

Mead Primary School

Amersham Road, Harold Hill, Romford, RM3 9JD

Inspection dates 23 – 24 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured typically good teaching since the last inspection. Pupils' progress overall is not fast enough. Those in Year 2 and Year 6 have to fill gaps in their learning quickly to reach or exceed the levels expected of them.
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar are not taught well in all year groups. This means pupils do not apply these skills accurately in their work across the curriculum. They do not have sufficient knowledge of a range of mathematical methods to solve problems.
- Approaches used by teachers, including in the early years, do not always offer sufficient challenge to the more able, or engage boys sufficiently in their learning. Pupils are not always clear about what they need to learn and the tasks they are to complete.
- Pupils returning from small group work outside of the classroom do not make a smooth transfer back into class based work.
- When marking pupils' books, teachers do not always point out where they have gone wrong or how they can improve their work.
- Leaders and managers responsible for developing the range of subjects provided and raising pupils' achievements in literacy and mathematics are new to their role. They do not yet contribute fully to the school's actions needed to raise achievement.
- Although the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, senior leaders do not systematically monitor the effectiveness of their policies to prevent name calling with regard to a small minority of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders', managers' and governors' robust approach to raising the level of attendance has been successful.
- Attainment is rising. A few pupils reached levels more typically found in secondary schools in writing and mathematics in 2014. Art work and pupils' singing are high quality.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those in the speech and communication unit or new to speaking English, make good progress.
- Provision in the early years is good. Staff promote children's early skills in speaking, communication and reading well.
- The great majority of pupils behave well in lessons. The provision of a wide range of activities and sports coaches means behaviour at lunchtime is often good.
- Learning mentors work closely with parents and other professionals to keep pupils safe.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 33 parts of lessons. The headteacher and deputy headteacher accompanied them for some of the observations.
- The behaviour and attitudes of the pupils were observed during lunchtime, in lessons, assemblies, playtimes, and when they moved around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils from different age groups, and some in Year 2 and Year 6 read to them. Pupils' previous work in literacy and mathematics was reviewed.
- Meetings were held with staff with leadership and management responsibilities, with representatives of the local authority and the governing body.
- Inspectors met with parents when they brought their children to school, and considered the responses of 159 parents who completed the online survey Parent View. They also considered responses in 61 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Documents reviewed include the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plan, arrangements for safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, and the notes of governors' meetings.

Inspection team

Kath Beck, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional Inspector
Barbara Warren	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than most primary schools nationally. Since the previous inspection the number on roll has risen by almost 200 pupils. There are now three classes in each year group, except in Years 4 and 6 where there are two.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is almost twice the national average. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is similar to that found in most schools. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- Pupils in the Nursery attend in the morning or the afternoon.
- The school has specialist provision for up to 20 pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties from Reception to Year 4. These pupils are recommended to attend the unit for short periods of time by health and education services. They are often integrated into classes.
- One third of pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Less than one fifth speak English as an additional language. Very few are at an early stage of speaking English. This is lower than found in most schools.
- Six staff were new to the school at the time of the inspection, four of whom are new to their teaching careers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is typically good or better in all year groups by making sure that:
 - pupils understand fully what they are to learn and the tasks they are to complete
 - information from assessments is used more effectively to speed up the progress of more able pupils, and boys, including in the early years
 - teaching engages pupils fully in their learning, especially boys
 - pupils returning from small group work away from the classroom settle smoothly back into class based work
 - marking is used well to enhance pupils' learning.
- Raise achievement in writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught well in all year groups, and pupils use these skills accurately in their work across the curriculum
 - pupils acquire a range of mathematical approaches that they can apply confidently when solving problems.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of the new leaders of the curriculum, literacy and mathematics so that they contribute fully to the school's actions to raise achievement
 - monitoring rigorously the effectiveness of the school's procedures to prevent name calling.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the school's effectiveness has not been maintained since its last inspection. Teaching is not enabling pupils to make good progress over time in all year groups. That said, the range of activities to help pupils fill earlier gaps in their learning led to a rise in the achievements of pupils in Year 6 in 2014. They were higher than in previous years. Leaders have sustained the good provision found in the speech and communication provision and in the early years at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils supported by additional funding achieve as well as other pupils of their age nationally.
- Senior leaders are ambitious for their pupils to do well. They are determined to improve the quality of teaching. This has resulted in some staff turnover, while others receive intensive support and are showing improvements. With the rapid rise in the number of pupils on roll, the number of leaders and managers has been increased. Staff with responsibilities to improve the curriculum, and achievement in literacy and numeracy are new to their roles. They have yet to contribute effectively to the school's actions to speed up pupils' progress across the school.
- The range of subjects taught promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development strongly. It provides opportunities for pupils to debate right and wrong, and respect the different faiths and cultures within the school. The vast majority of pupils respond well to this good preparation for life in modern Britain, but a very small number do not. The school is not checking rigorously enough that its policy to 'Call me by my name' is implemented by all pupils.
- The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed. Those who are talented in art and singing rise to the challenges offered by specialist teachers. Information from in-school assessments is used to identify pupils who are not making the progress they should. Senior leaders seek out different programmes that help them to overcome barriers to their learning. Staff are trained to enable those who join the school at the very early stages of speaking English to acquire essential skills quickly. Groups to enhance learning are organised appropriately, but those working outside the classroom in some lessons find it hard to pick up their learning when they return.
- Senior leaders have a robust approach to pupils attending regularly. Together with the learning mentors, senior leaders have ensured that pupils attend school frequently, and the number of pupils who do not attend school regularly has reduced substantially.
- Through their robust self-evaluation senior leaders have identified the priorities to raise achievement through improved teaching. Staff training in the early years has brought about good improvements in children's learning in the work they do outdoors. The decision to employ sports coaches at lunchtime has had a significant impact on pupils' behaviour, health and fitness.
- Senior leaders have already introduced arrangements to assess pupils' progress within the revised National Curriculum. In doing so they are raising expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan to check the impact of this over the year.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors and who completed the online survey Parent View have confidence in the school. Termly reports to parents about their child's targets and progress towards them, attendance and punctuality are informative. They show how well pupils are achieving in relation to those in other schools, and how they can be supported at home to make better progress.
- Senior leaders and learning mentors ensure that arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective and statutory requirements are met. They work closely with parents and their children to reduce barriers that hinder learning.
- The local authority has provided little challenge or support to the school since the previous inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors using their expertise in finance, building and education well during the school's rapid expansion. Following a recent independent review, governors have increased their effectiveness when visiting the school to gain in-depth understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They meet with staff and parents to seek their views to contribute to the school's self-evaluation and bring about further improvements.
 - With the increasing number of pupils from a wide range of backgrounds, governors work with senior leaders to promote tolerance and respect for all. They share the senior leaders' robust approach to poor behaviour and attendance.
 - Governors are aware of the quality of teaching in different year groups. They have made key decisions to appoint additional staff to enable the rising number of pupils eligible for additional funding or with specific needs to achieve well. They know that the allocation of sports funding has raised teachers' skills

