

# Bromsgrove Meadows First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116662
<b>Local Authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326425
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Hazel Callaghan

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	369
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kath Tedstone
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pam Townsend
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 January 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Stourbridge Road Bromsgrove B61 0AH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 872508
<b>Fax number</b>	01527 574975

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<b>Age group</b>	3–9
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- standards and progress across the school, especially in the new EYFS, and progress in mathematics in Years 3 and 4
- the extent to which teaching and assessment procedures are effective in moving pupils forward
- the extent to which middle managers, subject coordinators and governors are evaluating the next important steps for school improvement.

Evidence was gathered from the school's assessments of pupils' standards and progress and an analysis of the results of the 2008 tests. There were observations of teaching and discussions took place with senior leaders, staff, governors and pupils. Parents' responses to the Ofsted questionnaire were also analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Meadows First School is a large school of its type. The vast majority of its pupils come from families of White British heritage and the rest are from minority ethnic families. An extremely small proportion of these pupils start school with little knowledge of English. In the last few years, the school's catchment area has changed and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased and is now above the national average. The school now admits some pupils with a range of complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school moved into its new building in March of 2009, which it shares with its partner middle school. Within the new accommodation is also a resource base for pupils on the autistic spectrum, which supports three pupils from the First School. A new Nursery has also been added to the school's two Reception classes to extend its Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision.

In the last three years the school has successfully achieved a large number of awards, including the Healthy School Award, the Sports Activemark, Football Charter, B Smart Award, Eco Green Flag award, Artsmark Silver and two Leading Aspect Awards, one for Sustainability and one for The Support of Children with Learning, Emotional, Social and Behavioural Problems.

A privately-managed nursery uses the school's accommodation each afternoon during the week, and after-school care is also provided by a privately-managed company.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Meadows First School is a good school. It has maintained the outstanding aspects of its provision identified at the last inspection and improved many other areas. A particular strength is its inclusive ethos, which leads to excellent personal and pastoral care for all pupils, and its exemplary support for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils make at least good progress towards their individual targets, with some making excellent progress under the sensitive support found both in the new unit for autistic pupils and for those in the mainstream classes. There are extremely good links with parents and a wide range of outside agencies which extend the school's work. All pupils benefit from these high levels of care and they feel safe and secure in the knowledge that they are well cared for. One parent, typical of many, said, 'I have been completely at ease knowing my children are happy, safe and well educated.'

Pupils of all abilities achieve well. They start school in the Nursery and Reception classes with a narrower range of skills than is usual but settle quickly and enjoy their learning. The good progress that starts in the EYFS continues through the school. Standards in Year 2 had been on a rising trend over the last three years but dipped to broadly average in 2008 because of the increase in pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Early indications show that standards are rising again this year. The progress made by pupils in Years 3 and 4 has improved over the last two years. Good achievement and standards are clearly evident in pupils' reading and writing, the result of recently developed strategies for improvement and systematic teaching. Pupils' progress in mathematics has also improved but not at the same rate as other areas, and is satisfactory overall. The school has recognised this relative weakness and identified the need to improve pupils' ability to work out their answers quickly as a purely mental calculation. Opportunities to improve this 'mental maths' are now provided regularly and a positive impact can already be seen in pupils' progress, but it is still too early to see if this is the complete answer to pupils' lower standards and rates of progress in mathematics.

Teaching overall is good and teachers work hard to make their lessons interesting so they stimulate pupils' motivation to learn. Another parent wrote, 'They find a way to reach the children so that they have fun whilst, most importantly, they learn in a safe and loving environment.' Much attention has been given recently to developing a creative curriculum that not only meets pupils' learning needs but extends their experiences and enriches their activities. The curriculum is significantly enhanced by a wide range of additional activities and a large number of after-school clubs. The school has wholeheartedly embraced community cohesion and the need to promote pupils' environmental awareness. 'Sustainability Education' is now a strong part of the pupils' activities, which extends beyond the classroom to activities in the school and local area, and into global links with a school in Sierra Leone. This work, alongside the many other opportunities to take responsibility, is developing pupils' significant contribution to the life of the school and to the wider community. Pupils are enthusiastic about the extensive range of activities, especially in sport, music and art. They want to do well and the behaviour of the vast majority is excellent. Some pupils have social and emotional difficulties but any upsets are extremely well managed and do not affect other pupils. They have an outstanding awareness of how to keep safe and healthy and are well prepared for their future learning.

