

Meadowbank Primary School & Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106425
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	336672
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev G Bonson
Headteacher	Mrs Maureen Middlehurst
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by eight teachers. They held meetings with school staff, members of the governing body, an officer of the local authority, the teaching and learning consultant for the Improving Schools programme, and groups of pupils, parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to school management and pupils' progress. They also took into account the responses made to the inspection questionnaires by staff, pupils and 43 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment and progress of pupils at Key Stage 2, with a particular emphasis on writing
- the effectiveness of teachers' use of assessment information to provide pupils with appropriate levels of challenge and support
- the impact of the relatively new senior leadership team, and middle leaders, on driving forward school improvement
- how well the school promotes community cohesion beyond the immediate area
- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage in helping children to establish basic learning skills.

Information about the school

This average size school serves an urban area. The great majority of pupils are White British and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible to receive a free school meal is three times the national average. Above average numbers have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion that has a statement of special educational needs is high but it is reducing since the school's status changed, in September 2008, away from acting as a pre-school assessment centre. More pupils than is usual join or leave the school partway through their primary education. The school operates a breakfast club for its own pupils and those who attend the neighbouring school. It holds the Healthy School and Gold Physical Education awards and the Financial Management in Schools Standard.

Since the previous inspection, the school has had significant changes in staffing and leadership. The headteacher was appointed in May 2008, after an extended period as acting headteacher, and the deputy headteacher was appointed in April 2009. Since January 2010, the school has been part of the local authority's Improving Schools programme.

The school shares its site with a children's centre and a private provider of childcare. Neither of these institutions formed part of this inspection. The headteacher is the children's centre leader. Children of Nursery age receive integrated provision as the school and private childcare provider work together in one unit.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Due to good quality leadership by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, this satisfactory school is showing signs of good improvement. It is to the credit of the leaders and managers that the many significant changes that the school has undergone since the previous inspection, have not had an adverse impact on the pupils. During that time, there has been a rising trend in attainment in both key stages so that by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics; attendance has risen, behaviour has improved and the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is now good. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and firmly based on the analysis of pupils' progress. There is good capacity to improve further.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, building on the mostly low level skills with which the great majority join the Nursery. Most join Year 1 with skills that are below those expected for their age; their writing and mathematical development are the weakest areas. Progress through the rest of the school, in particular in Key Stage 2, is uneven due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points, although the achievement of other pupils is satisfactory. Pupils are willing learners yet too many opportunities are missed for them to practise their skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects, or to develop their skills of recall. Teachers do not always provide enough challenge for more-able pupils or use marking and target setting sufficiently well to help pupils to move their learning forward.

Good quality relationships and the good behaviour of the vast majority of pupils ensure that the school operates as a happy community. Pupils describe it as 'fun, exciting and encouraging.' Even so, punctuality is not strong. They have a good understanding of how to live safe and healthy lifestyles, and are keen to contribute to the community. Pupils develop these positive personal qualities because of the good quality care, guidance and support provided by staff which helps them to grow in self-esteem. Typical of comments from parents, carers and pupils is that, 'staff are willing to listen if there is a problem, are in tune with pupils' needs and are always available if a child needs to talk.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment in English and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that a greater proportion of pupils attain highly
 - improving the rate of progress that pupils make in each year group, in

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particular at Key Stage 2

- providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills across a range of subjects.
- Improve the quality of pupils' learning, by:
 - ensuring that teaching is at least of consistently good quality throughout the school
 - ensuring that marking and the use of targets consistently help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work
 - encouraging pupils to develop their skills of recall and ability to work independently
 - working even more closely with parents and carers to improve pupils' punctuality.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and relate well to adults and to other pupils. The large majority behave well. Pupils generally settle and listen well to teachers' explanations. They willingly discuss their thinking with partners and are prepared to have a go at answering questions. In the best lessons, pupils visibly rack their brains to try to improve their work, leading to sentences such as, 'I walked on the scorching sand as if it was hot rocks.' Elsewhere, pupils take too much time getting down to written work and need many reminders to recall for themselves, and to use, the skills learnt in previous lessons. Grammatical inaccuracies and untidy presentation sometimes make their work difficult to interpret. Skilful support for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to develop their skills at a good rate so that many attain average levels for their age by the end of Year 6. Few pupils attain highly in reading, writing or mathematics at either key stage. There is evidence of some very good progress in Year 6, but in other year groups the progress made by most pupils is satisfactory.

There are strengths in pupils' spiritual, moral and social development although their knowledge of the diversity of modern society is less strong. Most pupils are caring towards each other and can show empathy, for example, for the plight of street children. They happily take on responsibilities, for example, pupils in Key Stage 2 suggested establishing a 'listening council'. This has had impact on improving playtime facilities and reducing instances of unpleasant behaviour. Pupils' lunchboxes and choice of school dinners show their good understanding of a balanced diet and many are very keen on physical activity. They are currently local champions in netball and rounders, and runners-up in football. Pupils are polite, behave sensibly and move around the building in a quiet, safe manner. Although attendance is broadly average, despite the

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school's best efforts, a significant number of pupils regularly arrive late in the morning and miss out on important learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Thorough lesson planning includes activities that engage pupils' interest and identifies work that is mostly adapted to their different abilities. Teachers generally make the point of the lesson clear and use secure subject knowledge to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively. Even so, they sometimes miss opportunities to extend the skills of those who learn more quickly. Other adults in lessons provide well-targeted support for pupils who find learning difficult. On occasion, the introduction to lessons takes too long, the organisation of resources is time-consuming or pupils are not clear about what is expected so there is a delay to the start of independent work. The best lessons progress at a lively pace and move seamlessly between activities. High quality questioning inspires pupils to think hard and live up to the school's motto 'Only our best is good enough.' Pupils have opportunities to assess their own and others' work, and teachers' supportive comments help them to grow in self-confidence. In some classes,

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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the marking of work is irregular and provides insufficient guidance, or reference to pupils' targets, to aid improvement.

