

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KING'S MEADOW SCHOOL**

Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122167

Headteacher: B Kettleborough

Reporting inspector: Mary Last  
17171

Dates of inspection: 7-8 December 2000

Inspection number: 223652

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	5-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Manning Road Moulton Leys Northampton
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Eric Watson
Date of previous inspection:	7 May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

King's Meadow School is a special school catering for up to 40 boys and girls with emotional and behavioural difficulties from the ages of five to eleven. There have been no girls on roll for the last two years and at the time of inspection, there were 32 boys, all between the ages of seven and eleven. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. Fourteen pupils are entitled to free school meals (FSM). All pupils have statements of special educational need. They have various learning difficulties ranging from problems with learning as a result of their previous educational and social experiences, to specific difficulties with literacy and/or numeracy. As a result, all pupils are currently working below national expectations and, despite good gains in learning at King's Meadow, achieve significantly below their chronological ages. The school moved into high-quality purpose-built accommodation in September 1999, providing a stimulating and very well resourced learning environment.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

King's Meadow School continues to be a very successful school and is very effective in promoting high standards in all of its work. Pupils respond well to the routines and procedures of the school with the result that they improve their ability to concentrate in lessons and show interest in their learning. Teaching is of high quality in the school. The school's approach to improving pupils' behaviour and response to learning is very effective. The school offers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and a very good programme of extra-curricular activities. It makes good use of the local community to support learning. The governing body and head teacher provide excellent leadership, and a clear educational direction for the school. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Provides good and often very good standards of teaching and learning support in lessons, which motivate and interest pupils enabling them to do well.
- Provides good opportunities for pupils to improve their basic skills through the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and, more recently, improved opportunities using information and communication technology (ICT).
- Provides very good opportunities for pupils to improve and take responsibility for their own behaviour through a very effective points system, which recognises and rewards efforts and achievements.
- Develops its role within the wider community by sharing the school's facilities and the skills of the staff to help parents and teachers to identify and manage children's challenging behaviour.
- Provides very good quality leadership and management which enable all staff to help the pupils improve their work and behaviour.
- Makes very good use of the new building by creating a very positive teaching and learning environment, which enables pupils to concentrate well, enjoy their surroundings and make good progress.

#### **What could be improved**

- Strategies for identifying specific targets for learning, particularly in pupils' individual educational plans (IEPs).

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has built upon the high standards found at the last inspection in May 1996 and has made very good progress with the resulting key issues. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are now a major feature of the curriculum and the school has invested heavily in two computer-based learning packages. These provide individually targeted work for each pupil. The curriculum now meets requirements in terms of subject and time allocation. It also includes good arrangements for pupils' personal and social development (PSD) and regular, specific lessons on behaviour and social skills. The school has improved its system for setting individual learning targets for pupils' IEPs but does not yet ensure that each pupil's individual needs are systematically met within the lessons. The school has also significantly improved systems for identifying strengths and weaknesses through improved monitoring. The governing body has had a very significant impact on improvements.

### STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 11	Key
speaking and listening	B	<i>very good</i> A
reading	B	<i>good</i> B
writing	B	<i>satisfactory</i> C
mathematics	B	<i>unsatisfactory</i> D
personal, social and health education	A	<i>poor</i> E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	

Pupils make good gains in learning overall throughout the school. Their achievements in English and mathematics, whilst remaining below national expectations, are good in relation to their previous achievements and experiences. Pupils make very good gains in PSD because all the staff share a view that this is at the heart of the school's purpose and help and guide pupils to do their very best. Whilst pupils make good progress toward the targets in their IEPs, the targets themselves do not consistently identify very small and specific steps of learning for each pupil which maximise their learning opportunities.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils come to school willingly and eager to learn. Even when upset they quickly become interested in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: pupils behave well both in lessons and in and around the school. As they get older, pupils increasingly understand the impact of their behaviour on others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: through very good support from staff, pupils increase their confidence and maturity and talk about and face their difficulties.
Attendance	Satisfactory: attendance is slightly below the standard required of 95% but the school has very good procedures for following up lateness and absences.

