

# The Meadows Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109010
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	324879
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Huard

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 (total)	193
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sue Wakefield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fances Harding
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 May 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Bath Road Bitton Bristol BS30 6HS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01179 322203
<b>Fax number</b>	01179 326919

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the effectiveness of strategies to raise standards in Years 1 and 2, and standards in Year 6
- the extent to which the new curriculum meets the needs of the pupils
- the effectiveness of the new headteacher and senior leaders in driving the school forward and raising standards, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

Evidence was gathered from an examination of the school's documentation, parents' questionnaires and pupils' work, observations of pupils in classes, around the school and in the playground, as well as interviews with subject leaders, pupils, governors and parents.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, are not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This small primary school is located in a village on the outskirts of Bath. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to the national average but they are unequally distributed through year groups. The school has very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none at an early stage of learning English. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is made in the Reception class. The headteacher took up her post in April 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. It has suffered considerable disruption of leadership and management, and numerous staff changes over the last two years. This resulted in a fall in standards and, as the school freely acknowledges, a loss of momentum. However, this situation is rapidly being resolved. Since September 2008 a new, highly effective senior leadership team has been in place, led by a dynamic and purposeful headteacher. Weaknesses were quickly identified and priorities set for improvement. The most important of these was to halt the decline in standards, particularly in the current Years 1, 2 and 6, and to give pupils the support they needed in order to be able to achieve at least satisfactorily. These immediate aims have been realised with the support of the dedicated and committed staff. A number of pupils, particularly those in Years 2 and 6, have made very good progress during this year which means that standards are now broadly average and pupils are achieving satisfactorily over time. Subject leaders have carried out a thorough audit of their areas and accurately identified areas for development in order to build on and sustain the considerable improvements that have already been made. These accurately identify that pupils do not currently have enough opportunities to carry out investigational and experimental work in mathematics and science, and standards of reading are not as good as they should be throughout the school. Higher attaining pupils are also not given the challenges they require in order to achieve their full potential. The very good improvements made this year as a result of actions taken demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Children get a good start at the Meadows. The Reception class has a lively and inspiring curriculum which enables the children to make good progress. In Years 1 to 6, staff have risen well to the challenge of providing a curriculum which is creative and builds on the interests and needs of the individual pupils. It is broad and balanced and elements such as 'Forest School' provide an extra dimension which enhances pupils' independence and stretches their imagination and thinking skills. The pupils respond to this with enthusiasm and chatter eagerly about their sessions spent outside. Great emphasis is placed on ensuring all activities are safe and all pupils, from the youngest in Reception to the oldest in Year 6, understand the do's and don'ts of their outdoor education. This care reflects the good standards of support and guidance for the pupils which prevail throughout the school. All child protection and safeguarding procedures were fully in place at the time of the inspection and pupils say that they feel confident that they can talk to any member of staff if they have a problem. Pupils receive good guidance for both their personal and academic development. Pupils, when asked, could all say what their targets were and said that they receive good help from their teachers about how these can be achieved.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. 'This school has character,' exclaimed one pupil when asked why he enjoyed it so much. Others explained further, 'The teachers always listen to you and take your opinions on board,' 'It's easy to make friends because it's small, everybody welcomes you.' Their pleasure in school is reflected in their good attendance. A comprehensive programme for their personal, social and health education contributes effectively to their good personal development. They are lively and energetic and have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. The vegetables pupils grow in the school garden are eaten with great relish and enjoyment. Pupils understand how to stay safe. They have a very good sense of Internet safety and discuss the dangers of smoking and drug abuse maturely and sensibly. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective, assertive and confident. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour in and around the school is good and all the play spaces are happy and

harmonious places. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities in school but also in a wider, global sense and eagerly raise money for charities such as Water Aid. Satisfactory literacy and numeracy and good interpersonal skills ensure they are getting a satisfactory grounding for the future.

