

# Meadow Park Academy

Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 6BS

## Inspection dates

16–17 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Teaching is inadequate and this has led to pupils making inadequate progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching does not take account of pupils' different needs well enough. More able pupils are given work that is too easy and too few reach the higher standards of attainment.
- Pupils from Year 1 upwards do not make enough progress in reading because the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is not consistent or accurate enough.
- When marking pupils' work in mathematics, teachers do not clearly show pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers' questioning is not always effective. They do not check regularly whether pupils of different abilities understand what they are learning.
- Teachers have not had enough opportunities to observe and learn from good or outstanding teaching in other schools.
- There is still some poor behaviour by a few pupils in some classes that disrupts the learning of others.
- Governors have not ensured that all the resources available to the school, including additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for sports development, are used to best effect.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn about and appreciate other faiths and beliefs.

### The school has the following strengths

- The acting principal has taken strong and decisive action which has led to rapid improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Teaching is better in the Reception classes and in Year 6 and this has resulted in pupils now starting to make faster progress. Teaching is improving in the other classes.
- Attendance has improved well this year because of strong action taken by the school to reduce absence.
- Behaviour has improved significantly over the past two years and the majority of pupils now behave well. Pupils feel very safe in school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or parts of lessons. Four of these were observed jointly with the Acting Principal and another senior leader.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to a number of pupils in Years 1 and 2 read. They met with two groups of pupils to gain their views of the school. They spoke informally to pupils at break and lunchtime. They also attended an assembly.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including assessments and records of pupils' progress, the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection, behaviour and attendance, records of how teaching is managed and the school improvement and self-evaluation plans.
- Meetings were held with the acting principal, other senior staff and three governors. Inspectors also met with two representatives of the academy sponsor.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 26 responses to the staff questionnaire. They also spoke to several parents at the end of the school day.

## Inspection team

Adam Hewett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matt Middlemore

Additional Inspector

David Shears

Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with 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 it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.*

### Information about this school

- Meadow Park Academy is an average-sized primary school.
- The school has two Reception classes, two classes in each of Years 1, 2 and 4 and one class in each of Years 3, 5 and 6.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is significantly above that in most schools. Pupils come from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school does not meet the government's floor targets which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school became a sponsored academy in September 2012 and is part of the CfBT Schools Trust. In January 2013 the academy received a monitoring inspection, carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, because the academy's predecessor school was judged to be a school causing concern.
- Since the school became a sponsored academy in 2012 there have been three principals or acting principals. The current acting principal began supporting the school in February 2014 and formally took up his post in May 2014. There have also been a number of changes in teaching staff during this time.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good by:
  - ensuring all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what all pupils can achieve and how quickly they can work and learn
  - ensuring marking, especially in mathematics, provides pupils with clear guidance on how they can improve
  - making sure questions are suitably challenging for different pupils to check and extend their understanding
  - providing opportunities for teachers to observe and learn from outstanding teaching in other schools.
- Raise standards and improve pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - making sure all staff are sufficiently trained and skilled in teaching phonics and that they apply a consistent approach that builds pupils' skills and understanding throughout the school
  - ensuring pupils always present their work accurately and with care
  - setting challenging tasks for all pupils, especially the most able, based on accurate assessments of their abilities and what they need to learn next.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including the work of governors and

the academy sponsor, by:

- developing the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching so that teachers and leaders have a clear understanding of where they need to improve and what support there is to help them make those improvements
- improving governors’ ability to challenge the school effectively to improve and ensure pupil premium funding and sports funding are used appropriately
- extending pupils’ knowledge and understanding of different faiths and beliefs.

- Ensuring all staff consistently apply the school’s behaviour policy so that the behaviour of all pupils is good and that learning is not disrupted.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the academy’s use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is inadequate

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is well below average. In 2013 pupils at the end of Year 6 were over a year and a half behind other Year 6 pupils nationally in English and mathematics. This gap has narrowed slightly in 2014 but pupils' attainment is still significantly below average, particularly in reading.
- Pupils made inadequate progress in Key Stage 2 in 2013. The school's own information and evidence gathered during the inspection show that pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, have made faster progress in the current school year than they did in the previously.
- The most able pupils do not make enough progress. In 2013, very few pupils achieved the higher levels of attainment in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Although there is evidence to show a slight rise in the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the higher levels in 2014, too few pupils in Year 2 reached Level 3.
- Pupils who are eligible for additional funding do not progress rapidly enough. In 2013, these pupils were over four terms behind their peers in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The gap has not narrowed. The school is not successful in promoting equality of opportunity.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not make enough progress. In Key Stage 2, the attainment gap between them and other pupils in the school is wider than seen nationally, particularly in reading. The quality of support for these pupils has improved during the past year. The school now identifies their needs more accurately and provides additional one-to-one support and small group teaching. As a result, pupils are starting to make up lost ground.
- Children start in Reception with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. They make steady progress across the year and by the time they start in Year 1 have achieved standards that are still just below average. Children make good progress in developing their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. They do less well in developing mathematical understanding.

In the Year 1 phonics screening checks in both 2013 and 2014 the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard was well below that found nationally. This is limiting the progress that pupils make as they move through the school.

