School report

The Meadows Primary School

Harlech Road, Oswestry, SY11 2EA

Inspection dates	3–4 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	**Good**	**2**
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress from when they start at school and, by the end of Year 6, their attainment in English and mathematics is above average.
- The warm welcome and a strong focus on learning helps children make a good start in the Reception classes.
- Most teaching is at least good with some that is outstanding. Pupils settle to their tasks quickly.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- Strong leadership has produced an effective staff team that has improved the quality of teaching, although a few shortcomings remain.
- Staff value the opportunities they have for training and improving their teaching skills.
- The governing body is keenly involved and is kept well-informed by the headteacher's reports.
- The school's focus on improvement is based on an accurate view of its performance. Leaders have good capacity to build on these strengths.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Work is not always set at the right level to make sure all pupils learn as fast as they can.
- Expectations of the quality of pupils' work are not always high enough.
- Not all teachers have the skills of asking probing questions.
- Marking does not consistently help pupils to improve their skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 25 lessons and 10 teachers were observed teaching. Two lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff, two members of the governing body, parents, groups of pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, monitoring documentation, samples of pupils' work and documents relating to safeguarding. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their enjoyment of books.
- Account was taken of 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and the school's own information about parents' views of the school. In addition, 23 responses to a staff questionnaire were examined and analysed.

Inspection team

Lois Furness, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Bird	Additional Inspector
Michael Onyon	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Meadows is larger than the average-sized primary school. Almost all of pupils come from White British backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is broadly average. An above-average proportion of these pupils are supported at school action plus and through a statement of special educational needs.
- A below-average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- At the present time approximately one third of staff are relatively new to teaching, or are teaching a new age group of pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is at least good by:
  - teachers using assessment information to plan learning that is relevant to meet the needs of all pupils
  - developing teachers' questioning skills so they confidently use pupils' responses to speed up learning
  - raising some teachers' expectations of the presentation and quality of pupils' work
  - sharing the good and outstanding practice within school more widely to support weaker aspects of teaching
  - checking regularly that the work in pupils' books show good progress from their starting points.

- Increase the influence of teachers' marking and feedback on pupils' work by:
  - providing useful comments which clearly guide pupils in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of their work and making time available for them to respond to the advice given
  - supporting in all subjects the development of pupils' basic skills of handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Reception classes with the knowledge, skills and understanding that are expected for their age. As a result of good teaching they make good progress in all areas of learning and start Year 1 with attainment that is above average.

- Pupils make good progress overall as they move through Years 1 to 6. They leave school in Year 6 with above-average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils make at least the two levels of progress from the end of Year 2 in English and mathematics that are expected nationally. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

- In most lessons, pupils systematically learn new facts and gain new skills, including in subjects such as history, geography and science. Pupils are encouraged to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in these subjects. Occasionally, however, low expectations limit pupils' independence, for example when worksheets are overused.

- Attainment in reading is a notable strength. Pupils' early reading skills are taught well and, by the end of Year 1, an above-average number of pupils have good knowledge of how to link together letters and the sounds they make to read simple words. By Year 6, pupils read widely and use research skills effectively in a range of topics.

- All groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who are eligible for the pupil premium are achieving similarly to their peers.

- Although progress is good overall some inconsistencies mean that attainment at the end of Year 2 could be higher when considering pupils' starting points on entry to Year 1. Inconsistencies occur because the work that is set is not always matched precisely enough to pupils' needs.

The quality of teaching is good

- The overall quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good and some was outstanding. However, a very small minority requires improvement. This profile is typical of the teaching in school generally, as indicated by pupils' work and the senior leadership team's monitoring records.

- Teaching in the Reception classes is consistently good. Adults focus well on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills, as well as their personal development. A wide range of activities to effectively stimulate children's curiosity are planned. Teachers have high expectations and assess children's progress well to move learning on at a good pace.

- In the outstanding lessons teachers use probing questions very well to assess pupils' understanding throughout the lesson and to move them on when they are ready. This was seen in Year 6 as the two teachers skilfully ensured pupils were competent to use a range of techniques such as personification, use of similes and alliteration to compose poems of high quality.