Pupils are very polite and helpful around the school. They are courteous to visitors and try hard to do well in lessons. Very occasionally, where their emotional problems result in outbursts of challenging behaviour, pupils respond well to skilled support from staff and calm down quickly so that they are able to join in with activities speedily. The good role models provided by staff and the good relationships they have with the pupils are a major factor in helping pupils deal with their own behaviour. Pupils value the credit-points system, which tracks their behaviour and work and provides rewards for effort and achievements. This is a very effective way of keeping pupils focused on their work throughout the day.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11
Lessons seen overall	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Teaching is good overall throughout the school. A major factor in the quality of teaching is the high-quality support provided by the classroom assistants. Teachers and classroom assistants know their pupils well and adjust their questions and approaches according to the pupils' needs and difficulties. All staff make their high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work very clear and pupils respond accordingly. The teaching of PSD is very good both in lessons and informally around the school. Teachers are increasingly using ICT to promote pupils' understanding of computers and to raise their standards of learning in literacy and numeracy. Teaching in English, and mathematics makes good use of methods from the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this helps pupils focus their work and develop their basic skills. Teaching is never less than satisfactory. Out of fourteen lessons observed, teaching is good in nine lessons, very good in three and outstanding in one.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: the curriculum offers all subjects of the National Curriculum and RE. The curriculum is extended by a very good PSD programme and regular teaching of behaviour and social skills. Both these initiatives help pupils improve their concentration and learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils with EAL.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good with many visits to support pupils' learning. All pupils have sufficient times to reflect on their own actions and those of others. The school provides very good moral development by a continuing emphasis on right and wrong. The pupils benefit from many good social activities both in their school day and at other times.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good: the school's procedures for supporting its pupils meet all necessary requirements for child protection and ensure that pupils feel safe within the school.

The extended curriculum successfully helps pupils to improve their work and behaviour. Pupils are able to participate in a wide range of exciting activities during the school day and other activities include residential visits, mountain biking and outdoor pursuits. The work and extra-curricular activities develop pupils' positive attitudes and ability to learn very effectively.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good: the head teacher, chair of governors and key staff give clear and effective educational direction. As a result, staff work well as cohesive teams and pupils make good progress.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Excellent: the governors are welcome, regular visitors and make very good use of their expertise to support and question the work of the school, keeping developments within well-focused boundaries.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: very effective procedures for identifying strengths and weaknesses are in place and the school sets relevant, challenging targets for improvement, which are well linked to performance management.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent: the school has a very good system for ensuring that it spends its money wisely and provides good value for money.

The commitment of the head teacher, governors and key staff have enabled the school to establish a very clear direction and focus for its work. They have also established a very

good community focused project which is effectively meeting its aim of improving skills in behaviour management.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information provided by the school about their children's work and behaviour.</li> <li>• The improvement in the children's behaviour and progress in work.</li> <li>• Annual reports review arrangements and opportunities to discuss pupils' targets.</li> <li>• The friendliness, helpfulness and discreet communication when pupils are in crisis.</li> <li>• The very good facilities in the new building.</li> <li>• The value of the school's community project for those involved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of targets in pupils' learning.</li> <li>• More consistency in homework requirements.</li> </ul>

Inspectors support the positive views of the parents agreeing that staff ensure that parents are welcomed to the school and informed about pupils' achievements and difficulties. The school is very responsive to parents' needs, for example, someone picks them up by minibus for meetings if they have no transport. Inspectors agree that some pupils' targets do not clearly specify exactly what they should learn. Whilst the school has made arrangements for homework clear, the head teacher agrees that parents would benefit from further information which he will provide. One parent summed up her child's progress as *"He has more friends and talks to other children much more. He is polite at home and says please and thank you."* One parent explained that her child had attended five schools in fifteen months before successfully attending King's Meadow School.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

**Provides good and often very good standards of teaching and learning support in lessons, which motivate and interest pupils enabling them to do well.**

1 The high level of good teaching is a significant strength of the school. A major factor in achieving this high quality is the very good support and guidance provided by the skilled team of classroom assistants. These assistants give generously of their time and are often the people to whom pupils turn first when they need a listening ear, help with their work or simply to let off steam.

2 Teachers and classroom assistants know their pupils well. They plan lessons which are characterised by a wide range of activities, which are carefully linked to maximise pupils' learning and to maintain their attention. For example, in a mathematics lesson about coordinates, the teacher produced an attractively designed map of a secret island. Having established that the pupils could read and identify the various landmarks, she then put the points of the compass in place. Pupils very quickly learnt how to follow the coordinates from '*west of the buried treasure*' to '*south of the lighthouse*' and to read them off as, for example, 'h11'. Higher-attaining pupils were able to scan across and up the map to find 'h11', the coordinate they needed. Lower-attaining pupils used one hand for '*across*', the other for '*up*', a simple strategy which arrived at the correct answer but also helped them to see how they reached it. When they made errors, the teacher simply asked "*Are you there?*" and expected the pupils to check and self correct. Once the activity was well established the teacher increased the challenge by moving the compass points causing great indignation at first followed by a determination to succeed. The lesson ended with the classroom assistant taking the lead with a game of '*battleships*' on the board and the pupils competing appropriately with one another, using the plotting skills they had first learnt on the map.

