

Meadowfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134516
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	328913
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Fiona Gowers

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	453
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Shaw
Headteacher	Mr Richard Mellard
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Halton Moor Avenue Leeds West Yorkshire LS9 0EY
Telephone number	0113 336 8010
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is an amalgamation of two primary schools, which opened in September 2004. The new school building opened in November 2005. Following this, the school underwent significant and extended disruption due to building work and changes in staffing. The school serves an area with very significant levels of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of pupils at the early stages of learning English has increased since the last inspection, but remains below average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Nursery and Reception classes. There is a Children's Centre on the same site. A significant number of the teaching staff joined the school after September 2008.

The school has received the Investors in People Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools and the first level of the Stephen Lawrence Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to raising standards and improving achievement, and improving the quality of teaching and marking.

Achievement is inadequate for all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils enter the school with skills and abilities well below those typical for their age. Although they make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils fail to make sufficient progress. Standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science and have consistently been much too low since the last inspection. Targets set for the whole school are not consistently challenging enough to ensure that pupils reach sufficiently high standards.

Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, it is not all yet consistently strong enough to enable pupils to make the good progress needed to close the gap between their present low standards and those they should be achieving. The significant number of staffing changes since the last inspection has hampered the pace of improvement. Some pupils are beginning to make faster progress because the teaching they receive is more effective. In such lessons pupils enjoy a variety of challenging learning activities and work at a faster pace. However, this accelerated rate of progress is not sustained as pupils move from class to class. Expectations remain too low in some classes. The pace of learning slows and learning activities lack the same degree of interest and challenge.

The satisfactory curriculum is being adapted to address areas where there are gaps in pupils' learning. For example, the school has recently become involved with the 'Every Child a Reader' initiative and pupils are also provided with resources and guidance to help them improve the quality and content of their writing. These initiatives are starting to improve pupils' skills in these areas and are beginning to raise achievement. However, it is too soon to see their full impact. The curriculum effectively promotes good understanding of how to adopt healthy and safe lifestyles. Links with the Extended Schools Partnership have increased the range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities on offer.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. School leaders have been successful in creating a calm, supportive learning environment. Pupils enjoy their time in school and particularly like carrying out roles of responsibility. Attendance has risen and is now broadly in line with the national average. Behaviour has improved because pupils respond well to clear systems, supported by positive relationships. However, pupils' exceptionally low levels of attainment mean they are not sufficiently well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The care, guidance and support pupils receive are satisfactory overall. Parents appreciate the strong pastoral care provided. Pupils learn to show good levels of respect and care for each other and those of other faiths and cultures. Academic guidance is satisfactory. In particular, there are good examples of teachers' marking which challenge pupils to take their learning forward. This is helping these pupils to make greater progress. However this practice is not consistent throughout school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Over the past year the school leadership team has been strengthened and clear roles and responsibilities established. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. It has started to improve its target setting for individual pupils. Increased involvement of pupils in this is beginning to improve their rates of progress. The school deploys resources adequately and has recently installed a wind turbine to curtail energy expenditure! This has added to pupils' understanding of sustainability. However, value for money is currently inadequate because pupils' achievement is inadequate. Arrangements ensure that all groups of pupils have equal access to participate in all activities. Community cohesion is good. The school's work towards the Stephen Lawrence Award, alongside close links with schools in other countries, helps to develop pupils' understanding of local and global issues well. Leaders have successfully tackled some of the issues from the last inspection, for example, standards in science have risen, attendance has improved and pupils are now more actively involved in their learning. However, the rate of improvement has been hampered by the numerous building issues, as well as significant number of staffing changes. These issues have now mainly been resolved so that pupils' progress has started to improve and the school's capacity for improvement is increasing.

