

Mead Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102322
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	307970
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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 on roll	
School	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Bishop (acting)
Headteacher	Mrs S Garner
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Amersham Road Harold Hill Romford RM3 9JD
Telephone number	01708 343616
Fax number	01708 373310

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school serves a socially diverse area with a higher than average proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds although most other ethnic minority groups are represented in smaller numbers. More than a third of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. This is higher than would normally be expected and is because the school has a Language Resource centre which caters for pupils with specific language problems. These pupils are integrated into mainstream classes for much of the time. The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is lower than in most schools. The school roll has been declining over recent years in line with the pattern in the authority. A new headteacher and senior leadership team have been appointed since the last inspection. The school is part of Havering's Excellence in Cities Cluster.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The vast majority of parents are pleased with the school's work and are confident that their children are well cared for, happy and secure. One parent commented, 'I am very pleased with the school. They put the child's needs and welfare at the top. Keep up the good work.'

The headteacher and senior staff are well aware that standards have not been high enough in recent years and that pupils have been making insufficient progress. Over the past two years, initiatives introduced in mathematics and English are beginning to raise pupils' achievement. Pupils at the end of Year 2 now reach nationally expected levels, but standards at the end of Year 6 are still below average. Pupils are currently making satisfactory, and sometimes better, progress between Years 3 and 6 due to the school's successful efforts to improve the quality of teaching. Teaching is satisfactory overall but is better in mathematics than in English. The goals set for pupils in literacy lessons are not always clear enough, especially in reading and writing, and this affects their progress. More able pupils often find the work too easy and do not achieve as well as they should.

Behaviour in and around the school is good. Most pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They are polite and respectful towards one another and work and play well together. Too many pupils however, do not attend regularly and this affects their achievement. Those who do attend show good attitudes, enjoy their lessons and are prepared appropriately for their future education. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They know how to keep safe in and out of school. They are involved well in their school and local community.

A good amount of time is spent on literacy and numeracy, and other subjects are covered satisfactorily. Pupils participate enthusiastically in the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered. Pupils' performance in English and mathematics is tracked systematically and this helps to identify pupils who are not making sufficient progress. Additional support is offered to help them catch up but this is not always organised well enough to be really effective.

Senior leaders are very clear about the school's weaknesses and have already taken steps to begin to improve them. They approach the task ahead with real enthusiasm. The appointment of a new leadership team is helping to ensure that tasks are shared and that, with the team's input, teaching and learning continue to develop. The school shows a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children start in the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age. They get off to a good start because the atmosphere is warm and welcoming and helps them to settle in quickly. Children enjoy the wide range of stimulating activities that adults organise indoors and outdoors. They develop their language and confidence well through role-play and through good interaction with adults. In their topic about 'opposites' for example, they experienced and talked about hot and cold, and had great fun pretending to be penguins. Adults check children's progress regularly so they can adapt activities to suit children's different needs. Staff encourage parents to read with their children at home, but opportunities are missed to promote parents' more active involvement to support children's learning and good attendance.

Nonetheless, by the end of Reception, all the children have made good progress and most are working at the expected level for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Work with parents to improve children's attendance.
- Accelerate the progress of more able pupils by providing more challenge to ensure that a greater proportion reach higher levels in national tests.
- Embed the target-setting process more securely within teaching and learning and ensure that pupils understand their goals, especially in reading and writing.

