

# Meadow Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111235
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	356881
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brian Padgett HMI

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

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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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	360
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs J Gooderham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sarah Curtis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Dolphin Crescent Great Sutton, Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH66 4SZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 338 2450
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Seventeen lessons were observed involving 13 teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, governors, staff and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation provided by the school. The responses of pupils and staff to questionnaires were examined and 116 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed.

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

- how much the school has improved since the last inspection, especially in mathematics
- how well pupils, who may be vulnerable to underachievement, progress
- the leadership and management of the school, in particular, how it has sustained improvement since the last inspection
- the effectiveness of the school's work with its partners.

## Information about the school

Meadow Primary School is a much larger than average primary school. It is housed in two buildings on the same site, a legacy of the school's previous history as separate infant and junior schools. Pupils attend from many parts of Ellesmere Port and the surrounding districts. The vast majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A new headteacher took up her post three weeks before the inspection, at the beginning of the 2010-11 school year.

Before- and after-school childcare is provided, along with a holiday play scheme, through the Dolphin Club. These provisions are managed by the governors and were inspected along with the school. The school has achieved several awards, including the Activemark. It has International and Healthy School status.

The school shares its site with a childcare setting, Meadowlands Pre-School. This setting is not managed by the school governors. It is inspected independently by Ofsted and its current report can be found on the Ofsted website, [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk), under its reference EY249033.

**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?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**4**

## Main findings

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 significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to aspects of leadership and management, the school's capacity to sustain improvement, the performance of different groups and in ensuring safeguarding regulations and duties are met.

Despite these weaknesses the school at this point in time provides pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has shown a general decline to broadly average, with a particular concern over standards in mathematics. On the whole, pupils make satisfactory progress with their work to reach average standards at the end of each key stage. However, some pupils are capable of better progress and specific groups of pupils, such as the more-able, the lower-attaining and boys, do not always do as well as they should. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They enjoy school and have good relationships with staff. Most pupils behave well in lessons but doubt was expressed by pupils, parents and carers and staff as to whether the school deals effectively with inappropriate behaviour, on the rare occasions this occurs. Teaching is satisfactory but support for teachers in lessons, to ensure all pupils can succeed, is very limited, especially in Key Stage 2. There is general acknowledgement amongst teachers of the need to develop the curriculum to provide more interest and excitement in learning but this has not happened. The school has strengths within its care, support and guidance for pupils. For example, the Dolphin Club is of good quality and very popular with pupils. The good partnerships with local pre-schools and high school ensure smooth transitions. Despite these stronger points, the care, guidance and support for pupils are inadequate. This is because the school fails to comply with the statutory requirements for ensuring pupils are safe at school.

The reason the school has not improved sufficiently is that the leadership and management of the school has not proved effective. The governing body does not hold the leadership properly to account or monitor its performance adequately.

In effect, the school has almost been at a standstill in recent years. There have been limited improvements over time in some areas; for example, the mathematics results were better in Year 6 in 2010 and the Early Years Foundation Stage has been introduced successfully. The school has faced recent challenges in taking in pupils from local schools that have closed. However, at nearly every turn, action to meet challenges has lacked rigour, too many issues have been brushed to one side and the belief of staff in their capacity to make a positive difference has fallen. One telling example of the long-term ineffectiveness of the leadership and management is that 17 years after the amalgamation

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of the infant and junior schools, parents and carers and staff acknowledge that the two departments continue to feel and operate like two separate schools.

The arrival of the new headteacher has heralded an immediate improvement in staff morale and leadership that has won the warm approval of parents and carers. A thorough audit of needs is in process and all stakeholders are involved. However, a root and branch improvement in all aspects of leadership and management at all levels is required in order to begin to secure the effectiveness of the school.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Meet all statutory safeguarding requirements in full and update all safeguarding documentation.
- Leaders and managers of the school should improve the motivation and expertise of staff, by:
  - raising the achievement and meeting the learning needs of all pupils, particularly those groups of pupils who are currently underachieving and do not have an equality of opportunity when compared to other pupils
  - developing the curriculum to provide lessons that are more interesting, exciting and relevant for pupils
  - dealing consistently with unacceptable behaviour.
- Improve governance so that the governing body rigorously holds the school to account for its performance.

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

Children's learning and development when they enter reception are slightly below those typical for their age. They enter Key Stage 1 having made a good start to their education. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' performance suggests they make satisfactory progress. By the end of each key stage (at Years 2 and 6 respectively) attainment is broadly average. This represents satisfactory achievement. Analysis of results and evidence from observations during the inspection suggest that within this overall satisfactory picture some groups of pupils do less well than others. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do as well as other children as their needs are separately provided for, but lower attaining pupils, higher attaining pupils and younger boys do not always do as well as they might. The root cause of their relative lack of progress lies in no better than satisfactory teaching. The support for teaching, until recently, did not have information about pupil progress that was as sophisticated and well managed as it needed to be. As a result, action to accelerate progress was less effective.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. In each area of their personal development, pupils do well enough, but in each there is clear scope for further improvement. For example, behaviour is generally good but observations suggest that when things go wrong, as they do from time to time, pupils do not have the strategies to resolve conflicts independently. Indeed, behaviour is seen as a relative weakness by pupils and staff. In addition, although many children have good ideas, for example, about improving the book stock in the library, they do not believe their suggestions would be acted on. Attendance is at average levels.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