Governors are supportive and challenging and fulfil their statutory responsibilities. With their effective support, and that of the local authority, the school is now more keenly focused on raising standards and improving achievement. The school has more effective systems in place for assessing performance. This is leading to demonstrable improvements in provision and pupils' performance. Leaders at all levels are playing a part in promoting these improvements. Improvements, particularly those of recent months, show that the school has the necessary capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

When they start in the Nursery, children's skills are well below those typically expected for their age. The care and attention paid to their welfare is good and meets requirements. The school's good relationships with parents and the staff who work in the adjoining children's centre enable children to settle quickly. As a result, children feel happy and secure and are keen to take part in the range of activities provided. They particularly enjoy exploring things for themselves. For example, whilst they were carefully observing tadpoles with magnifying glasses, children exclaimed with great enthusiasm: 'The tadpoles are very tiny, but they look much bigger now!' Children make satisfactory progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. When they join Year 1 their attainment is often well below age-related expectations. However, the proportion of children meeting the expected levels is increasing. Leadership of this key stage is satisfactory and links to lower Key Stage 1 now ensure a smooth transition as the children leave Reception. The staff team are keen to develop the provision further. For example, a conservatory is currently being constructed to enhance the learning environment and the hard work of the staff team has improved the quality of learning activities outdoors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and raise standards in English, mathematics and science for all pupils.
- Raise teachers' expectations and increase the pace of learning and level of challenge in those lessons where teaching is not sufficiently strong, to enable pupils to make more rapid progress.
- Make sure all teachers' marking matches the best practice in letting pupils know what they need to do next to improve their work.

- Ensure pupils' targets are consistently challenging enough to raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are exceptionally low in reading, writing and mathematics and well below average in science at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. This means that pupils make inadequate progress from their starting points and that their achievement is inadequate. Standards rose in 2007, but remained significantly below the national average. They dropped again in 2008. This was partly a result of the larger than average proportion of pupils entering and leaving the school in this year group, but also because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. School leaders are beginning to interpret the data about pupils' progress more realistically. While this is leading to improvements in learning and progress in some lessons, the information gained is not used consistently in all lessons to provide learning activities with a sufficient level of challenge to help all pupils improve the speed at which they learn. As a result, pupils make inconsistent progress and achievement remains inadequate. However, within this overall picture of inadequate achievement, there is evidence of improvement because the leadership team is now more sharply focused on raising standards and improving levels of achievement. In particular, standards have risen in science because of an increased emphasis on investigations. Initiatives to improve literacy skills are starting to have a positive effect on pupils' progress in these areas. In addition, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are beginning to make better progress because of the more effective additional programmes provided for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development reflects the school's positive and caring ethos. Pupils grow in confidence and they are keen to carry out a limited range of responsibilities. For example, pupils on the school council work hard considering how to improve their school further and older pupils enjoy helping younger pupils learn to read. Pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe, fit and healthy and enjoy the sporting activities on offer. They respond well to the positive behaviour systems in school, such as the chance to win a 'Star Badge'. As a result they behave well and are keen to learn. The school promotes a good sense of citizenship and pupils are proud of their school. Opportunities are provided for pupils to find out about life outside school, during trips on the new school minibus or residential visits. Although pupils learn to work well in a group with others, the exceptionally low academic standards attained mean they are not sufficiently prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There is some variation in the quality and consistency of teaching throughout school. This has led to inconsistencies in the progress pupils make in different classes and in different year groups. However, recent improvements in the quality of teaching and a growing proportion of good lessons are having a more positive impact on pupils' learning. In these lessons, pupils are provided with a variety of interesting and challenging learning activities at an appropriate level. They have the opportunity to learn through investigations and games and to discuss their work with a partner. This helps pupils to keep focused and engaged because teachers expect them