A small proportion of the schools whose effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school is making steady inroads into a backlog of underachievement that continues to affect standards. Standards are rising and are now broadly average at the end of Year 2 where a good number of pupils exceed the levels expected of them in mathematics. This is because of recent initiatives that have improved the quality of teaching and made learning more consistent across the school. Standards at the end of Year 6 are rising more slowly although more pupils are reaching nationally expected levels. Few however, exceed these levels in any subject. Progress is better in mathematics than in English and science because of a focus on improving resources and making activities more stimulating and enjoyable for pupils. A similar focus on literacy is beginning to have an impact, especially in Year 6, where boys, who have underachieved in the past, are making good progress.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils with EAL make satisfactory progress mainly because of the classroom teaching which encourages them to work in groups. This develops their fluency and confidence. Those with speech and communication difficulties who are supported in the Language Resource centre also make satisfactory progress. However, higher attaining pupils are capable of much better progress, especially in English. There is little difference in the achievement of pupils from different minority groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Overall, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Most pupils are happy to come to school and talk enthusiastically about what they are learning and how they enjoy attending the lunchtime and after-school clubs. Many are involved in sport and realise how this contributes to a healthy lifestyle. They are well behaved in class and around the school. They know how to keep safe. The staggered start to the school day means that pupils can chat informally to their teachers and share any concerns. Pupils show good levels of respect for each other. The school council meets regularly and is involved in making decisions, for example about developments to the playground. Pupils are involved well in the local community. The school choir, for example participates regularly in music festivals and concerts. Attendance continues to be a significant problem for the school. Too many children miss important parts of their education because they are absent. This affects their overall achievement.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers manage their classrooms and pupils well so lessons are purposeful and pupils are engaged in their learning. Pupils learn to work well together because of the good opportunities provided for paired and group activities. They concentrate well because teachers use a range of strategies, including computer technology to make lessons interesting. A recent focus on providing individual targets for pupils is beginning to improve pupils' motivation and their learning, especially in mathematics. This focus has had less of an impact in reading and writing because pupils do not always understand what the targets mean and how they might work towards them in different subjects. Teachers plan lessons well, and this helps ensure that lessons move at a good pace, which in turn maintains pupils' motivation and interest. However, not enough is asked of the more able pupils, who often find the work easy and finish it quickly. As a result, these pupils do not always make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum caters well for pupils' personal development resulting in positive attitudes and good behaviour. One Year 5 girl said, 'I am more confident now. I know I can learn from my mistakes and I don't worry so much.' A wide range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors further support pupils' personal and academic development. A good amount of time is devoted to literacy and numeracy. Links with the neighbouring secondary school enable Year 6 pupils to use its laboratories weekly for science lessons, which is helping to improve their motivation and achievement. The school has rightly recognised the need to develop links between subjects to make learning more relevant to the pupils' needs and interests. Although teachers use information technology successfully as a teaching tool, pupils are not using it well enough across a range of subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good levels of care, especially for vulnerable pupils. Adults take time to get to know pupils well so they can offer support and encouragement when needed. Good work by support staff has raised the attendance of a small number of pupils. However, the school is not yet making a real difference to the attendance of other pupils, especially those who take holidays during term time. Child protection and welfare systems are rigorous. Pupils with speech and language problems and those with emotional and behavioural problems are supported appropriately. Pupils' progress is tracked systematically in English and mathematics. This enables teachers to identify pupils who are not making enough progress. Intervention programmes provide some help for these pupils but are not structured well enough to make a really significant impact. Teachers mark pupils work well, often providing useful information to help them improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior leadership team have made a good impact on school improvement. Careful analysis of assessment data and monitoring of teaching have enabled them to identify the strengths and weaknesses in school performance. The initiatives introduced have made teaching more consistent across the school and have begun to raise standards. The target setting process is developing appropriately. The main thrust so far has been to raise the proportion of pupils who reach nationally expected levels for their age. However, the targets set for the most able pupils are not challenging enough.

There is a real sense of purpose amongst the staff who are fully committed towards improvement and have embraced the changes with enthusiasm. Senior leaders are supporting staff well, by modelling lessons and providing advice when required. Governors are developing their role satisfactorily and have set up some useful systems to help them monitor the school's work effectively.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

06 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mead Primary School, Romford, RM3 9JD

Thank you all very much for making us so welcome at your school. We really enjoyed watching you work in lessons and chatting to you in the dining hall and in the playground. We reached the conclusion that yours is a satisfactory school but that things are improving quickly.

Here are some of the things we especially liked:

- you are growing up as confident, polite and well-behaved young people
- children in the Nursery and Reception classes settle in quickly and make good progress
- you are proud of your school and take your responsibilities seriously
- you are gaining a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy
- teachers and other adults take good care of you and give you help if you need it
- the people in charge know what they have to do to make the school even better.

We were rather worried to find that quite a lot of children do not attend school regularly. Some go on holidays during term time and this means they miss important chunks of their education. They are then at a disadvantage when they move to secondary school. In addition, we feel that some of you find the literacy work too easy. We think you could make even faster progress, especially in reading and writing, if teachers explained the targets more clearly so that you understand what you have to do to improve.

Thank you once again for your help during the inspection. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Summers

Lead Inspector