

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



3 April 2018

Mrs Sue Hewitt  
Headteacher  
Meadows First School  
Stourbridge Road  
Bromsgrove  
Worcestershire  
B61 0AH

Dear Mrs Hewitt

### **Short inspection of Meadows First School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in January 2014.

### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Together, you and your teachers deliver a rich and effective curriculum, which enables all pupils to experience and understand the wider world they live in. You are unwavering in your intentions to provide experiences to inspire and underpin pupils' thinking. Your bright and engaging school environment celebrates these 'memorable experiences'. For example, all pupils are provided with clarinets and music coaching in Year 3. This culminates in a celebratory performance later in the year. You provide a rich variety of books for pupils and there are many places to sit and read throughout the school.

You create an inclusive culture, which values all pupils and staff. Pupils from the autism base approach their learning with confidence. Some of these pupils access lessons in the main school when they are ready to do so. Skilful teaching by the teacher and support staff enables pupils to make strong progress. Every class has supplies of visual aids and learning boxes. These resources enable pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities to access learning in all classrooms and the curriculum effectively. Through your focus on the rights and respect of others you systematically tackle stereotypes, building on the understanding of difference and tolerance.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. You and your leaders implement positive strategies to equip pupils to be resilient learners and celebrate their successes. Your school's 'Meadow Mouse' mascot is a much-loved character. Teachers use 'Meadow Mouse' to teach children how to develop learning behaviours of being organised, determined, focused and enthusiastic, with great success. Teachers refer to 'Meadow Mouse' attributes and give stickers when they observe pupils using these skills. Pupils, parents and carers talk fondly about 'Meadow Mouse' and how they collect awards throughout the year.

Parents spoke about the difference the school makes to their children's progress. Parents gave examples of how their children settle quickly into the school's routines and make significant progress in their writing. The extensive information you provide on your website enables parents to know what their child is learning at school and how they can support their child at home. Parents very much value the 'stay and play' days offered in the early years and the online recording of children's skills, which they access from home.

You and your deputy headteacher lead the school very well. You have systematically addressed the areas for improvement since the last inspection through your rigorous approach to implementing school improvement plans. Pupils make rapid progress in their learning because of the consistently high-quality teaching they receive. However, in the early years some disadvantaged children who have SEN and/or disabilities are not yet making rapid enough progress to attain the early learning goals.

Teachers are skilful in how they use time in lessons. They are adept at moving pupils on in their learning, while still providing enough time for pupils to explore concepts in greater depth. Your teaching assistants effectively support pupils to engage in tasks and be independent in their learning, for example by modelling subject vocabulary for pupils which they can then apply to their learning.

The leadership team are focused, and rightly so, on the development of writing throughout the school. You and your teachers carefully consider how to inspire boys to engage in writing. In lessons there is an expectation that pupils will discuss their writing with one another. This enables pupils to build confidence and improve their writing. Strong teaching in the early years means that children are helped to improve their writing skills from the very start of their education. For example, children's workbooks in Reception demonstrate their progress from initial mark-making to early letter formation, with some emerging words over a short period of time.

You have taken steps to address the low attendance of some pupils. For example, you have appointed an attendance officer to further support you in tackling families who do not ensure that their children attend school regularly. In addition to this, you provide appropriate support where some pupils have genuine reasons for not attending school. Nevertheless, you recognise that further work needs to be done to tackle the persistent absence of some pupils.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The person responsible for safeguarding attends regular training and instils a culture where safeguarding is central to the work of the school. As part of checking these arrangements you recently commissioned a safeguarding audit. The governors also carry out their own safeguarding audits.

Leaders are focused on ensuring that parents, staff and governors have the right information and training to keep pupils safe. Information about how to keep safe and the procedures for raising concerns are displayed clearly around the school and in classes. The person responsible for safeguarding ensures that concerns raised are followed up in a timely manner. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and are confident to raise concerns.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. Pupils who spoke to the inspector knew how to keep themselves safe online and were clear about whom they would go to if they needed help.

Parents spoken to during the inspection and through the responses of the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, are confident that you keep their children safe and that they can raise concerns with you should they need to.

## **Inspection findings**

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership. They dedicate time and resources to improving the skills of the teaching staff, so that they continue to improve outcomes for pupils. They commission outside agencies to review and validate their work on a frequent basis. For example, they have recently taken part in a peer-to-peer review of the school and commissioned a review of the autism base. Consequently, the school has continued to improve since the last inspection.
- The governing body have a clear and persistent focus on improving the school. They are rigorous in the information they collect about the school and are confident to challenge leaders appropriately.
- Teachers engage in a wide variety of professional development opportunities. They share this information with other teachers to improve teaching and learning throughout the school.
- There is some very high-quality teaching throughout the school. Teachers support pupils' learning by asking probing questions. As a result, pupils develop a deep understanding of the concepts being taught.
- Pupils' topic and science books show examples where teachers develop reading, writing and mathematics effectively across the curriculum. For example, pupils are given opportunities to develop mathematical concepts of time and measurement in science and produced extended pieces of writing in their 'Polar Explorer' project.
- Teachers provide tasks and challenges that consistently meet the learning needs

of most pupils. Teachers challenge misconceptions routinely and provide pupils with opportunities to revisit concepts that they have not understood. This helps pupils to make rapid progress in their learning.

- Pupils talk confidently about their work, both to adults and to one another. One pupil explained to the inspector how he had learned to use a cursive script, which had improved his handwriting. Pupils also discuss the tasks that they are given. For example, pupils in Year 4 were heard to talk about the impact of adding punctuation to a sentence. One child replied, 'I had not thought about doing that; would that change the meaning though?'
- The outside learning and play areas in the early years provide an exciting and stimulating environment in which to learn and play. The area is divided cleverly into different learning zones, which children can explore. Resources in these learning zones link to the main topic of learning. There are extensive opportunities to develop writing, reading and mathematical concepts in the outdoor space. As a result, most children in the early years make good progress in their learning. However, some disadvantaged children who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make as much progress as they could and do not attain the early learning goals.
- Most pupils attend school regularly but illness and personal circumstances have an impact on the attendance of some pupils. However, despite leaders' attempts to address this, some pupils continue to be persistently absent when they could be in school.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to plan and deliver highly focused support so that disadvantaged children in the early years make rapid progress from their starting points and diminish the difference between them and other pupils nationally
- they continue to take effective action to reduce persistent absence.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Clugston  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the governing body. I spoke with local authority school improvement adviser. I met with parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of the 81 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

I reviewed a range of other documents, including your self-evaluation, school development plan, case studies, assessment and progress information, as well as documents relating to safeguarding, staff recruitment checks and child protection procedures.

I visited classes with senior leaders to observe teaching and learning. I spoke to pupils during lessons and looked at their work both in and outside of lessons.