Teachers do all they can to try and ensure that all pupils are engaged and motivated and that they enjoy their learning. However, the quality of teaching is patchy across the school and ranges from outstanding to satisfactory. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, all the children were fully engaged and bubbling with enthusiasm as they tackled fractions using 'One Legged Jack's' pieces of eight to help them identify halves and quarters, equivalent fractions and fractions of whole amounts. In this lesson, all pupils were appropriately challenged, motivated by the task and consequently achieving extremely well. However, this is not always the case. In some lessons teachers talk for too long and give pupils too much information. This means that the pace of the lesson is much slower and pupils do not have sufficient time to learn and discover for themselves. Teachers' planning invariably identifies tasks to meet the needs of all pupils. In practice, this does not always happen. Whilst lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties are well supported, more able pupils do not consistently receive sufficient challenge and the tasks they are set are too easy.

Staff and governors know how well the school is doing. The school has set challenging targets for future development but they are achievable. The school uses data well to check its performance and the very good monitoring system ensures that the quality of teaching and learning is effectively evaluated and specific training needs identified. Governors regularly visit the school and they check for themselves the success of such projects as the Forest School. They promote community cohesion satisfactorily but the school acknowledges that there is more to be done to set up effective links nationally. They have a good perception of the need for pupils to understand that they are growing up in a culturally diverse society. Visits to a mosque and synagogue demonstrate this, but there is more to be done. The school development plan is good and purposeful, and reflects the concerted efforts to drive this school forward. Parents are extremely supportive of the school. They appreciate its ethos and, as one said, 'It has a great community spirit.' However, some parents also rightly feel that communication is not as effective as it could be and they are told too late about events or school closures, making it difficult for them always to support their children's needs. Overall, the parental voice is overwhelmingly positive. Many echo the sentiments of another who said, 'This is a wonderful school, the children get a really varied experience with the Forest School and conservation area, my child is extremely happy here.'

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children join the Reception class with the skills that are slightly below those expected for their age in reading, writing, calculation and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children make good progress and reach broadly average standards by the time they join Year 1. Children's personal, social and emotional development is good, and the encouragement and guidance they receive helps them to become happy and independent learners. Children behave well and learn to play with and help each other. Teaching is lively and stimulating and enables the children to learn effectively. The curriculum is exciting and provides activities across all the areas of learning. There is a good balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. The Forest School initiative gives them a wide range of stimulating outdoor experiences which they approach with great enthusiasm. A wide range of activities is also provided in the immediate outside area and the learning environment here is

as stimulating and exciting as that inside. The care and attention given to children's welfare is good. The provision is led and managed well. Staff have a clear understanding of how well the provision meets children's needs and how it could be improved still further.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly the pace of lessons, to be more consistently good so that pupils make sustained good progress as they move through the school.
- Ensure that more able pupils are consistently and sufficiently challenged in lessons so that they reach their full potential.
- Improve communication with parents to ensure they are fully informed about all school events or closure in order that they can fully support their children's needs.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged 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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## 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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

<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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
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

## 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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

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

16 July 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of The Meadows Primary school, Bitton BS34 6HS

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you enjoy your work and all activities in which you are involved. Your school gives you a satisfactory education and is working hard to make it even better.

This is what we thought about your school.

- You behave well and are keen to learn.
- You are doing much better in English, mathematics and science this year.
- You take very seriously the importance of eating healthily at school and keeping safe. The peas I tasted were delicious!
- The new curriculum covers all the subjects you are supposed to learn and you particularly enjoy the Forest School area.
- Teachers help you to make the progress you should and you say learning is often made fun.
- The teachers and staff take good care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher understands very well what must be done to make your school even better.

These are some things that we have asked the school to improve.

- Those of you who find learning fairly easy need to have more challenging tasks in lessons.
- Some of your teachers need to move your lessons on a bit more quickly and make sure you have enough time to learn and discover for yourselves.
- Improve communication systems to ensure that parents have plenty of notice of events or closures so that they can participate fully in your learning and activities.

We are glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard.

Very best wishes,

Mrs Christine Huard

Lead inspector