3 This very motivating lesson enabled pupils to learn to apply what they had learnt in a related but different context. Pupils also demonstrated their ability to concentrate in a group, to listen to others and to control their own responses when their friends' answers were inaccurate. Sharing the presentation of the lesson meant that both teacher and classroom assistant had opportunities to observe individual pupils' responses.

4 All teachers are knowledgeable and confident about the subjects they teach. They ask questions which challenge and extend pupils' thinking. A '*what*' question will quickly be followed by a '*why*' or a '*which*' question and this results in pupils increasing their efforts and thinking hard about their work. For example, in a literacy lesson with the youngest and least mature group in the school, the teacher focused on a small group of pupils to reinforce their understanding of capital letters and full stops. When they had completed some sentences she asked why a particular word was capitalised. Pupils could explain that both '*Manchester*' and '*United*' were capitalised because together they formed the name of a football team. One pupil demonstrated his deeper understanding and also pointed out that '*Manchester*' deserved a capital letter on its own because it was the name of a town.

5 Staff expect pupils to work independently whenever they can. Teachers arrange the rooms well to maximise pupils' opportunities to concentrate. In one classroom, the teacher has adapted a strategy often used with autistic pupils. Each pupil sits at their own work base formed with screens, where he follows his own schedule of work, moves independently from one task to the next and is undisturbed by others. This strategy enables pupils to concentrate well and, as a result, they complete all the work required of them. Classroom assistants oversee the pupils' work and intervene only when essential. The pupils

understand the well-established classroom rules and they behave well. The atmosphere is of quiet intensive concentration. Where, very occasionally, a pupil calls out, the staff gesture the reminder of the rule *'Hands up for questions'*. The teachers all have high expectations of pupils. They expect, for example, that they will look for information themselves before asking an adult for help. As a result pupils make very good use of dictionaries, word books or displays in the classroom which feature the words or information they require.

6 The school places a clear emphasis on pupils' personal development which teachers incorporate very effectively into their teaching methods. They regularly provide opportunities for pupils to work cooperatively together and to share equipment. In a food technology lesson for example, a classroom assistant fostered very good relationships between the pupils and succeeded in getting them to work well as a team when making sweets and Christmas cake decorations. The classroom assistant's skills were particularly effective in this situation as one of the pupils had earlier been upset by an incident during break but because of the assistant's persistence and her knowledge of the pupil, she was able to keep all pupils working harmoniously.

7 The teachers' use of *'circle time'* (a method where pupils sit in a circle to work together sharing thoughts and feelings) is particularly effective in promoting pupils' communication skills. It also serves an alternative and equally important purpose, that of encouraging pupils to share their thoughts. In a faultless example of how the technique works, one teacher first settled the pupils by holding a general conversation with the group. She then gently reminded them of the circle time rules that when one person talks, others listen. The teacher introduced the topic of *'Feelings'* by asking *"How do you feel when its."* She then used simple examples as *"sunny", "wet"* and *"windy"*, and *"nearly Christmas."* One pupil shared his technique for dealing with Christmas *"when I get excited."* Once the activity was underway the teacher skilfully encouraged the pupils to identify some feelings that were specific to them. The pupils made sensible contributions about feeling *'silly'* and *'how they felt when they hadn't slept'*.

8 To conclude, the teacher helped the pupils to see that everyone experiences a range of feelings and that it is perfectly acceptable for people to react differently to the same thing. She reinforced the point that everyone should respect each other's views and feelings.

9 This very effective session was instrumental in deepening pupils' understanding of each other and also accepting that everyone is, in some way, different. The pupils' behaviour was very good. They listened with interest to the others. Pupils displayed a range of speaking and listening skills. Some were confident, sat upright and spoke in good, clear voices. Others were less sure, and reluctant to speak in front of the group, so made a smaller contribution. The teacher drew them out just a little so that they were not overwhelmed.

10 The most significant and effective characteristics of this lesson were the attitudes and behaviour of the teacher. She took her turn, provided an excellent role model and being totally unencumbered with notes, paper or pens truly belonged to the group. The pupils accepted her as an equal member of the circle and their confidence in her helped them to speak openly and thoughtfully.

