceed these and the school is working to increase this proportion, especially in personal development and language skills. Responsibility for leadership of the Foundation Stage is being shared during current short-term staffing changes but the teachers and assistants work effectively as a team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Carry out systematic and rigorous checks on the performance of the school, including teaching and learning, and ensure the information gained is shared and used to bring about improvements.
- Raise standards by making full use of assessment information when planning work in order to ensure pupils of all abilities, especially the more able, are fully challenged and extended.
- Help pupils to become clearer about their learning and what they can do to improve.
- Review the structure of the leadership team and clarify the roles of all leaders within this expanding school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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?	3
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	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

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

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

5 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Meadowside Primary School, Gloucester GL2 4LX

- Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I very much enjoyed talking to groups of you, seeing some of your work and walking round your school and the grounds. You were very helpful in answering my questions. I was particularly impressed by the way many of you are so involved in helping with the 'green' aspects of the school. Overall, Meadowside is a satisfactory school. Here are some of the highlights I noticed:
- You obviously like being at the school and take a lot of pride in helping to run various things, such as play rangers, being members of the eco committee or school council.
- You behave sensibly and are thoughtful about each other.
- Everyone who works in school takes good care of you all. If you become worried or have a problem, there is always someone to help you.
- You work hard in lessons and make progress.
- Your teachers plan interesting activities in the classroom as well as providing lots of clubs, visits and special events.
- The unusual school building and grounds help you to become experts about ways of avoiding waste and preserving the planet.
- I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on four things:
- Carry out more careful checks on how well the school is doing and use what they find out to help improve things.
- Help teachers to set work that is not too hard, but challenges you all to do even better than you are already doing, especially those of you who sometimes find your work easy.
- Help you to become clearer about what it is you are learning, things you need to practise and how you can improve.
- Make sure that all the leaders are clear about what they have to do around the school.

I know you will want to help the school in these things and you may well have your own ideas about them.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly Lead Inspector