

# Meadowhead Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119121
<b>Local Authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	358495
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Barbara Flitcroft

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>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	252
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alan Holderness
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Frances Stevenson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Anglesey Street Blackburn Lancashire BB2 4QG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons and observed 12 teachers. The inspection team held discussions with pupils, staff, the School Improvement Partner and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at policies, internal and external monitoring evidence, assessment information, teachers' planning, and safeguarding documentation. The 112 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed.

- How well pupils achieve in relation to their starting points, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics.
- Whether the quality of teaching and assessment has improved since the last inspection.
- How well leaders and managers have led improvement since the previous inspection.

## Information about the school

Meadowhead Community Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also much higher than the national average. However, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has gained a number of awards including Artsmark Gold, Enquiry School and Activemark, and it holds the Healthy Schools status.

**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, to which pupils feel proud to belong. After an unsettled period, when pupils' achievement was well below national averages, clear-sighted leadership and strong teamwork are successfully turning the school around. In response to the good care and support offered by all staff, pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem. Throughout the school they are now making at least satisfactory progress with some good or better and overall attainment has risen to average levels.

Pupils develop adequate skills to support their future economic well-being; however, insufficient time is devoted to the teaching of dedicated skills in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils clearly enjoy school, describing it as 'ace' and 'a good place to be'. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and make good use of the extensive outdoor spaces. Pupils feel safe and behave well. They make a satisfactory contribution to wider community through, for example, responsibilities in school and gardening in the new raised beds. Pupils welcome the opportunities to make new friends through their work with pupils at neighbouring schools. Effective links with parents and carers and varied agencies contribute to the strengths in pastoral support and aspects of pupils' personal development.

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons run smoothly and pupils behave very well in and out of classrooms. However, teachers are not using to full effect the information now available about pupils' progress to adapt work according to individuals' needs. Their marking does not always give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work. The curriculum has some strengths, for example, in enhancements such as visits and clubs, but topics and activities do not consistently allow pupils to be active enough in their learning.

School leaders have worked with the local authority to achieve a broadly accurate view of the school's performance and to identify priorities for development. Staff are keen to build on their successes in raising attainment by contributing to further school improvement. However, most leaders are not involved enough in monitoring teaching and any information gathered is not always used to full advantage to improve the quality of teaching. The headteacher has a strong sense of purpose and a clear ambitious vision for the future. She is very well regarded by the school community. All this and the school's track record of improving outcomes demonstrate a clear and satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 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.

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

- Raise attainment and improve rates of progress by ensuring that:
  - teachers match work closely to the needs of each pupil
  - books are marked in such a way that pupils understand clearly how they can improve their work
  - sufficient time is allowed to enable pupils to develop skills in ICT
  - the curriculum provides more and better opportunities for pupils to take part in practical and open-ended activities.
- Improve teaching so that all lessons are good or better by:
  - ensuring that all senior and middle leaders develop the skills needed for them to monitor the quality of teaching
  - providing leaders with sufficient opportunities to contribute to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching
  - developing systems that ensure the outcomes of monitoring activities lead to precise actions designed to have a direct impact on improving teaching.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils usually work hard in lessons and enjoy learning. They respond positively to questioning and are confident to put forward their ideas. They are keen to do well, have good attitudes and demonstrate good behaviour at all times. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress with some making good or better progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the high-quality care and support that is tailored to their specific needs. Better progress is made during lessons that move at a good pace and when pupils are given activities that are well-matched to their needs and interests. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson, when pupils were learning how to write the feelings of a character they had studied through drama, activities were carefully planned for pupils of all abilities to take an active part and work at a good pace. As a result pupils worked conscientiously, and learning and progress were good.

Most pupils enter Year 3 with skills that are in line with national expectations. Achievement in English and mathematics is currently satisfactory. Older pupils speak impressively of what they have learned about the importance of eating healthily and the need to take regular exercise. Pupils are sure that they are safe in school and those who look after them at home agree. They are confident that any bullying or other harassment is fairly rare and dealt with decisively. Pupils' knowledge of any potential dangers they may come across is good. They talk confidently and articulately about topics such as internet safety. Pupils treat each other, and the adults who help them, with respect. Overall, they contribute well to school initiatives but have limited opportunities to take decisions about their learning. Pupils are proud of the money they raise for charity. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils really like coming to this school and enjoy the activities, such as extra-curricular clubs, provided for them.

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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	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</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?

