

Meadow Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111235
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	310539
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Graham Martin

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Gooderham
Headteacher	Mr A Furber
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Dolphin Crescent Great Sutton Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH66 4SZ
Telephone number	0151 3394361
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

This larger than average school is situated in an area which is relatively advantaged but it admits pupils from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds. Infant and junior pupils are taught in separate buildings on the same site. The number of pupils eligible for a free school meal is lower than the national average. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is similar to that expected for children of this age. The closure of two local schools brought an influx of pupils so that, where the school expected reducing numbers, numbers have stabilised for the time being. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that found nationally. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools status and the Activemark for its health and sport promotion. It also holds an International Schools award for developing links with communities overseas. Space is leased by providers for pre-school, breakfast and after-school club provision managed independently of the school. Separate inspection reports for this provision are available from Ofsted.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school provides a good education for its pupils. Parents value highly the quality of care shown for their children's social, emotional and personal development. The headteacher leads the school well, establishing a good climate for learning in which pupils thrive and achieve well. The school's welcoming and caring atmosphere promotes positive relationships so that pupils enjoy coming to school and the good learning opportunities provided. Pupils are proud of their school and this is reflected in their good behaviour and attendance. Well organised day-to-day management and good links between staff ensure that the school runs successfully in its two separate buildings. The good quality curriculum provides stimulating learning opportunities, with a particular strength in the wide range of popular enrichment activities, such as sports, arts and residential visits. The school meets current guidelines on safeguarding pupils' well-being. The care, guidance and support provided are good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Where pupils are shown clearly what they must do to reach the next steps in their learning, their progress is particularly good. Inconsistencies in marking and guidance to pupils in some classes do not enable them to always understand how to reach the next level of learning. This means that, although their progress is good overall, it is not necessarily even as pupils move up through the school. Standards are above average. They are above the national average in reading and mathematics by Year 2. Standards in writing by Year 2 are satisfactory but girls attain better than boys. By Year 6, standards are usually above average overall, though similar to the average in mathematics. Assessments show that current Year 6 pupils are, at this time, on track to meet the challenging targets set for them.

Leadership and management are good. The school evaluates its work well and responds accordingly. For example, reorganisation of the leadership team recently has given key leaders clearly defined responsibilities and made them accountable for aspects of school improvement. These responsibilities are linked closely to priorities in the school's good quality plans for improving what it provides and further raising standards. The positive effects of this reorganisation are seen in an improved climate for learning with raised expectations of teaching and progress for all pupils. Careful assessments and checks on pupils' learning provide leaders with a clear knowledge of how well the school is meeting its own challenging targets. This has resulted in improvements in the curriculum to make learning more relevant and fun. Alongside the extensive partnerships with the wider community that support its work, this all gives the school good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

At the last inspection, provision in the Foundation Stage was a relative weakness. It is now an emerging strength. Children are helped to settle quickly into Reception class routines. They enjoy a stimulating range of learning opportunities and make good progress in their personal and social development. They quickly learn to cooperate with each other and with the adults who support them. Their interest in the good range of indoor and outdoor activities and enjoyment of the level of challenge they provide is high. Their behaviour is exceptionally good. The Foundation Stage team is well led so that collaboration between staff working in the adjoining Reception classes is managed well. Warm relationships and the nurturing environment provide safety and security, enabling the children to develop positive attitudes to learning. The quality of teaching is good. Because assessment is thorough, learning is planned carefully to