The satisfactory curriculum makes good use of the locality, theme weeks and visitors to bring learning to life. The provision to promote pupils' personal development is strong and pupils appreciate the good range of extra-curricular activities. Careful identification of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities leads to good quality support in school, plus good use of external agencies, so they make good progress. In Year 6, some good links are made between different subjects. Elsewhere the overuse of worksheets and copied texts limits opportunities for pupils to apply basic skills to other subjects or to organise their own learning.

Pupils confidently approach adults with any concerns: they know that they will gain the help they need. Firm, fair and consistent management of behaviour, alongside the introduction of lunchtime clubs, has led to an impressive reduction in exclusions from a high level to nil. The breakfast club effectively helps to improve attendance and pupils' physical fitness and ensures that those who attend are ready to learn. Good arrangements enable new pupils to settle, support the movement between year groups and prepare older pupils well for the transfer to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The tenacity and clear vision of the headteacher, together with the skills of the deputy headteacher, which complement senior leadership and management, have led the school successfully through a challenging period. Assessment information now clearly highlights where extra focus should be targeted and class teachers are beginning to use it more confidently when planning lessons. Staff respond positively to guidance on how to improve the quality of teaching and, as a result, teaching is satisfactory and improving. Attainment in reading and writing has risen over the past year during which they have been a main focus. Subject leaders for English and mathematics monitor the quality of provision and use the information to develop clear action plans.

Governors are very supportive of the school and have been particularly helpful when it has been necessary to take some difficult decisions about finance and staffing. Good quality systems and practice ensure that pupils are safeguarded from harm. These include an excellent response to pupils' views about their feelings of safety and also very close working with outside agencies. The school in the main, successfully engages with

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parents and carers in their children's learning. For example, in the past two weeks, 61 fathers and carers attended a 'Dads' Day' in school and many families supported a football carnival to raise funds for new sports kit. However, the work with parents and carers to promote punctuality has not yet had the impact required. Equality of opportunity is promoted well: pupils of different ethnicity work harmoniously together, gaps between different groups are closing and the school is very clear about where further improvements can be made. The school promotes community cohesion well in the local area, but has yet to extend this fully at a national and global level.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children join the Nursery with skills that are well below those typical for their age. Good quality induction arrangements ensure that they settle happily and soon begin to make the most of the interesting, practical activities on offer. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, children develop good learning habits. They concentrate well on self-chosen activities or those led by adults, and become used to well-established routines. Children form good relationships, although some find it hard to share and behave well all the time. Adults generally support children well to extend the skills learnt in earlier sessions, for example, the links between sounds and letters, in games, such as an activity during which children built up simple words through 'fishing' for letters. The outdoor area does not provide as rich an environment as that found indoors but this is being addressed.

Knowledgeable and determined leadership has built a good team which is committed to promoting children's welfare, safety and development of skills and knowledge. Through

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effective use of observations and careful monitoring of individuals' progress, staff have a good understanding of children's different abilities and needs. They use the information well when planning the next steps in learning. This leads to children making good progress overall, although girls progress at a faster rate than do most boys. By the end of the Reception Year, children's personal and physical development is broadly as expected for their age but their skills in other areas, particularly communication and mathematics, are below those expected. Parents and carers are delighted with the provision and say that they receive regular information about activities and their child's progress. Every effort is made to involve them in their children's development and they are invited to add their comments to the children's records or 'Learning Journals'.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About one fifth of parents and carers volunteered their views to inspectors. The overwhelming majority are very positive about the school. They greatly appreciate the 'hardworking and very helpful staff' and the efforts taken to support their children's individual needs. The inspection team agrees with these positive views.

A very small minority of parents and carers have concerns about the way the school takes account of the suggestions of others. The inspectors found no evidence to support this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meadowbank Primary School & Children's Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	70	13	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	70	13	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	65	15	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	72	12	28	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	72	12	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	60	16	37	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	67	14	33	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	27	63	14	33	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	65	14	33	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	53	19	44	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	58	15	35	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	65	14	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	81	8	19	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meadowbank Primary School & Children's Centre, Manchester, M46 0HX

Thank you for being so friendly and polite to the other inspectors and me when we inspected your school. In particular, thanks go to those of you who gave up some of your lunchtime to help us understand what it is like to be a pupil in your school.

Meadowbank is a satisfactory school that is improving well. This is because the senior leaders are good at listening to you and at using information about how much progress you are making, to help them know how to make the school improve. They mostly work well with your parents, carers and agencies from elsewhere. They are well aware that pupils who find learning more difficult make good progress, but that the progress made by the rest of you is satisfactory. We have asked them to make sure everyone learns at a good pace so that your attainment is raised further. We have asked them to make sure that the teaching in every class is of good quality and that marking consistently gives you pointers about how to improve your work. You can help with this by trying your best to recall what you have learnt in earlier lessons and to practise using your skills in writing and numeracy in other subjects. Those of you who regularly arrive late in the mornings could try to persuade your parents and carers to get you to school on time so that you do not miss any learning.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. You and your parents and carers agree that adults in school look after you really well. This means that you also take good care of each other, form good relationships and help to create the school's happy atmosphere. Almost all of you behave well and it is great that your ideas have helped to reduce the number of times when pupils are unkind. You feel very safe in school and understand well how to keep fit and healthy. Congratulations to all your successful sporting teams! Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Sarah Drake

Lead Inspector

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