- In an outstanding English lesson in a Year 4/5 class, the teacher continually reviewed pupils' learning, quickly identifying any group or pupil who was having difficulty. Swift intervention ensured they quickly moved onto their next steps with confidence. This skill of using probing

questions to accelerate learning is not a strength in all year groups

- In lessons that require improvement, information about what pupils know already is not used carefully enough to plan next steps of learning. This means that sometimes work is too hard or too easy for pupils. Also expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work are not consistently high in all subjects and untidy work is sometimes accepted.

- In almost all lessons, pupils listened well to their teachers and to each other. They answered questions willing and were respectfully of responses made by their peers. This respect of others ensures that in all classrooms there is a positive climate for learning.

- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution in most lessons, especially in supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They also ensure that other pupils, such as those who speak English as an additional language and those who are eligible for the pupil premium, are included well in all activities.

- Over time the school has made improvements in the quality of marking, especially in English. In other subjects marking is not as informative, and does not consistently support the improvement of pupils' skills of handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The small number of parental responses on Parent View and the larger number to the school's own recent questionnaire indicate that most parents have no concerns about behaviour. Pupils also say that behaviour is good in lessons and that disruption to learning is rare. School records relating to behaviour and safety reveal a positive picture of behaviour over time.

- Pupils also say that bullying of any kind is not a problem and that, if it happens, adults are quick to deal with it effectively and sensitively. This view is endorsed by the overwhelming majority of parents. Pupils are aware of different kinds of bullying such as cyber bullying and unkind name-calling.

- Observations in lessons and around school show that pupils treat each other and the adults working with them with good levels of respect. They behave considerately and courteously as they move around the school and have good attitudes towards learning. Attendance is above average and punctuality good.

- Positive, caring relationships are a strength of the school and pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. Parents agree that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils understand what constitute potentially dangerous situations and how to avoid or react to them. For example, they know about the possible dangers of the internet.

- The school sets high standards for behaviour and has implemented behaviour management strategies consistently. Pupils understand these and perceive them to be fair. As a result, behaviour, including that of pupils with specific behavioural needs, is managed well.

- Pupils' mature behaviour, their respect for others, their relaxed and courteous manners and the open views they express about other cultures and religions all indicate good levels of social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

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The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders and members of the governing body have high aspirations and the school improvement plan is a useful tool to drive forward to achieve their vision. Results of the staff questionnaire shows that all staff are fully supportive of the senior leadership team and what it is doing to improve the school.

- Parents are appreciative of the staff and the work they do. The online questionnaire returns, the school's own survey results and informal discussion with parents at the start of the school day indicate that parents have positive opinions of the school's work.

- Self-evaluation is accurate and senior leaders are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching in the school. Action has been taken to help to improve the teaching skills of less experienced members of staff, or those who are teaching in unfamiliar year groups. However, this action, for example sharing good practice, has not had time to ensure all teaching is at least good.

- A regular cycle of monitoring of teaching is in place, including analysing pupils' performance information, lesson observations, discussions with pupils and the checking of pupils' work. However, work scrutinies are not carried out often enough to check that all pupils are making consistently good progress from their starting points, for example from the start of the school year.

- The curriculum is broad and provides pupils with a wide range of learning experiences both within and outside of school. Meaningful links are made between subjects so pupils are able to apply their literacy skills, as was seen in a good history lesson for Years 3 and 4 pupils. In this lesson pupils effectively used their skills of descriptive writing to explain their feelings during the Battle of Bosworth.

- Lessons involving personal, social and health education promote pupils' good personal development, including behaviour and an understanding of keeping safe. Other aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are provided through music, art, links with a school in Sri Lanka and the learning of French, for example.

- **The governance of the school:**
  - has improved since the previous inspection when it was evaluated as satisfactory
  - is well informed through the headteacher's reports, with the governing body increasingly challenging the school's performance
  - checks that financial resources are used efficiently
  - ensures the safeguarding of pupils meet statutory requirements fully.

- The local authority provides light-touch support for this good school. However the School Improvement Advisor visits the school termly, providing useful advice to the headteacher. The advisor also signposts the school towards any available training or support groups such as network meetings for subject leaders.

What inspection judgements mean

School Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors. A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

School details

Unique reference number	123452
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	403528

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 of pupils on the school roll	275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Roads
Headteacher	Karen Morris
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2008
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