cater for the children's different needs and abilities. Daily sessions in the Reception class focusing on letters and sounds help to boost early reading and writing skills. All of these factors underpin the good progress the children make in relation to their abilities and starting points; enabling the majority of children to work within the higher levels of the expected range of the early learning goals. Some exceed these goals, showing particularly good achievement. By the end of the Reception Year, all children are well prepared for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that marking and guidance enables all pupils to understand how to achieve their learning targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards shown by tests results at the end of Year 6 in 2007 were similar to the national average in English, mathematics and science. This represented an overall dip in the school's standards compared with previous years. This dip was caused by a number of historical factors specific to the cohort, including some previously weaker teaching that affected pupils' attitudes to learning. This dip has been reversed through improvements to teaching, and standards are currently above average, other than in mathematics. Achievement is good overall. However pupils' progress is not even as they move up through the school. In some classes progress slows because assessment information and marking are not used sufficiently well to enable all pupils to achieve as well as they can. Good intervention and support by adults enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. The small numbers from minority ethnic groups achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are rightly proud of their happy and harmonious school. They feel safe, well cared for and enjoy attending. They behave well, look after each other and enjoy working and playing together. They also enjoy warm and positive relationships with their teachers. Lessons and the extensive range of clubs and activities help to develop their physical fitness, creative skills and enquiring minds. They are keen to take on responsibility within the school community such as through the school council, as class monitors and by promoting recycling. Pupils regularly think about the needs of others and develop appreciation of the world around them through assemblies, art work, music and outdoor residential experiences. They enjoy learning about other cultures and making friends with other children in other parts of the world through the school's well established international links. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good overall. Pupils' basic skills, good teamwork, positive attitudes and respect for others provide a good basis for life beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The strengths in teaching include well structured lessons that engage pupils' interests, encouraging them to work well and independently. Teachers ensure all groups of children are well supported. For example, they use a wide variety of resources and deploy teaching assistants effectively. Teachers make good use of questioning and varied activities, including songs, and information and communication technology (ICT), to consolidate pupils' learning. Classroom displays are vibrant and encourage pupils to learn. Teachers do not always explain clearly to pupils what they are intended to learn. The school has started to involve pupils in their own learning by introducing targets they can understand. However, these targets are not referred to consistently in lessons or used to assess the progress pupils have made. While pupils' work is marked regularly, teachers' written comments do not always make it clear what pupils need to do to move forward. As a result, pupils do not always understand how they can make gains in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum promotes enjoyment and emotional well-being particularly well. An extensive range of learning guidance and extra-curricular activities takes place outside the normal school day. The school works well with a range of organisations to enhance the curriculum. Sport, music, dance and art play an important role in developing pupils' fitness, attitudes and self-esteem. The curriculum is enhanced by good outdoor provision, such as marked playgrounds with quiet seating, a well resourced computer suite and well stocked central library. Good provision for pupils' social, health and citizenship education enhances many aspects of their personal development, including their health awareness and preparation for adult life. Provision for religious education and assemblies give pupils many opportunities to experience elements of worship and reflect on moral and social issues. The teaching of French adds further enrichment of the curriculum. There are good opportunities to learn the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. A new approach to learning through a recent reorganisation of the curriculum has been introduced but the school has not yet had time to assess its impact or check, for example, that children develop appropriate knowledge and skills in all curriculum areas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents appreciate the high quality of pastoral care the school provides. Typically they comment, 'My child is happy and settled; the school has a caring ethos and the staff are always friendly and helpful.' Arrangements to safeguard pupils and measures to ensure health and safety, including risk assessments, meet current requirements. Pupils with additional learning needs are identified promptly and supported well through good quality programmes of work and well trained teaching assistants. Vulnerable pupils are provided with sensitive support. Academic guidance is satisfactory overall. In some classes, pupils are not clear about how to achieve the next steps in their learning. A new system to track standards is providing useful information to enable the school to check that pupils' progress is consistently good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher establishes a climate for learning that impacts well on achievement. His influence ensures that day-to-day management is effective, taking advantage of the separate buildings to use resources well and ensuring that communication between staff benefits pupils' learning. The school is well cared for. Administration, maintenance and care staff make a good contribution to the running of the school. The organisation of the school management team gives key leaders clearly defined roles and responsibilities linked closely to school improvement priorities. These leaders impact well on the school, making full and effective use of their skills to support school improvement. For example, they use assessment information to check that pupils' achievements are consistently even and have introduced year group learning targets to ensure uniformity between teachers' expectations. This gives the school accurate assessment information with which to check the quality of learning across the school. The good experience of established governors shows in their knowledge of the school's work and their good influence on its management.

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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?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
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	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Inspection of Meadow Community Primary School, Ellesmere Port,
CH66 4SZ

Thank you for the lovely welcome that you gave to the inspectors when we visited Meadow Primary School recently. You were very polite and helpful. We enjoyed our talks with you. The things you told us about your school really helped us to decide if your school is as good as you say it is. I hope that you will be pleased to know that we do think you have a good school.

The things we especially liked are:

- you behave well and you enjoy learning
- you have lots of enjoyable learning opportunities and you take part in them enthusiastically
- your headteacher makes sure that your school helps you to learn well
- your parents told us that they think you are well cared for and we agree with them
- you are well prepared for going to High School. Year 6 told us that you don't feel worried about moving up to Year 7.

We have asked your headteacher to make three things better to improve your school:

- some of the children in the infant classes need more help to get better at their writing
- some of the junior children could do better in mathematics
- some teachers could mark your work more helpfully and give you more guidance, so you understand how to reach the next level of learning.

We enjoyed our visit to Meadow Primary School and send you all best wishes for the future.