

Meadows Primary School

Newcastle Road, Madeley Heath, Crewe, CW3 9JX

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Since the appointment of the new headteacher 18 months ago the school has made rapid and sustained progress and pupils' achievements are now good.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage especially in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils from different groups, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those eligible for additional funding make good progress. Pupils who are higher attainers are now consistently making accelerated progress.
- In English and mathematics standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Whilst standards in writing are improving rapidly they are not yet as high as those in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching over time is good and pupils say that their teachers do everything that they can to help them learn.
- Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons they demonstrate good learning habits. They have good attitudes to learning because they are taught how to persevere in learning.
- Governors are determined that every child shall succeed. They keep a close eye on the achievements of different groups of pupils and execute their statutory duties well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching, whilst improving, is not of a sufficiently high standard to bring about outstanding achievement of all groups of pupils, especially boys with special educational needs who struggle with writing.
- Throughout the school pupils make too many careless mistakes in their spelling.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not have enough opportunities to form their letters and numbers correctly.
- Pupils do not yet know enough about the different cultures that make up multi-cultural Britain.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons taught by four teachers.
- Documentation was analysed including that related to teachers' planning, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, the school's systems for improving teaching and learning, and how the additional funding is spent.
- The inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online Parent View survey and emails from parents. Responses to an inspection questionnaire from eight members of staff were analysed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body, pupils and parents.

Inspection team

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Meadows Primary School is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. None are currently at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- The school has received support from a National Leader of Schools, Mrs Abigail Rourke of Knypersley First School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and progress in writing of boys who have disabilities and special educational needs by ensuring that they have more opportunities to develop their handwriting skills and write in depth in all subjects.
- Improve the quality of pupils' spelling across the school by ensuring that they have every opportunity to apply their weekly spellings in a range of contexts and that there is greater emphasis placed in marking on the correct spelling of subject specific vocabulary.
- Accelerate the rates of children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage in play activities by providing them with more opportunities to form their letters and numbers correctly.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about the different cultures, customs and traditions of people living in England.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good. Standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 are above the national average in English and in mathematics. The consistent approach from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6 on developing thinking skills is having a positive effect on pupils' achievements and their positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils make better progress in reading than in writing because they do not always spell words correctly. Boys with disabilities and with special educational needs struggle with both handwriting and spelling, and do not always write enough in other subjects.
- Since the last inspection the school has successfully improved the rates of progress for all groups of pupils due to much improved systems to track their progress which now identify any aspect of underachievement. This is acted upon immediately by staff and as a result pupils are making good progress.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in reading, writing and mathematics at expected levels. They make good progress throughout Key Stage 1 and attain a good level of development in the prime areas of learning. However, their rates of progress occasionally slow in play activities due to the lack of opportunities to form their letters and numbers correctly.
- A high emphasis is placed on phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make). In 2013 in the Year 1 phonics check the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard was above that in most schools. Pupils become confident readers. Consequently they make good progress and attain above average standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. They have secure skills of finding supporting evidence in texts and confidently talk about their favourite authors.
- Higher-attaining pupils make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because teachers give them harder work. In mathematics they solve problems logically underlining key words and finding appropriate mathematical operations.
- The number of pupils eligible for additional funding is too small in most year groups to compare their achievement with that of their classmates without identifying individual pupils. In 2013 there were no eligible pupils in Year 6.
- Pupils make better progress in reading than in writing because they do not always spell words correctly. Boys with disabilities and those who have special educational needs struggle with both handwriting and spelling and do not always write enough in other subjects.
- The impact of Primary Sports Funding is evident in the amount of extra inter-school sports activities that the pupils are involved in. The money is used wisely on sports coaches who are helping staff develop their skills of teaching dance, gymnastics and team games.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good. Parents and carers speak very positively about the way that the school helps their children to learn. It is not yet outstanding because boys with disabilities and special educational needs do not have to write in depth with a neat script. Also, in play activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children occasionally do not have enough opportunities to form their letters and numbers correctly.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are helped to settle into school life by staff who are sensitive to their needs and value their uniqueness. A careful eye is kept on their preferred way of learning and they are encouraged at all times to try a variety of approaches to solve problems.
- Lessons are well planned. This demonstrates teachers' thorough knowledge of their subjects and their knowledge of pupils' strengths and areas for development. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and pupils are very keen to use their gold pens to make regular corrections. This consistent approach in all classes accelerates pupils' rates of progress. Marking is now good and this best practice is shared with other schools.
- In mathematics pupils are given purposeful opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to problem solving. Learning is interactive, linked to solving real life problems and good use is made of the outdoors. Teachers consistently make reference as to how learning in class will help pupils in the real world.
- Pupils are very keen to get on with their learning because they feel safe in trying out new things. This is due to consistent application of 'non-negotiables' by all staff across the school, including the well-trained teaching assistants. These refer to the way that written work has to be set out, how mathematical thinking has to be explained through the use of thought bubbles and how pupils use learning mats both for mathematics and English in order to become independent learners.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well both in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school as evidenced by their good attendance. They show positive attitudes in lessons and are keen to learn.
- The school places the pupils at the centre of all it does by providing a caring and supportive environment in which all pupils are valued and their needs are met. The school has many letters from the public praising their behaviour outside school on the many school trips that are undertaken.
- Teachers are highly skilled in managing behaviour and resolve issues swiftly. They have been successful in keeping pupils in school who show challenging behaviour. Pupils say that their teachers are very fair and that they know them well. They appreciate their efforts in making lessons interesting.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils understand different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They know the systems for reporting any instances of bullying. The recent introduction of thinking strategies has enabled pupils to distinguish between logic and emotion which they find helps them to resolve any conflict.
- Parents say that the school is safe and that the newly erected fence has made a big difference to the safety of all pupils.
- Occasionally learning behaviours in Early Years Foundation Stage slip when children have to listen for too long and are not given enough opportunities to write about what they are learning. Further up the school some boys with disabilities and special educational needs occasionally lose concentration and this results in them not writing enough in lessons.