11 All teachers are skilled in the subjects they teach and make very good use of the whole-school strategies for managing the pupils' behaviour. All staff are accepting of the pupils' difficulties and insecurities and teachers ensure that they provide a consistent response, a reliability that many pupils welcome in their lives. One member of staff summed up her relationship with one pupil as *"He did not like me at all yesterday but shared his sweets with me today."* The pupils summed up the support by saying that *"Teachers always*

*listen to you and help with your problems.*” The very good relationships between staff and pupils clearly help the pupils to concentrate well and make good gains in learning.

**Provides good opportunities for pupils to improve their basic skills through the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and, more recently, improved opportunities for information and communication technology (ICT)**

12 Teachers use the content and methods from the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very well to help pupils do their best. This term the school has made a major investment in an integrated, computer-led learning programme. These resources, whilst honing pupils’ skills in keyboard use, also place a major focus upon improving standards of literacy and numeracy and help pupils make effective use of their basic skills in everyday situations.

13 All classes now include a daily lesson on literacy and numeracy. The lessons provide a very good, regular structure for learning, which the pupils have come to understand. They particularly enjoy and listen well during whole-class sessions when the teachers use big books to read a story or poem. The teachers challenge the pupils with questions about the narrative and the use of words. For example, pupils enjoyed the humour of Roger McGough’s play on words and they understood the similarities and differences between a tree surgeon and a human one. They read excerpts with good style and work well writing their own versions.

14 Pupils’ progress is particularly evident in discussion time when they demonstrate their ability to wait their turn to speak and offer their opinions with confidence. For example, a Year 3 pupil discussed his work on adjectives and explained the feel of potatoes in his mouth as “*soft*” while sausages were “*crunchy*.” He then went on to give two further examples including “*soft*” yoghurt and, from his experience, a large range of specific crunchy sweets.

15 Pupils’ reading levels show slow but steady improvement as they read with increased fluency and confidence. In Year 4 higher-attaining pupils read non-fiction texts including difficult words such as ‘*cherries*’ and ‘*supermarket*’. Older pupils show an increased confidence and interest in literacy generally, for example, one group of Year 6 pupils were able to talk about the ‘shape’ of poetry and describe being in a storm at sea using languages such as “*upside-down*” and “*swish*.”

16 Teachers provide interesting contexts for writing. This means that pupils try hard to improve their writing particularly where they can see a good purpose to the task. Some younger pupils drafted letters to Father Christmas making every effort to be polite and to include all that they would like. They then made good use of their computer skills to redraft what they had handwritten into ‘best’ copies. In mathematics lessons, pupils show good gains in their knowledge and understanding. They are eager to do well and appreciate the positive comments about their work. Pupils are aware of targets in their individual educational plans and try hard to achieve them. They are particularly responsive to a gently competitive element in mathematics so they are eager to find the correct answers as quickly as possible. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in other subjects, for example in measuring in design and technology (D & T) and in recording results in science. Pupils’ social skills are also enhanced by their improving numeracy. For example, a Year 4 class showed good understanding of time, and, in a Year 6 class, pupils used money accurately for shopping. Teachers plan very well for pupils to use the skills they have learnt in lessons and pupils understand that being able to read, write and use mathematics helps them in their everyday lives.

17 As part of its drive to raise literacy standards, the school has recently supplemented its work by introducing two comprehensive computer packages. These packages present each pupil with a range of exercises in English and mathematics, which are matched to their individual ability levels. At present, teachers are introducing the program to the pupils who are working through the initial assessment stages. Teachers use the program for twenty-minute sessions giving a short but focused approach to the work. The pupils are motivated by good quality graphics and the range of activities presented to them. The literacy programme provides valuable practice in reading, writing and spelling. It also requires good skills in manipulating the images on the screen, choosing between alternatives and generally being able to use appropriate keyboard skills. Most pupils have sufficient skills to use the computer in these ways and they move around the screen using the mouse and other tools efficiently. Where the pupils' skills are less well developed, the practice forms a natural part of the programme. The high-quality support and advice given by teachers and assistants help the pupils to improve their skills. They each work at individual computer terminals and enjoy the independence that this brings.