in physical education, and provided opportunities for pupils to take part in a wider range of sports.

- While governors check the school's information about pupils' progress, they are less aware of how well the school performs in relation to other schools nationally. They monitor the budget carefully and check the impact of their spending on pupils' achievements. Governors have recently up-dated their teachers' pay and performance policy ensuring that there are close links between pupils' progress and teachers' pay, and that poor performance is not rewarded. Statutory requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Parents and staff have no significant concerns about pupils' behaviour, although some say it could be better than it is. The great majority of pupils respond well to the school's high expectations that they will behave well, be polite and show good manners to adults and to one another. However, a very small number of boys have been excluded for a short period of time recently for challenging behaviour.
- Not all pupils display positive attitudes to learning. While they do not interrupt the learning of their classmates, some boys 'switch off' when activities lack interest for them, and this holds back their progress. Most pupils take pride in presenting their work well. They take care over their appearance and make sure the school is cared for well.
- Pupils in the speech and communication provision are keen and enthusiastic learners. They respond well to the tasks they are asked to complete, and to the ways in which staff help them to improve their ability to talk and express their ideas.
- Staff, including sports coaches, provide many activities at lunchtime that enable pupils to develop skills in teamwork and cooperation with friends from a wide variety of backgrounds. Pupils' involvement in these activities means they are ready to learn at the start of the afternoon.
- Pupils elected to the school council feel responsible for the school, and develop a sense of ownership in what the school is trying to achieve. They worked well with the school cook to improve the meals at lunchtime.
- The school has a robust approach to ensuring pupils attend as often as possible, and arrive on time. Action taken by senior leaders and learning mentors have led to significant improvements in attendance rates over the past year. They are now average and contribute well to the increasing level of attainment for most pupils.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Pupils have a clear understanding about what constitutes bullying, and know what they ought to do if it happens. Most pupils respect the school's policy to 'Call me by my name'. However, they say that a very small minority of pupils do not keep to this, using derogatory language that causes upset. The school deals with these situations quickly and appropriately, but recognises there is more to do.
- Staff pay close attention to other aspects of pupils' safety, ensuring that all visitors are checked for their suitability and are monitored as appropriate.
- Learning mentors work closely with parents, including those who are hard to reach. They collaborate effectively with other professionals to overcome barriers to learning, and to pupils' safety in school and in the locality.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because the activities provided to help pupils learn in writing and mathematics are not good enough to engage some pupils, primarily boys, in their learning. Not all teaching ensures pupils are clear about what they need to learn and the tasks they are to undertake. This leaves pupils confused.
- The teaching activities chosen do not extend pupils' learning, especially in writing. During some lessons pupils are removed to work in small groups to help them to catch up. However, they find it hard to pick up the ongoing work when they return to the classroom. In addition information from assessments is not used as well as it should be to accelerate the progress of more able pupils and boys across all year groups, including the early years.