to learn at a fast pace. However, in other satisfactory lessons, while suitable planning and organisation are in place, the pace of learning is slower. This is because assessment information is not always used effectively enough to pitch work with just the right level of challenge to help pupils make enough progress, and teachers' expectations are too low. Lesson introductions that are sometimes too lengthy and unexciting learning activities mean that the pupils lose interest. In such lessons, pupils are not so actively involved in their learning and, therefore, they do not progress at the rate needed to help them close the gap between their present standards and those they should achieve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met. The school is working to drive forward a new vision for the curriculum that will engage and excite learners and raise standards and improve levels of achievement. However, opportunities to extend and apply literacy and numeracy skills further across the curriculum are not yet fully utilised. The school is also aware of the need to use information and communication technology (ICT) more effectively to enhance pupils' learning. The curriculum makes a good contribution to improvements in personal development. Work towards the Stephen Lawrence Award, in particular, is helping to improve harmony in the school community and also in pupils' lives out of school. There has recently been an increased range of intervention strategies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or pupils who are identified as underachieving. An emphasis on helping pupils learn through practical everyday activities, such as shopping, is helping some pupils make faster progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support pupils receive are satisfactory overall. Safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements. Pupils benefit from strong pastoral care, which underpins their good personal development. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and they know who to turn to if they have any worries. The 'Oasis' provides a caring and nurturing base in school, where pupils can talk about any concerns, receive reassurance and learn to make good choices in their lives. New systems are in place to assess the needs of pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, but it is too early to assess their impact. The school works closely with parents to emphasise the importance of their children attending regularly. This has led to improved attendance since the last inspection. Academic guidance is improving. Pupils and staff are working more closely together to establish individual targets for improvement in their 'Learning Conversations'. This is beginning to improve pupils' progress. However, systems are not yet embedded to have had a sustained impact on standards. Although there is some good practice, teachers' marking does not always guide pupils as to how they can improve their work further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision for school improvement and is determined to provide the best for each individual child. The leadership team is well aware of the main issues facing the school and is implementing a range of appropriate strategies to deal with them. The school has

recognised that former systems to assess pupils' progress have not successfully picked up on weaknesses quickly enough to ensure that all pupils could make sufficient progress. Whole school targets have been insufficiently challenging and inconsistently used to ensure standards rise. The targets set with individual pupils are more effective. School leaders are working to increase the accuracy of pupils' assessments and to identify more effectively any pupil not making the expected progress, so that additional support can be provided. In addition, the recently developed 'Learning Enquiries' conducted by school leadership successfully highlight gaps in pupils' learning, which are being addressed and are improving pupils' skills. The governing body is very supportive and has the expertise to hold the school to account in its improvement drive. Such strengths in leadership, increasingly accurate self-evaluation and the improvements that have been made to date demonstrate that, in spite of very low standards, the school has the capacity to secure the further improvements required. Leaders and managers have worked hard to develop a positive partnership with parents. Community cohesion is now a strength. Special events such as 'Fair Trade Week' and 'Refugee Awareness Week' enhance pupils' understanding and respect for others. The school has worked successfully to develop strong links in the local community as well as with communities overseas.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	4

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

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

Inspection of Meadowfield Primary School, Leeds, LS9 0EY

Thank you for being so helpful when we inspected your school. While we found a lot of positive things about it, we also found that you are not making enough progress with your work or reaching high enough standards. As a result, we are giving the school a 'Notice to Improve'. This means there are some important things it should be doing better in order to help you reach much higher standards. It also means that inspectors will call back in a few months time to see how well the school is improving.

We were really pleased to hear how much you enjoy your school. You should be very proud of the way you behave, because you are very polite and friendly. Adults in school look after you well, so you feel safe and confident about asking them for help or talking to them about any worries or concerns. Your attendance has improved, which is a credit to you all and to your parents, as well as staff at school. You told us how much you particularly like finding about life in other countries, especially through special events like 'Fair Trade Week.'

Your headteacher and school staff work very hard to make sure you are safe and happy. To help you make quicker progress and reach higher standards, I have asked your teachers to give you some more challenging learning activities and to expect you to work at a much faster pace in some of your lessons. This will help many of you who are capable of reaching much higher standards to do so. I know that some of your teachers mark your work very carefully and clearly tell you how you improve it further. I have asked all your teachers to make sure that they do this so you can make much faster progress.

Remember to keep working hard and coming to school regularly!

I wish you all the best in the future.