18 Staff make good use of their own time by overseeing the pupils' work and helping them on an individual basis. As the system has only been in place for a few weeks, it is clearly too soon to judge its effectiveness. However, it is already clear that the pupils work well in these short, sharp sessions. The computer-generated activities also encourage the pupils to develop a critical attitude and to extend their understanding and use of language. For example, one pupil was unable to answer a question correctly because he did not know the word '*scattered*' to complete the phrase '*the books on the floor*'. "*Why didn't it say dropped?*" he asked. The teacher was then able to talk to him about the use of language and to explore the use of different words to express similar ideas.

19 The head teacher and governors have identified the need to raise standards in literacy and numeracy as a major focus of its work. It is clear that pupils are working at levels well below national expectancies upon entry to the school. Given the nature of admissions, many pupils also join the school nearing the end of Key Stage 2 and the school recognises the difficulties for these pupils in acknowledging and tackling their literacy and numeracy skills after a previous lack of success. With its current and continuing focus upon work in literacy, numeracy and ICT the school is well placed to boost pupils' achievements and increase their skills through these well-planned and effective measures.

**Provides very good opportunities for pupils to improve and take responsibility for their own behaviour through a very effective credit system which recognises and rewards effort and achievement.**

20 The school has a well-established and very effective system for recognising, rewarding and reviewing pupils' efforts and achievements at regular, fixed points during the day. The review considers the pupils' work and behaviour and is known as the 'Credit System'. The staff are highly skilled in managing the pupils' behaviour because they use effective management strategies and ensure that pupils know what is expected of them.

21 Teachers and staff have very good relationships with the pupils and provide a consistently supportive and understanding response to pupils' behaviour. A major focus of this work is the very effective implementation of the credit system. The staff record pupils' behaviour and responses to work on an hourly basis, five times each day. The school rules are well promoted through the school, displayed in every classroom and regularly referred to by teachers during lessons. These rules form the basis for judgements in the credit system. Pupils understand the implications of their behaviour because the consequences at each of three levels are displayed and teachers make them clear.

22 For example, they know when they will be required to leave the room or when a senior member of staff will be called. The credit system supports these levels. At the review times each pupil receives a grade for his work and behaviour from the teacher with an element of agreement or negotiation with the pupil. Staff are rigorous in ensuring that all good work and effort is celebrated, maintaining the emphasis on positive achievements. The system helps to boost pupils' self esteem. For example, they are proud when named as 'Champion of the week' or when their picture is displayed and their friends write good things about them. The weekly totalling of these credits is a highlight of school life. The pupils are extremely motivated by the prizes awarded, particularly if their group gains 30 points or more and qualifies for a prize, the current favourite being highly-collectable cards.

23 Each pupil has a behavioural target included in his individual educational plan and they all know what this target is. Teachers remind pupils of their targets during lessons and also review them during the school's taught sessions on improving their behaviour. On a few occasions, some pupils' behaviour becomes unacceptable and they have outbursts of temper or frustration. As a result of speedy, efficient and supportive responses from the head teacher or his deputy, the impact of these incidents is minimised and most lessons continue undisturbed. The pupils quickly gain control of their responses and, after a short time out of class, settle back to work.

24 Pupils understand the importance of improving their behaviour and work well. They take a keen interest in the grades they are awarded and strive hard to do better. The positive approach and the emphasis on achievements is very effective in raising pupils' self esteem. The pupils are very supportive of each other and rarely criticise or comment on each other's points.

25 Pupils understand that if their behaviour is too serious they may be excluded. All pupils arrive at the school with poor attitudes to education and learning as a result of their previous experience in school. Nevertheless they enjoy coming to King's Meadow and no pupil has been permanently excluded in the last year. Four pupils have received temporary, half-day exclusions this year but pupils' attitudes to school improve as they settle down and understand what is required of them. From observation of the good behaviour in lessons and around the school, it is clear that the pupils are increasingly addressing the school code of 'Respect – for ourselves, for others, for property'.

**Develops its role within the wider community very successfully by sharing the skills of the staff and the school's resources to help parents and teachers to identify and manage children's challenging behaviour**

26 The school is making excellent use of Standards Funding to run a three-tiered project within the community. It is building a good reputation for the very effective work it is undertaking and the impressive results it is already achieving. The project has now been running for two terms and will be formally evaluated for its effectiveness in the spring of 2001. The local authority has been very supportive of the work and its value in schools and with parents. The project addresses three distinct strands of behavioural management. These are '*Ready for school*', '*Learning to grow*', and '*Staff training and development*'.

27 '*Ready for school*'. The project took place at King's Meadow School during the summer term. Inspection judgements were made through talking to staff and parents and examining plans and records. The project was run by a home-school-liaison project worker, a play therapist and two classroom assistants. Because the home-school-liaison worker and the play therapist had a wide knowledge of the local community and many good contacts within it, they were able to identify families with young children who are exhibiting early characteristics of challenging behaviour.