- Teaching ensures that pupils' work is marked regularly, but does not always give them the information they need to move learning along at a faster rate. This is particularly true in writing, when pupils are not reminded how to use their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills accurately. Consequently, pupils continue to make the same errors.
- Mathematical facts and methods to carry out a range of calculations are taught well in some classes. That said, when faced with problems, not all pupils know how to solve them successfully.
- Teachers in the speech and communication provision are skilled in enabling these pupils to make progress, not only in their speech but also in other subjects appropriate for their age. They are supported well when they join with others in the main school classes.
- Additional qualified teachers and teaching assistants provide well-targeted assistance to disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, pupils speaking English as an additional language or those supported by additional funding. Their needs are met through a wide range of activities that encourage them to do well.
- Homework is used well to consolidate and extend pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment in Year 6, and their progress from Year 2 to Year 6, has been broadly average for several years. The rate at which pupils progress across the year groups varies. Records of pupils' progress show that those in Years 2 and 6 often make up for time lost in previous year groups. Low levels of attendance have also impacted negatively upon pupils' achievements. Now that pupils attend more frequently, their attainment is rising.
- In national tests in 2014 pupils' attainment improved in writing, but was not as good in mathematics as in previous years. Girls outperform boys in the early years, Year 2 and Year 6.
- In the past, few of the more able pupils reached the levels expected of them in reading and writing. This is because tasks do not challenge them well enough in all year groups. That said, in 2014 more pupils in Year 6 exceeded the national expectation. A small number of the most able pupils reached levels of attainment in mathematics and writing that are more typical of those found in secondary schools.
- Pupils in the early years and Year 1 acquire good skills in the knowledge of the sounds that letters make. This helps them to make good progress in reading, but they do not apply these skills well in their writing. Older pupils without this knowledge find it hard to spell accurately or read unfamiliar words confidently. They do not apply their skills in grammar and punctuation well across the curriculum.
- Throughout the school pupils gain knowledge and skills in mental arithmetic and calculations, but not all know how to apply a variety of methods to problems they need to solve.
- In 2013 and 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2013 the gap between their attainment and that of their classmates in school was less than half a term. In English, punctuation, spelling and grammar, they performed well. However, in 2014 the gap widened to over a term in reading, two terms in mathematics and almost a year in grammar skills.
- Pupils in the speech and communication provision make good progress from their varied starting points. They enjoy many engaging learning experiences that develop their speaking, listening and writing skills well. Staff are sensitive to pupils' learning needs and tailor programmes accordingly. The unit is successful in enabling pupils to return to their own schools.
- The small number of pupils who come to the school at an early stage of speaking English, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in the main school also achieve well. Staff are knowledgeable and help them to develop their knowledge and skills in small steps that give them confidence, and motivate them to do as well as they can.
- When pupils work with specialist teachers, their art work and singing are high quality.

The early years provision

is good

- A high number of children enter the Nursery with speech and communication difficulties. They make good progress and quickly gain confidence in talking to adults and to their friends. Staff provide many captivating activities that inspire children to converse with others. Often they play along with the children, providing excellent models of spoken Standard English and extending children's vocabulary. Reception children are particularly enthusiastic about acting out stories that they record on small hand-held computers and share with their friends.
- Attainment at age five over the past two years has risen, but remains below average when children enter

Year 1. Following detailed analysis by senior leaders of the reasons for this, staff have undergone training, changed their practice and raised their expectations.

- Literacy and mathematics are included in many activities. This allows children to make good gains in their knowledge of the sounds that letters make, and by the age of five some write recognisable letters or words. In the Nursery children make a good start in counting and working out simple calculations using numbers 0–5. Staff in this year group vary their questions to challenge the more able to think hard, but this is not always the case in Reception.
- Children are enthusiastic about learning. They enjoy playing with their friends, listen carefully to adults, and acquire positive work habits. They are resilient, remain on task for considerable periods of time, and are willing to 'have a go.'
- These positive attitudes and the good rate of progress result from good teaching by adults who use assessments well to provide the next steps in children's learning. They are trying out new methods this year to stimulate the development of boys' early skills in reading, writing and mathematics to close the gap between their attainment and that of the girls.
- Communications between staff and parents about children's progress and their welfare are strong. Parents can easily access teachers' records about how well their child is doing and how they can help them to achieve more. Currently, staff are working with parents to support their children in becoming potty trained. This is to help children towards maturity in their personal hygiene, and to leave adults more time to focus on their learning.

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	102322
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	449310

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	3– 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	603
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Bishop
Headteacher	Susan Garner
Date of previous school inspection	2– 3 March 2011
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