The care, guidance and support for pupils are inadequate, since the school does not meet the statutory regulations on safeguarding. Other aspects of care are more positive: the before and after-school club provides good quality childcare out of school hours. It is run with enthusiasm and pupils have a substantial say in the activities provided. Transitions into and out of the school are also managed well. The school has developed good links with the on-site pre-school and other settings to ensure that children have a stress-free start to the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are well-established links with the local secondary school to ensure a smooth transition when pupils leave the school.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and has all the features that make it broad and well balanced. However, there is strong feeling amongst teachers and support staff that pupils' enjoyment and achievement would benefit from a revision of the curriculum to provide better links between subjects, an emphasis on skills rather than content, a more flexible use of lesson time and more exciting work that better engages the interest of pupils. Inspectors agree with their evaluation.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and explains why learning, on the whole, is no better than satisfactory. Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils. They show genuine care for them and praise them when they can. During the inspection, teachers talked for too high a proportion of lesson time and did not allow sufficient time for children

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to put into practice what they had learned. However, the most significant weakness was the lack of support in lessons for particular groups of pupils, such as the higher and lower attaining pupils, which accounts for their relatively poorer progress. This was especially noticeable in Key Stage 2. In this key stage, the very few teaching assistants are almost fully deployed in providing intervention programmes for pupils who need a boost to their learning. As a consequence, support for pupils in lessons is rarely provided.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>4</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Weak leadership and management at all levels have resulted in a lack of sustained improvement since the last inspection. Moreover, it has left the staff feeling isolated in their separate departments and frustrated at not being able to effect the changes they believe are needed to improve teaching and learning. The senior leaders do not provide the necessary support for the staff who have been given additional responsibilities. These include improving assessment so pupils know how well they are doing, special educational needs and improving pupils' writing. The management required to make ideas a reality has been absent. There have been a few improvements; for example, investment in mathematics at Key Stage 2 has resulted in better achievement at Year 6 in 2010. Throughout this period, the governing body has failed to provide adequate oversight and challenge to the leadership for the lack of improvement. The lack of oversight is clearly seen in the school's poor quality of self-evaluation, written policies and the failure to meet the necessary safeguarding regulations and procedures.

Other aspects of the leadership and management are satisfactory. Most parents and carers are reasonably happy with the school and feel they have a good relationship with staff, as can be seen in the returned inspection questionnaire analysis. Partnerships with other schools are satisfactory; the school is an established member of the local Educational Improvement Partnership. The school is developing strong links with a school in Ghana and this supports the pupils' understanding of diversity and promotes community cohesion. The school is generally effective in tackling discrimination but does not ensure equality of opportunities, as some groups of pupils do not always achieve as well as others. Pupils usually work together in harmony, although when problems arise the senior leaders do not always deal with them to the satisfaction of parents and carers.

The new headteacher has quickly won the confidence of staff, pupils and parents and carers. All stakeholders are currently involved in a thorough audit of school to draw up development plans for the school's improvement. In a very short time, there has been a rapid improvement in the morale amongst the staff.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two Reception classes. Most children enter Reception from the Meadowlands Pre-School. Relations with pre-schools are good and ensure a generally smooth transition to Reception. The Reception classes provide children with a good start to school life. The inspection took place while children were starting school. They were settling well and enjoyed engaging in a wide range of opportunities for learning and development both inside the classrooms and outdoors. Many of the children cooperated well together in their play, making friends and adapting quickly to new routines. Records show that children make good progress in Reception with many children reaching, and some exceeding, the learning goals desirable for the start of the National Curriculum in Year 1. Staff have good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensure a good quality of provision. They are effectively led and understand young children well. They have quickly taken advantage of the opportunity to give children more frequent access to learning outdoors afforded by the new canopy. Staff make an early start to assessment of children's development, with less focus on developing relationships than is usually seen.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire held positive views of the school, overall. Of the concerns they expressed, the most frequent was of the school's handling of unacceptable behaviour, inspectors found this to be inconsistent. The evidence from parents and carers suggested that many concerns they had raised with the school had not been dealt with. There was overwhelming support for the new headteacher, who parents and carers felt had made an immediate impression on the school for the better.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meadow Community 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 116 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 360 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	53	50	43	5	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	61	42	36	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	47	41	61	53	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	41	58	50	8	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	52	50	43	2	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	41	58	50	4	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	42	62	53	3	3	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)	46	40	51	44	8	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	47	53	46	7	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	31	59	51	12	10	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	28	63	54	8	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	55	47	49	42	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	67	58	43	37	4	3	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 all 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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 September 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Meadow Community Primary School, Ellesmere Port, CH66 4SZ**

You may remember your school was inspected recently. I am writing to report our judgements to you. I would like to thank you on behalf of the inspection team for your cooperation and help during the inspection. We spoke with many of you and your views helped us come to our conclusions.

We decided that the school should have a 'notice to improve' because it does not support you well enough in your learning and development. We also found that the leaders of the school need to ensure they meet certain requirements to keep you all safe. We heard that most of you enjoy school. We know that many parents and carers believe Meadow is a good school. Many positive things were said about the changes being introduced by your new headteacher. However, when we make our judgements we have to take into account how well you ought to achieve and whether the school has improved enough since it was last inspected. On looking at all the evidence we firmly believe that, although you are achieving reasonably well, most of you can do better. We found the school has not moved on sufficiently in the last few years.

Your new headteacher and the staff have many ideas they plan to introduce to help every one of you do your best and to make your lessons more interesting and exciting. We have asked those responsible for the school, the governors and the local authority, to check very carefully that the planned improvements really do take place. An inspector from Ofsted will visit the school again next year to see if it is improving.

Of course, you are all part of the school and have a part to play in helping it get better. Your ideas and efforts with your school work are sure to make a positive difference. On behalf of the inspection team, we wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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