28 Before they came to school, the project worker had visited the children and their parents at home and had already fostered good relationships with them. This helped them to settle quickly when they saw friendly faces at school. Eight parents and their children signed up for the project. One parent spoke at length to inspectors, describing how useful it had been to have the opportunity to reflect on her skills and what effect they had on the behaviour of her child. The families and the children attend King's Meadow School for one day each week. The parents are able to discuss their individual situations, their difficulties and, if they wish, their problems and fears. The project team provided professional help and advice. They gave examples of how young children could be encouraged to understand the impact of their behaviour on others and learn to change it themselves.

29 The parents learned to be positive, to value their time with their children and to identify strategies which will be useful to them. To do this they were able to observe classes where the staff were working with their children. The facilities at King's Meadow have been purpose built to include opportunities for classroom observation. The teacher's approval is always sought before any observations take place. Watching staff allows parents to have first-hand experience of various strategies in action with their own children. The observations prove enormously beneficial as the parents see whether the child's behaviour is similar to or very different from the way he behaves at home. The most useful aspect from the parents' point of view is seeing how their child responds to the staff and they report this as being very good on almost all occasions. They can then see how effective the strategies are proving within the classroom. This information provides a good focus for further discussion about the suitability of a range of techniques which the parent might want to try at home. The main and very important focus of this part of the project was developing the skills of the parents so that they felt more confident and competent about their role and, as a result, their children's behaviour improved.

30 '*Learning To Grow.*' This part of the project is ongoing and concerned with encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to improve it. Many of the pupils involved in this part of the project, have already been identified as having severely challenging behaviour. Most have not yet, despite the best efforts of teachers, parents, social workers, educational psychologists and others, learned to behave at an acceptable level. The emotional difficulties and barriers to learning that arise from such behaviour mean that they have problems with forming relationships and responding to the necessary rules and structures of the classroom. Because they lack self-confidence they have difficulty listening to others and voicing their own views in front of their friends and teachers. The project aims to equip them with the necessary skills to be part of a class group, to learn and enjoy learning with their friends and to increase their levels of achievement.

31 During the inspection one pupil was observed in his own primary school and the lesson was taught by one of the project teachers from King's Meadow School. Whilst attending King's Meadow for one day each week, this pupil has been particularly responsive and enthusiastic about circle time. When this was discussed with the primary school, the teachers thought it was a good idea to try, not only for this pupil but because it would also benefit others in their communication and personal skills. The project teacher subsequently demonstrated the technique by leading a circle time session.

32 The effect of this work was very exciting to see and beneficial for the pupils and the staff who were observing. The teacher from King's Meadow was highly skilled and used her experience to establish a good rapport with the pupils from the outset. After a few minutes they were passing a smile or a hand squeeze around the room. They were sufficiently confident to say what they thought about the person sitting next to them. Some were very basic in their views saying "*...because she plays with me*" and others were more thoughtful "*because she always listens to what I say.*" These supportive and positive attitudes developed in the group during this activity, enabled pupils to make such comments with

confidence and ease and prepared the way for the teachers to explore other issues in more depth.

33 The project is particularly effective in preparing these young pupils to take their place in school successfully. Many come to the project unable to accept the boundaries and rules necessary within a school setting. After working with the project staff and their parents, they gradually learned skills of socialisation such as listening to each other and turn taking. The project is demonstrating very good levels of success with the individual children. For example, a new pupil who was very close to permanent exclusion following consistently challenging and disruptive behaviour in school, has now attended the project for several weeks. The project worker reports that he is now able to abide by classroom rules and knows when he is doing wrong. Even though he has changed schools he continues to meet his targets on his behaviour management plans which are helping him to mix and talk with other children which he could not do before. This improvement in his behaviour is having a positive impact upon his learning. He is now working and taking a pride in his work, whereas before he tore up all his work. The project worker was particularly pleased at the amount of work the pupil generated. When asked by his teacher to write eight sentences in English, he actually wrote twelve, a great achievement.

34 ‘*Training and staff development*’, the third aspect of the project, is the development and equipping of teachers with a range of skills with which to tackle difficult behaviour in the classroom. As part of the *Learning to Grow* scheme, two members of staff from a local primary school, visited King’s Meadow School during the inspection. They met a project teacher to receive help and guidance for managing a pupil who was part of the scheme. This project teacher is very skilled and highly knowledgeable about aspects of behaviour management and was able to discuss various issues with these teachers and to answer questions with ease and authority.

