

The Meads Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125964
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	340882
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Ken Bryan

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 of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Kent
Headteacher	Mrs Rhona Perry
Date of previous school inspection	6 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation showing the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the school's tracking data about pupils' progress, the school development plan, the records of monitoring of teaching and learning and all safeguarding documentation. The lead inspector spoke to four parents on the telephone. Questionnaires returned by pupils and staff and 93 questionnaires returned by parents were also analysed.

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

- the impact of initiatives and strategies for improving pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 and for boys across the school
- the quality of provision and leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage and their impact upon outcomes
- how effectively subject leaders monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and their impact upon pupil's achievement, especially of boys and higher-attaining pupils.

Information about the school

The Meads is now an average-sized primary school where most pupils are from White British families, with relatively small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The profile of the school has changed significantly over the past few years, with falling rolls and increasing numbers of pupils joining the school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including pupils requiring speech and language support. With the fall in pupil numbers, the school now has six mixed-aged classes, in Years 1/2 and 3/4.

The school has achieved the Activemark award and it is working towards the Healthy School and International School accreditations.

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

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. There are some strengths in pupils' personal development. They are very knowledgeable about how to stay healthy, and are able to explain not just about how they have improved their health but how they have been able to affect the eating and exercise habits of their families too. Pupils are also very committed to helping the school community. The sight of Year 6 pupils helping the youngest children in the dining hall was very heartening. In addition, the school's monitors and Eco and School Council representatives play very supportive roles. Around the school, most pupils' behaviour is orderly and the atmosphere is generally calm and purposeful. They can reflect about their own and others' lives, and the large majority show a care for and sensitivity to each other's feelings. They greatly enjoy school, especially the opportunities to play musical instruments, speak French and Spanish and participate in sporting activities

Standards are broadly average and progress across the school is satisfactory. This picture is changing and there are clear signs of accelerated progress and improving standards in many areas, particularly in Key Stage 2. However, too few pupils achieve the highest levels at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Girls consistently out-perform boys, especially in English. Teaching quality still varies greatly between classes. Although some is good, there are lessons where the pace is too slow and those who are more able are not sufficiently challenged or stimulated in their learning. Lessons have clear learning objectives, but the quality of the written and oral feedback given to pupils on their learning and progress is variable, with more able pupils especially unsure about what they need to do to improve. The school's provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good, with a very well-equipped computer suite and numerous laptops. However, pupils do not make sufficient use of these resources to support their learning in different subjects.

Staff work well as a team and teachers, teaching assistants and volunteers are highly committed to raising pupils' achievement. Information about progress is analysed well through effective data reviews that set priorities for teaching and staff development. Plans for improvement are clear and address the right things, identified through the school's sound self-evaluation. What has been done has had a positive effect. For example, the strategic management of the problems caused by falling rolls, pupil mobility, increased numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and staff absence has been effective. This shows that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. The large majority of parents are supportive of the work of the school and attendance is above average. A few, however, have some concerns, particularly about behaviour and how well this is handled.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of good and better teaching so that all pupils consistently make good progress across the school by:
 - quickening the pace of learning in lessons
 - ensuring that lessons challenge and encourage all pupils in their learning, especially boys and the more able
 - using assessment to inform pupils, especially the more able, of what they need to do to improve
 - making the fullest use of ICT resources to support pupils' learning.
- Work with parents to deepen their understanding of how the school's behaviour management strategies are supporting pupils and ensuring an acceptable standard of behaviour.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Lesson observations confirmed that rates of progress vary across school, being better in the upper Key Stage 2 classes. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups make similar, and at times, better progress. One pupil, who began Year 6 with little or no proficiency in English, went on to achieve expected levels for his age group in mathematics and science. Most pupils are happy and motivated and contribute well to class discussions, often after talking to a partner to clarify their ideas. Pupils, particularly older ones, also respond well when they are involved in their own learning, through sharing clear lesson objectives and receiving helpful suggestions in marking. More able pupils are sometimes not extended enough in their learning as activities are not pitched at a high enough level, so that progress slows. Sometimes, the pace of work drops because teachers spend too long on an activity and fail to set time limits for work to be completed. This again slows progress, particularly of boys, as pupils start to lose interest and concentration. Behaviour also slips as, for example, some pupils start to chatter. Pupils have a good knowledge of the wider cultures of the world as well as those present in their own country. They are generally alert to safety issues. Though play can be boisterous at playtimes and the dining hall can be a busy and lively place, pupils assured inspectors that they felt secure and were well supervised. There is a specified area for Year 6 pupils, which they value.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

How effective is the provision?

Teachers mostly apply effective strategies for classroom management, ensuring that pupils listen attentively when others are speaking. They work collaboratively to plan interesting lessons which have a clear focus on learning, although they are not always sufficiently challenging, especially for more able pupils.

The curriculum satisfactorily meets the needs of different pupils. It is imaginative and well enriched. Resources are utilised well to stimulate ideas and the use of visitors and visits significantly extends pupils' learning experiences. Innovative ideas during the current International Week, which integrate subjects, have been particularly successful. Egyptian bread making in history and the making of Native Indian totem poles in mathematics greatly extended pupils' learning experiences.