### The quality of teaching

### is inadequate

- Over time, teaching has failed to ensure that pupils make good progress. There are too many inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between different classes.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are not high enough in some classes. As a result, teachers often set work that does not build effectively on pupils' previous learning. Sometimes they set the same work for all pupils which is too easy for some or too difficult for others.
- The work set for the more able pupils is often too easy so they do not achieve as well as they should.
- The quality of marking and feedback to pupils on how well they are doing are not consistent. Marking tends to be less effective in mathematics because teachers give too little advice to pupils on how to improve their work and extend their learning.
- The marking of pupils' writing is stronger and is improving the quality of their work. However, teachers do not always correct basic errors in punctuation, spelling and grammar and they do not always encourage neat presentation or have high expectations about how work is set out. This leads to a slowing down in progress and an occasional lack of care in the way pupils present their work.
- Too many teachers do not check what pupils know and understanding well enough. They do not

match questions carefully to the different needs and abilities of the pupils.

- The teaching of reading is ineffective across the school because there is no systematic, whole-school approach to the teaching of phonics. Some staff are not sufficiently skilled in helping pupils to build words using the sounds that letters make. This is slowing progress for pupils, particularly those who find reading more difficult. The school has begun to implement plans to bring about rapid improvement.
- Evidence in pupils' books over a period of time and in sessions seen during the inspection indicates that teaching is starting to improve. The strongest teaching was seen in Reception and Year 6. This better teaching is helping pupils to make more rapid progress. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils worked very well together to solve appropriately challenging number problems that required them to identify and use a range of mathematical skills. The teacher designed a range of tasks that were suitably demanding for pupils of all abilities.
- Increased opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work are also beginning to improve standards in writing.

Teaching assistants are generally effective in supporting the learning of small groups and individual pupils. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are helped to understand their learning and make faster progress.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because there are still too many occasions when a small number of pupils behave inappropriately in lessons and disrupt the learning of others. In the past two years, the school has improved pupils' behaviour significantly. As a result, pupils usually display positive attitudes, are keen to learn and are willing participants in lessons. They are polite and courteous towards each other and towards adults.
- The school has developed an effective approach to behaviour management. Staff almost always apply the agreed strategies and pupils fully understand what is expected. Pupils and parents appreciate the significant improvements that have taken place. All parents who responded to the Parent View survey felt that pupils were well behaved.
- Pupils play well with each other at breaktime and lunchtime and show consideration for each other. They show pride in their school and their school uniform.
- Bullying of any kind is extremely rare and when it occurs pupils are very confident that it will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils have a good awareness of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of what constitutes safe behaviour and pupils say they feel very safe in school. The school provides clear and strong guidance on how to use computers, mobile devices and social networking sites safely.
- Pupils' attendance in 2013 was low compared with national averages. The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils and parents understand the importance of good attendance and arriving on time. As a result, attendance has improved significantly this year and is now broadly in line with the national average.

### The leadership and management

### requires improvement

- Since the school opened, leaders, managers and governors have not been effective enough in ensuring good teaching for all pupils and tackling the legacy of underachievement. Until recently, the academy sponsor had not provided rigorous support and guidance to the school leaders. A much more robust system of support is now in place. This includes regular help and advice from an experienced headteacher of a local outstanding school and a newly appointed group of assistant headteachers.
- In the short period of time that he has been in post, the acting principal has taken steps that are

driving improvement. Teaching across the school is beginning to show signs of improvement. As a result, pupils' progress is speeding up and standards are starting to rise. The acting principal has introduced effective methods to check pupils' progress and use the information to set targets for their achievement. Staff now know what rates of progress are required for all pupils.

- The previous lack of systematic processes to identify where improvements were needed, hampered the ability of leaders and governors to drive improvement. School leaders have recently put in place more effective systems that are allowing them to identify more quickly where improvements must be secured.
- The arrangements for assessing teachers' performance, identifying appropriate targets for improvement and linking the outcomes to pay progression are not well established or clear enough. As a result, weak teaching has not always been identified or dealt with quickly.
- During the current school year, the most effective teachers have begun to work alongside other colleagues to share expertise and develop their skills. However, teachers have not had enough opportunities to observe and learn from good or outstanding teaching in other schools.
- The subject leaders for mathematics, English, special educational needs and the Early Years Foundation Stage have all identified where changes are needed within their areas of responsibility. They have led actions that have brought about improvements in pupils' progress. These leaders provide valuable support to the acting principal. Other subject leaders have not always had similar opportunities to observe teaching or check pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility.
- The school has developed a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes pupils' interest in learning and encourages their creativity. The school organises an annual business week, supported by the Reading Rotary Club, that encourages pupils to use a range of skills in real-life situations. Pupils say they enjoy the additional activities that are offered, including sports clubs.
- The school supports pupils' moral, social and cultural development well but their spiritual development is more limited due to a lack of opportunities to broaden their understanding of different faiths and beliefs.
- The school has used the additional sports funding to employ specialist coaches to deliver sports lessons. However, there are too few opportunities for teachers to develop their skills and confidence in leading sports lessons. This has significantly limited the impact of the funding on raising standards.
- The school places a strong emphasis on keeping pupils safe and ensures that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have not always been sufficiently realistic about the strengths and weaknesses of the school to evaluate the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement accurately. Consequently, they have not taken action to improve the school's effectiveness quickly enough. Governors are now beginning to use information about pupils' progress to understand how the school is performing. However, they do not yet use the full range of information available rigorously enough to challenge the school to improve rapidly. They have not ensured that the resources available to the school, including the sports funding and pupil premium, are used effectively. Discussions with subject leaders help governors gain a deeper understanding of the quality of teaching. The governing body ensures that leaders carry out reviews of the performance of teaching staff, but, as yet this is not used well enough to determine teachers' pay progression

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138372
<b>Local authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	426370

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	275
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nathan Crawley-Lyons
<b>Principal</b>	Mark Frost (Acting Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 9375562
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