35 As part of the visit, they observed a target-review session in one class. They saw how well the pupils were motivated by identifying their targets and saying how well they had worked towards them. The teacher then acknowledged their effort and their success by the award of points through the school’s credit system. The visiting teacher commented on the pride the pupils displayed when so rewarded. They were able to see the very good example of circle time described earlier in this section of the report. With help from the project teacher they were quickly able to envisage how well this technique might work with their own pupils particularly in the context of teaching personal and social development.

36 The feedback from schools on the effectiveness of the project is extremely positive. The special educational needs coordinator of one partner school identified many strengths including “*inspiring staff to reflect on their own practice, improving the focus on behaviour management plans.*” He also stated that the “*sharing of materials and staff was a real benefit in broadening views and experiences.*” At King’s Meadow School the benefits are valuable as they stimulate a continuing debate among staff about teaching methods and behaviour management strategies. It is clear that as well as having a useful and immediate effect on improving skills in behaviour management, the project is also meeting one of its wider aims to ‘*foster children’s emotional well-being and future sound mental health*’.

**The head teacher, governors and key staff provide very good quality leadership and management which enable all staff to work as an effective team.**

37 The school benefits from very good leadership and management. The head teacher, chair of governors and key staff give a clear and very effective educational direction. The head teacher and chair of governors work very closely together in a professional partnership, which helps the school develop and in which decisions are challenged and explored in depth. For example, they meet at two or three-week intervals and agree priorities, which

form the basis of their next agenda. This structure ensures that all decisions are acted upon and that there is an ongoing and recorded dialogue between the school and the governing body. The chair of governors has been active in observing the needs of the school and acting upon them. For example, during one visit he noted signs of stress and, after conducting an audit of staff views was able to suggest training, which helped the staff with their communication skills. As a result of this increased contact and involvement, the governors have a greater awareness of the school strengths and weaknesses.

38 The head teacher maintains close contact with the pupils. He undertakes regular duties in the school and provides strong backup for dealing with difficult behaviour. Pupils respond well to his guidance and frequently talk to him about issues which concern them, clearly seeing him as a friend and support. He is very ably assisted by his deputy who is also very skilled in managing the pupils' challenging behaviour. Together, their skills provide a very effective and responsive network of support to pupils and staff. The staff feel confident that their views and ideas are taken into account, one saying that she '*feels secure if she needs to ask for help*' and is able to share her experiences openly with the head teacher and other staff. The parents specifically commented on how responsive the head and deputy are in helping them with specific difficulties. They quoted such examples as driving them to school meetings in the minibus or arranging for them to see their children when families became separated.

39 The school and the governing body have very good procedures for monitoring and questioning the work of the school. Governors are very actively involved in school life. They visit the school regularly and each has a designated role to play, so good use is made of their interests and expertise. For example, the literacy governor has seen at first hand the good progress of the pupils and discussed with them and the teachers the benefits of the National Literacy Strategy. The local authority link inspector also plays a major part in the life of the school, meeting regularly with the chair of governors and advising the head teacher, on for example, matters of curriculum.

40 The school is very efficiently administered and the procedures for financial control are very good. The school is rigorous in managing its finances and ensures that it spends its money wisely by obtaining quotations from several sources when ordering goods. The school also considers other aspects of its performance very carefully. For example, after a feasibility study, the governors have decided to take responsibility for the maintenance of the school. This decision was only taken after they had ascertained that the money saved would represent a considerable amount and after ensuring enough would be available to deal with eventual maintenance, that any excess could be used more effectively to meet the needs of the pupils. All educational products are carefully costed and their effectiveness discussed before purchase. The school accounts are very well maintained and the budget, including specific grants, is properly and efficiently used. The effectiveness of the Standards Fund project provides clear evidence that this work is beneficial to pupils, parents and teachers. Given the challenging nature of the pupils' needs and the progress they make, the high quality of the teaching, the very good leadership and management and the contribution the school makes to supporting pupils and teachers from King's Meadow and elsewhere, the school provides very good value for money.