Pastoral care and the support provided for vulnerable pupils are good. Effective transition arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth transition as pupils move on to secondary education. Arrangements for small group teaching and other interventions that address the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are constantly modified and are generally well planned and organised. This helps to ensure that most of these pupils make similar progress to others. Communication with parents and carers to discuss their child's special needs is not always effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff are ambitious for the pupils, and the school's leaders are taking appropriate steps to drive improvement. School leaders and managers at all levels have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have made effective strategic decisions to manage the many recent changes in the school. For example, the addition of extra support for the school's leadership team, the re-structuring of the classes and ensuring that there is a full and effective governing body have resulted in greater stability, greater consistency in the quality of teaching, improved subject leadership and a strong team ethic. Already there are signs of improved outcomes in terms of pupil progress and attainment, particularly at Key Stage 2. The school's leaders and managers have been effective in establishing an atmosphere in which pupils feel cared for and safeguarding procedures and requirements are well met. The governors are involved and effective. They have deployed resources well to support the school's drive to improve teaching. The school works closely with many partners, including the secondary school to which most pupils go, and the local pre-schools, enhancing provision for pupils and children. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, both within school and locally, and is exploring national and international partnerships with other schools. Although individual pupils are all valued, differences in the progress of different groups of pupils show that equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Despite establishing good partnerships with external specialists to support learning and behaviour, this is not being communicated effectively with some parents who have contrary views, especially about standards of pupil behaviour.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3

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	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school assesses the capability of children on entry and again at the end of their time in Reception. These assessments show that last year the children made satisfactory progress. However, progress made by pupils in the area of personal and emotional development is slower and the school has correctly identified this as an area for development. Teaching assistants take every chance to join in play, weaving learning and questioning into what the children themselves are doing. Long-term planning is good, covering all the expected areas of learning, and progress is tracked well and analysed effectively. The external area is particularly well resourced and organised, with many activities to stimulate learning and to encourage creative play. The street in a playground is a particularly good feature. As a result, children tend to move freely between activities and show increasing independence. There is a good balance between child- and adult-initiated activities. Lesson planning targets aspects of learning that will be drawn out by adults during play, and the emphasis upon teaching sounds and letters (phonics), is now resulting in better outcomes. Good links with parents ensure that children quickly settle into school. One parent stated, 'The teacher has totally captured my son's interest and I am truly impressed with his achievements.' All safeguarding and welfare procedures are in place and all adults consider the well-being of children to be at the heart of what they do.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Views of parents and carers

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The large majority of parents are satisfied with the school. Many of the responses to the inspection questionnaire had additional comments that were very positive, such as, 'The headteacher and the teachers have been very quick to respond to any concerns', 'There are lots of exciting and interesting opportunities for the pupils' and 'The teachers are really approachable.' Many commented on the supportive atmosphere and the interesting curriculum, which inspectors also noticed.

Parents' biggest concerns were about behaviour and some bullying. Inspectors saw just one incident of unacceptable behaviour, which was managed effectively. However, across the school, most pupils behave well and are kind and considerate to one another and they have developed positive relationships with all adults. In the playground, though, play can be boisterous and lively as the children enjoy the fresh air, but there was no evidence of rough or dangerous play. Inspectors interviewed many groups of pupils about their views of behaviour, both formally and informally in the playground. Some pupils during these meetings and a significant number in the pupils' questionnaires had some misgivings about behaviour but they stated that the staff in the school dealt with misbehaviour promptly and appropriately. Most pupils said they felt safe and could always go to teachers if they were worried about anything. The school is aware of the issues and has appropriate behaviour strategies. The school's safeguarding procedures are good. A small number of parents expressed concerns regarding the provision of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The inspection team found robust evidence of multi-agency support for these pupils and all procedures were being followed appropriately.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Meads Primary School 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 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	51	34	37	3	3	9	10
The school keeps my child safe	46	49	35	38	4	4	7	8
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	43	41	44	4	4	7	8
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	33	48	52	5	5	8	9
The teaching is good at this school	41	44	39	42	3	3	8	9
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	42	40	43	4	4	9	10
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	43	41	44	5	5	8	9
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)	39	42	38	41	2	2	9	10
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	41	40	43	5	5	9	10
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	24	42	45	14	15	10	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	37	41	44	4	4	10	10
The school is led and managed effectively	36	39	33	35	6	6	11	12
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	42	49	42	5	5	9	10

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



12 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Meads Primary School, East Grinstead RH19 4DD

Thank you for such a warm and caring welcome to your school yesterday and for helping us during the inspection. We found that you are getting a satisfactory education. Most of you are clearly very happy and you are well supported by your teachers and other adults in the school.

Here are some of the strong features we found.

- The teachers plan and provide interesting lessons that enable most of you to enjoy learning.
- The behaviour and attitudes of most pupils is good.
- You clearly enjoy the wide range of clubs, school visits and other activities provided by the school.
- You enjoy learning about other cultures and you know how to care for one another.
- All adults in the school take good care of you by making sure that you are safe.
- It is clear that you know how to eat healthily and lead healthy lifestyles.

The school runs smoothly. We much enjoyed the very colourful displays. The headteacher, her staff and the governors know what the school needs to do to improve and how well it is doing. We have asked them to do some things to make the school even better.

- Make more teaching as good as the best by quickening the pace of the lessons, using ICT more and by making the lessons more challenging and interesting for boys and those of you capable of achieving the highest levels.
- Ensure that all of you have a good understanding of how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve, especially those of you who are capable of achieving the highest levels.
- Work with your parents to make sure that everyone is happy with behaviour in the school.

You can help make these things happen by continuing to care and work hard.

Yours sincerely

Ken Bryan

Lead inspector

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