In the best lessons teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, the pace is lively and resources are used to good effect; questioning is effective and develops pupils' skills and knowledge well. However, in other lessons the pace is slower and activities do not inspire or excite pupils. Sometimes good opportunities are provided for pupils to talk in pairs and this successfully promotes the development of speaking and listening skills. Teachers are starting to make more use of assessment information to adjust lesson planning, but this is not fully developed. As a result, work is not always tightly-matched to the needs of individual pupils. In the best practice, marking is helpful and provides constructive comments to help pupils improve, but this is not so in all classes or in all subjects. Structured programmes for small groups of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to boost their progress in literacy and numeracy, have been successful. Progress has accelerated more rapidly for those pupils involved.

The curriculum is satisfactory because the school has worked hard with its network of schools to introduce a more creative curriculum to better meet the needs of all groups of pupils. It has been successful in improving English language and literacy skills as well as numeracy across the curriculum. However, the curriculum is at an early stage in developing other skills, particularly those in ICT where there is not enough time dedicated to direct teaching of skills. Overall, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to be independent learners, for example, by carrying out investigations or learning through

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practical activities. The classes benefit from specialist music tuition with samba drums. Visitors such as the school nurse enhance personal and social skills. Visits, including residential visits, support many areas of the curriculum. In addition, pupils have a wealth of opportunities to take part in a wide range of out-of-school clubs.

Pupils are well cared for and looked after. Very positive relationships with staff are evident, as is a good level of behaviour management. Pupils with specific needs are especially well catered for because there are good links with external agencies to support them. The breakfast club offers a healthy and welcoming start to each day. Strong links with the local feeder infants and the secondary schools enable pupils to get to know their new school before they leave their previous one.

*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>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers have focused effectively on improvements to raise attainment. There is a comprehensive system to track the attainment and progress of all pupils. As a result, teachers are becoming more aware of pupils' attainment and are in a better position to intervene when pupils start to fall behind. The impact can be seen in pupils' higher attainment and better progress. The senior and middle leaders have a shared understanding of strengths and weaknesses and are aware of the need to improve systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and targeting support and challenge to where they are most needed. Not all leaders have sufficient expertise or opportunities to enable them to make a strong contribution to improving teaching. Additionally, the areas of comparative weakness identified by the current monitoring arrangements do not all lead to sharply focused actions for further improving teaching and learning. Difficult decisions have needed to be made in the past and the headteacher and the governing body have now stabilised and reinvigorated the workforce. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met and is aware of the school's strengths and its areas for development. However, it is not robust and rigorous enough in driving the priorities for improvement nor is it sufficiently involved in target-setting. School leaders communicate ambition and drive improvement at an adequate pace and have forged strong links with local agencies to enhance this.

The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination satisfactorily. For example, it has effectively identified strategies to ascertain and overcome variations in the performance of different groups of pupils. These have been particularly successful in accelerating progress for pupils who need additional help with their learning. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily; the school is a harmonious community where pupils

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from different backgrounds get along well with each other. The school has a good understanding of the community which it serves, and is now developing links further afield. Partnerships with other local schools and a local business are strong, and staff and pupils benefit from this. Some events are shared to enable pupils to work with others from different backgrounds in their local community. The school communicates well with parents and carers through newsletters, flyers and the website. It runs a number of activities for parents, carers and families. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. For example, risk assessments for all trips and activities carefully consider pupils' safety.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</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>

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers commend the provision and feel well-informed. All of those who replied to the questionnaire agree that their children's experience of school is a happy one. Quotes include 'this school has gone from strength to strength' and 'I would not consider anywhere else for my child.' Parents and carers feel that pupils are helped to live a healthy lifestyle and that children are safe. Inspection evidence supports these views. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour and school not promoting healthy lifestyles. The inspection finds that current systems to encourage pupils to be healthy and support good behaviour are effective.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meadowhead Junior 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 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 252 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	54	50	45	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	54	50	45	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	51	46	60	54	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	66	59	46	41	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	64	57	47	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	48	56	50	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	40	64	57	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)	54	48	55	49	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	48	57	51	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	44	57	51	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	35	67	60	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	50	54	48	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	64	38	34	1	1	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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.**



10 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Meadowhead Junior School, Blackburn, BB2 4QG**

Thank you for the very warm welcome and the beautiful manners you showed to my colleagues and me when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the help you gave us. We were really impressed with your good behaviour. We found that Meadowhead provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. You get on very well together and take good care of each other. You are a credit to the school and your families. Well done! Thank you to the pupils who filled in their questionnaire and those who chatted with me. You are very pleased with your school and feel that your teachers do a good job.

You are keen to learn and work hard. You are learning at a faster rate now but I think that there are some areas for further improvement, so I have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- make sure work is just hard enough for each of you and that marking lets you know how to improve your work
- increase the time you spend developing your skills in information and communication technology
- ask all those involved in leading improvements at your school to make the best use of all the information they gather to further improve your school.

You can help by trying hard and telling your teacher if work is too hard or too easy.

I hope you and your school have a very successful future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Flitcroft

Lead inspector

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