The school is successful in promoting pupils' academic and personal development because all staff members are committed to the needs of each child. The headteacher was determined that even through the extensive arrangements prior to moving into the new school building the

pupils' learning would not be disrupted nor their sense of well-being threatened. It is to the staff's great credit that the relocation went extremely smoothly, and the First School and Middle School are now working together as partners. This strong leadership from the headteacher and deputy Headteacher is mirrored by the other senior staff, who give a very clear direction to school improvement. The school's accurate self-evaluation gives an effective steer to the areas of focus for improvement. Pupils' standards and progress are checked thoroughly so that pupils who are likely to underachieve are identified and appropriate support strategies put into place. Similarly, the quality of teaching is effectively monitored but more emphasis is given to how the teachers engage pupils' interest and motivation to learn than is given to its impact on pupils' learning and their rates of progress within the lesson.

The school is well supported by an active governing body which has been fully involved in the strategic planning required during the construction of the new school building and in the appointment of the new Headteacher who takes up post in April 2009. The access to the new school has caused some worries for both staff and parents but the headteacher has done everything in her power to ensure the pupils' safety and to keep them from harm. Given the school's good track record of continuing development and the strong teamwork of staff, the capacity for further improvement is good.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The school Nursery opened in April 2008. It is developing well and provides a positive start for children's learning. Children work sensibly alongside each other and their confidence in their own capabilities is growing steadily. Children start in the Nursery with a much narrower range of personal skills and knowledge than is expected for their age. This is also the case for children starting school in the Reception classes. They make good progress throughout the EYFS to reach broadly average standards when they transfer into Year 1. Teachers work closely with children's families and the daily communication between the staff and parents ensures children feel confident and secure. Children's welfare is successfully promoted and children with various forms of learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and their independence nurtured. The teachers and learning support assistants understand how these young children learn and provide exciting tasks that promote their curiosity and interest. Children's interests influence curricular planning so they are well motivated to learn. The classroom is well resourced and there are plenty of opportunities for children to plan their own activities, to experiment and to explore ideas in the classroom and in the safe areas outside. Leadership of the EYFS is good. The children come from many pre-school settings and, at present, the assessment of children's progress in these settings is variable. Once in the school, however, the teachers' assessment of children's work and progress is used to set the next steps in learning. Information from these assessments is also used by the manager to plan adjustments to the teaching and curricular planning so that children's learning needs are met more accurately.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase the focus on the quality of pupils' learning in mathematics lessons in order to identify and implement appropriate strategies to raise standards and increase the rate of progress pupils make in mathematics.

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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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

28 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Meadows First School, Bromsgrove B61 0AH

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a good school that has lots of outstanding features. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You make good progress and you reach standards that are similar to those in other schools and often higher.
- Your behaviour is excellent. You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You have an exceptional understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and healthy. Your good personal development and good attitudes to learning prepare you well for your future education.
- You clearly enjoy your lessons and often have lots of fun. You work hard and want to do well.
- You are taught well and all your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are interesting and you have a good understanding of how you can get better in your work.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team provide strong leadership for the school and the staff have a clear view of the school's strengths and what still needs to be improved.
- Everyone in the school works together as a strong team and there is an excellent partnership with others who can help you to learn, especially those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- All the staff look after you extremely well so you feel safe and happy.

Even though Meadows First School is a good school, there are some ways in which it can do better. We have particularly asked the headteacher and governors to:

- ensure you all make the same good progress in maths as you do in your reading and writing by getting teachers to look closely at how well you are learning in your maths lessons so they identify how you can improve and make better progress.

Thank you again for helping us and remember you can help to ensure your school gets better and better by continuing to work hard.

Best wishes

Hazel Callaghan

Lead inspector