The leadership and management are good

- The Headteacher has taken all of the advice given to her by the local leader of schools and the local authority. She has worked hard at developing consistency in all year groups, ensuring that her staff are clear about what has to be done to successfully raise standards. With the support of her senior teacher she has devised systems to improve teaching and track the achievement of different groups of pupils. She has successfully developed a whole school team which promotes a shared ambition and determination within the school.
- Improvement since the last monitoring visit by HMI in April 2013 has been good and all issues have been addressed resulting in pupils now achieving well. School self-evaluation is both honest and accurate and involves all staff and stakeholders.
- Staff are held to account for pupils' progress through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. Regular pupil progress reviews are held with the governors, local authority and the local leader of schools.
- Teacher performance is well managed. All teachers and teaching assistants have targets linked to priorities for school improvement and the progress that pupils make with secure links between performance and pay awards.
- School improvement planning is robust and detailed with milestones identified which are monitored by the governing body ensuring that no group of pupils is left behind.
- The school has developed a well-thought-out curriculum which makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Nevertheless pupils' knowledge of different religions, customs and practices in multi-cultural Britain is not as strong as it could be.
- The school is well supported by the local authority and a local leader of schools who have offered helpful guidance in moving the school forward through core groups meetings which have offered both evaluation and challenge.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. It is involved in all aspects of self-evaluation and forward planning. Governors are regular visitors to the school and are aware of how teaching relates to the progress of all groups of pupils. Governors execute their role of supporting the school whilst asking appropriate questions well. They engage in a wide range of training and are aware of the school's performance. Governors have a good understanding of how well teachers with responsibility points perform and link pay progression with pupils' achievements. They keep a regular check on the spending of additional and sports funding. They fulfil their statutory duties with respect to safeguarding and monitoring the school's performance by different groups of pupils.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124102
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	442595

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	96
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Jacqui Rowley
Headteacher	Helen Procter
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2012
Telephone number	01782 750313
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