

The Mead Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132092
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315918
Inspection date	9 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone

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	423
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Smith
Headteacher	Lyssy Bolton
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	Hackett Place Hilperton Trowbridge BA14 7GN
Telephone number	01225 759273
Fax number	01225 759274

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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: current standards, the quality of teaching and learning and the way that the school checks its own performance. Evidence was gathered through classroom observations, work sampling and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but 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 this report.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a new private housing development on the outskirts of Trowbridge. The inclusion of military housing within the designated catchment area results in above average movement of pupils in and out of the school other than at the usual times of joining or leaving. There are two classes in each year group. The school holds national awards for its high quality provision in physical education and art, its international work, and its healthy approach to the pupils' lifestyles. Attainment on entry into the Foundation Stage is as expected for this age group.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Mead is an outstanding school where all pupils thrive and succeed. Many parents say they feel privileged to send their children to this school. They correctly identify its greatest strength as the way it works with them '...as a team to educate and develop the children'. The success of this excellent partnership is reflected in the pupils' outstanding personal development and the exceptional educational standards that are attained by Year 2 and maintained through to the end of Year 6. The school has an extremely accurate understanding of its overall effectiveness. There is no complacency and the school has an excellent capacity for making further improvements. The headteacher, senior staff and governors share a relentless focus on maintaining the best quality of education for the pupils. They continually use challenging targets to full effect to raise standards. Extensive systems support rigorous monitoring of the school's performance and ensure that the highest quality provision is maintained. Foundation Stage provision is exceptional. The most successful teaching skills and techniques are used consistently across the school and this ensures that the pupils receive only the best.

Consequently, pupils' achievement is outstanding. Pupils always know what is expected of them because there is consistency in approach. For example, the 'Tickle Pink' markers are used exceptionally well by teachers to identify and celebrate accurate work. Pupils are also very clear that the green markers indicate how they might improve their work. Individual targets provide a very clear direction for the next step in each pupil's learning.

There is a real buzz to the atmosphere in school because learning is made fun and the activities are presented in an interesting and meaningful way. Corridors bulging with interactive displays ensure that pupils are immersed in their learning in a relaxed and fun way. Trips on a canal boat, theatre visits and outings to other places of interest, for example Caerleon, add to the pupils' genuine thirst for and enjoyment of learning. Subjects are linked together and taught in a way that makes sense to the pupils. Their exceptionally high levels of basic skills are applied fully to support learning across all areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils use complex information and communication technology and art skills to support their history work. Mathematical concepts are applied very well in science and geography. Special events, such as 'Celtic trading days', when beans are used as a currency, support pupils' economic awareness extremely well.

The successful personal development of the pupils is a reflection of the attention and value given to each individual. Transition from each year group is seamless because pupils spend three days with their new teacher at the end of the school year, thus making summer holidays free from anxiety and apprehension. However, the school has identified that stronger links with the secondary schools would promote a smoother transition for Year 6 pupils into Year 7. Parents confirm that their children feel very safe because they are treated as individuals and, as one commented, it is 'as if he was the only pupil' in the school. Involvement in the school council and the provision of 'worry-boxes', through which pupils can seek advice or help from an adult, ensure pupils' views and concerns are heard. A well-resourced kitchen not only helps the pupils develop basic cooking skills but also enables them to gain a full understanding of the importance of eating healthily. For example, pupils prepare nutritious meals during the morning sessions and these are then eaten at lunchtime as an alternative to sandwiches. The buying and budgeting of the cookery ingredients ensures that pupils develop a good understanding of how much food costs and this is reinforced through the good links with a local shop. Early morning physical wake-up activities, regular involvement in sports events and

participation in family country dance sessions ensure that pupils know the importance of keeping active and fit.

The consistent approach to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes a good deal to the excellent relationships among pupils. There is very good acceptance of individuals who have differing needs, abilities and cultural backgrounds. For example, Year 6 pupils were able to confidently and sensitively explain the differences between a range of religions during a World Faith Conference. Pupils have a very strong sense of responsibility and develop into independent individuals who are articulate and numerate. Attendance is very good and pupils behave extremely well in and out of lessons. They fully understand the importance of their role within the wider community. This understanding has been developed to a very high standard through fund-raising events in school and by links with schools in Germany, Italy, Malta and a country in Africa.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start to school life because the provision in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) is outstanding. Home visits and lots of invitations to join in activities prior to starting school ensure that induction into school is smooth. Highly effective planning and excellent use of resources ensure that not a minute is lost for learning. The 'Snack Café', where children are encouraged to select their drinks and snacks, is also an effective resource for developing children's knowledge of the wider world. Children are encouraged to try different fruits and vegetables. Role-play areas, such as The 'Trowbridge Hospital' which includes a pretend skeleton and x-rays, ensure that children develop their personal and social skills very well. In the 'hospital' they take turns playing patients and hospital staff. Whilst at play they learn about bones and start to develop an understanding of keeping healthy. The importance of the written word and safety awareness is heightened by the use of signs to display significant messages such as 'Ambulance, Keep Clear'. Maximum use is made of the outdoor learning area. All children are equipped with waterproof clothing and footwear so bad weather is never used as an excuse for staying indoors. This makes splashing through the puddles a fun learning activity! Basic skills are taught very well because there is a good balance between adult input and reinforcement through play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop stronger transition links with the secondary schools.

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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?	1
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	1
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	1
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

9 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Mead Community Primary School, Hilperton, Trowbridge, BA14 7GN

A big thank you for making me feel so welcome at your school. I enjoyed spending time with you and finding out about The Mead. I would like to say a special thank you to those pupils who talked with me about your school.

Your school provides you with an excellent education. Your work is of an exceptionally high standard and your achievement throughout the school is outstanding. I was very impressed with the way you use your skills, such as those in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), across all the subjects you learn about. Teaching is excellent and the teachers make sure you are always clear about the next step you need to make in your learning.

It is very clear that you take a full part in the life of the school and really enjoy coming to school. The teachers plan extremely interesting activities for you and make sure that the learning is meaningful to you. I enjoyed hearing about the trips you go on and was very interested to hear about the food you prepare during your cookery lessons. You have a very good knowledge of how to keep fit and healthy. You feel safe because the school looks after you well and there is always someone you can talk to about a problem.

Your headteacher and the other adults involved in leading and managing your school do an excellent job. They make sure that you receive the best possible education. I have asked them to think of ways that they can develop links between The Mead and the nearby secondary schools so that your transition into Year 7 is smoother.

Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults in school to make sure that The Mead Community Primary School gets even better.

Best wishes

Lorna Brackstone Lead inspector

Annex B



9 October 2007

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Lorna Brackstone
Lead inspector