**The school makes very good use of the new building by creating a very positive teaching and learning environment which enables pupils to concentrate well, enjoy their surroundings and make good progress.**

41 A major outstanding achievement since the last inspection, has been the acquisition of the new, purpose-built accommodation. The school is now housed in excellent accommodation on the outskirts of the town, with very good resources and facilities. All the governors, the head teacher and the staff were closely involved with the development of the new building. They were able to use their expertise and experience to suggest ways in which the building could be of maximum benefit to the pupils. For example, each classroom has a door leading directly to the playground and when pupils go outside they do not have to mix with a stream of others in crowded corridors. Clearly this strategy helps the pupils maintain their good levels of behaviour and reduces friction between the pupils particularly if any one of them is upset. The way pupils move around the school is very much influenced by suggestions from staff and governors. For example, the corridors are wide and angled which deters pupils from running. There are numerous display boards, in classes and common areas, where pupils' work or school notices can be displayed.

42 The school has settled speedily into this accommodation and created within it an atmosphere of security where learning is the main focus. The classrooms are of very good size and well equipped, allowing plenty of space per pupil so that none feel crowded. Teachers make very good use of the accommodation by arranging it for whole-class, group or individual work. The comfort and very good design of the building fosters well being as staff and pupils benefit from good light sources in very pleasant teaching rooms.

43 The school boasts some very fine additional facilities such as observation rooms, one of which adjoins every two classrooms. The school make very good use of these rooms to observe the pupils' behaviour patterns or, where appropriate, to enable visitors to observe the work of the staff and pupils.

44 The pupils speak positively about the accommodation, and spend time looking at displays and notices. Pupils respect and value this environment and care for it. There are no signs of damage or graffiti within a school which is clearly proud of its work, accommodation and resources.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

### Strategies for identifying specific targets for learning particularly in pupils' individual educational plans.

45 This school has very efficient systems for organising its annual reviews of pupils' statements and other required procedures. It provides a good range of information on improvement in work and behaviour for parents and compiles a range of learning targets covering appropriate areas of the curriculum. The recording and assessment of the pupils' work is detailed, regularly completed and very good. The procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' improvements in their behaviour are also very good.

46 Despite these strengths, there are weaknesses within the target setting process. The school uses a computer-generated programme to identify targets in the core subjects of the National Curriculum. This is helpful in that it is well organised, provides guidance on methods and support and provides a clear and consistent format for individual educational plans throughout the school. However, many of the pupils have identical targets within these plans. This repetition does not help teachers pay specific attention to the individual needs of each pupil. Neither does it help the pupils to understand that, whilst they might all be working on the same general topic, their needs within it differ according to their ability and experience.

47 The teachers clearly know their pupils very well and during lessons make every effort to ensure that they are challenged well and required to complete work which caters for them and their needs. In many lessons teachers have taken time and effort to plan for individuals or small groups of pupils. During discussions or question and answer time, they match their expectations very well to the abilities and responses of the individual pupils. However, although they may be very familiar with the abilities and needs of the pupils, they do not consistently plan the small steps of learning which will help pupils to achieve their very best. The targets they work to are general in nature. They have an overall aim but do not include specific examples of what the pupils should know and do in order to improve.

48 As the maximum number of pupils in each class does not exceed eight, it is clearly possible for the teachers to identify small, individual steps of learning for each pupil's targets. For example, in mathematics all pupils might be working on improving their skills of calculation, but the levels at which they are working could range from the simple division of two, single-digit numbers to more complex operations using two or three digits.

49 The school has tried very hard to address this issue. Over recent years it has experimented with several different strategies for meeting pupils' individual needs in formal and recorded ways. The staff recognise the need to continue exploring ways in which the already high standards of teaching can be improved by finding a sharper focus to target setting.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

**The school should now:**

**Improve the quality of targets in the pupils' individual educational plans by:**

- breaking down each target into small achievable steps;
- writing these steps in specific terms in all planning documents;
- using current assessment strategies to identify work towards each step;
- reviewing the steps and targets to ensure that each pupil is learning as much as he can (paragraphs 45-49).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	20	53	20	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	32
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	14

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.1	School data	2.67

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	2
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	30
Any other minority ethnic group	

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other	4	
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	17	
Other minority ethnic groups		

*This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y5– Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.5
Average class size	8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y5 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	199

### **Financial information**

Financial year	99-2000
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	£
Total income	390679
Total expenditure	368348
Expenditure per pupil	11883
Balance brought forward from previous year	11400
Balance carried forward to next year	39731

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	32
Number of questionnaires returned	18

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	44	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	33	50	11	6	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	39	22	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	28	28	10	17
The teaching is good.	78	22	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	83	17	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	11	0	0	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	22	6	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	78	22	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	83	11	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	28	11	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	61	28	0	0	11