

# Meadfurlong School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 110373           |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Milton Keynes    |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 337481           |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 5–6 May 2010     |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Hugh Protherough |

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

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| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Junior   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 7–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 267  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Mr D Wenham  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Mr J Bailey  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 28–29 June 2007  |
| <b>School address</b>                      | 1 Fishermead Boulevard<br>Fishermead<br>Milton Keynes<br>MK6 2LB |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01908 661952   |
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|---------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Age group</b>          | 7–11         |
| <b>Inspection date(s)</b> | 5–6 May 2010 |
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and observed 13 teachers. Inspectors met with parents and carers, governors and staff. In addition to informal conversations in lessons, they held meetings with the school council and groups of pupils from Years 3 and 6. They observed many aspects of the school's work and looked at a large sample of pupils' work, and documents such as the school improvement plan, curriculum and lesson planning, and the tracking of pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed the questionnaire responses from 67 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which the school's approaches to supporting pupils' individual needs and abilities are improving their well-being, progress and achievement, especially in raising aspirations and developing core skills in literacy and numeracy
- how far teachers plan successfully for the wide range of pupils' abilities and ensure oral and written feedback engages and motivates the pupils to improve their work
- whether senior and middle leaders can demonstrate the impact of their work on improving provision and outcomes for pupils.

## Information about the school

The school is larger than average and serves a community with a significant number of transient families. As a result, the proportion of pupils arriving and leaving school during the course of each year is much greater than average. Since the last inspection, the number of pupils at the early stages of learning English has increased and is well above the national average. Although the largest group of pupils continues to be of White British origin, the range of other groups has continued to increase to more than double the national average. Sizeable groups include pupils from Black and Black British African, Asian and Asian British, Indian and other White backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has grown in recent years and is above the national average as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. The school provides a breakfast club prior to the start of the school day. Healthy Schools status was awarded in May 2010.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The school makes realistic evaluation of its work and knows that it continues to provide a satisfactory quality of education. There are areas of significant strength, such as the outstanding care and support provided for pupils. Arrangements for the welcome and induction of the large number of transient families and vulnerable pupils are excellent. They are effective because staff at all levels share a common vision and work closely to ensure consistent approaches to developing good relationships with the pupils and a positive ethos for learning.

By the end of Year 6, the profile of pupils' attainment is low and the measurement of their progress highly complex because a significant proportion of the school population changes frequently. Barely a half of the current Year 6 attended this school at the start of Year 3. The leadership team maintains detailed records and an effective analysis of the progress of individuals and groups. These data and the inspectors' analysis of pupils' work show that overall progress is satisfactory. It is improving swiftly in reading and writing, but recent initiatives to raise attainment in mathematics have yet to have a measurable impact, especially in calculation and solving problems. Well-managed provision and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities result in these pupils making good progress towards their targets.

Pupils of all backgrounds enjoy school and all that it has to offer. Staff provide a rich variety of learning experiences in and beyond the classroom. As a result, pupils are engaged in their learning and behave well. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and there is an increasing amount of good practice evident around the school. Teachers plan assiduously, but the match of task to individual abilities and the quality of questioning and feedback to pupils vary from class to class. The analysis of pupils' books shows similar occasional inconsistencies in teachers' expectations for the presentation of work and in the depth and quality of their marking.

Since the last inspection the school has improved the quality of its monitoring and self-evaluation. Leaders and managers at all levels have a keen appreciation of the quality of provision and its impact on pupils' progress. They can explain their successes and identify appropriate actions to address weaker areas such as mathematics. The curriculum has greater breadth and is better organised to meet the needs and interests of individuals. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are successfully included within the school community as a result of continuing improvements to the arrangements for care and the good provision for pupils with

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special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is well placed to improve further.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise pupils' attainment in mathematics to meet the school's challenging targets by embedding recent initiatives to improve pupils' skills of calculation and problem solving.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching by ensuring that:
  - teachers' questioning probes pupils' understanding and offers opportunities for extended responses that will improve their speaking and listening skills
  - tasks are always matched closely to pupils' abilities.
- Improve the consistency of feedback to pupils in at least 80% of lessons by December 2010 so that pupils always:
  - know the level at which they are working and the next steps in learning
  - receive consistent expectations about how to present their work neatly
  - have opportunities to revisit work, and correct and improve it.

About 40% of the schools whose effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

Positive attitudes to learning are evident in all classes and pupils of all backgrounds and abilities get on well together to make the most of the interesting learning opportunities provided by staff. Behaviour is good and pupils offer a polite and courteous reception to visitors. Pupils say they feel safe, secure and valued by the adults at the school. The way that the school community successfully includes and manages vulnerable pupils and several with significant behavioural needs is highly effective.

Inspectors' analysis of pupils' work confirms that, in comparison with the national picture, attainment in English and mathematics is low. However, there is compelling evidence that the school's strategies to improve reading and writing are accelerating progress. A wide range of provision, such as one-to-one tuition, comprehension groups and writing projects, is targeted precisely towards individuals and groups, such as reluctant readers, those speaking English as an additional language or pupils with learning difficulties. The impact of this provision is most evident for those pupils who have been at the school from the age of seven. Many of the current Year 6 pupils have made good gains from their starting points and an increasing number of them are reaching the nationally expected level. The progress of recently arrived pupils is more variable. The school's well-developed tracking means that staff can explain case by case the background of those who have made good progress, as well as what is being done for those who need to catch up.

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The school has identified that progress in mathematics has been slower, particularly in respect of pupils' abilities to solve problems and calculate using division. Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation and witnessed the sound start that has been made on a school-wide project to ensure a systematic approach to building pupils' confidence and competence in solving word problems.

These findings are reflected in pupils' satisfactory achievement. In English, pupils frequently achieve well because teachers pitch activities at just the right level. For instance, a group of lower attaining readers competed keenly to sort a selection of three letter words using their knowledge of word-endings and enjoyed considerable success. More able writers in Year 6, including many boys and Black African pupils, speak knowledgeably about their writing and explain how they amend their early drafts and improve them. Pupils enjoy mathematics, but their achievement is not as good as in English. They work hard to solve word problems but sometimes struggle to sustain concentration, especially if the teacher has not spotted if the work is too hard or too easy.

Pupils have a good appreciation of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle and talk knowledgeably about the importance of diet and exercise. The school has worked successfully to ensure that despite the challenge of adverse weather and swine flu, attendance remains in line with last year's national average.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 4        |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress  | 3        |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress                      | 2        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>2</b> |

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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## How effective is the provision?

The great majority of pupils enjoy school and make the most of what is on offer because they trust the adults who work and care for them. This is due to the excellent attention that is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. Thorough induction arrangements support pupils arriving from local infant schools and those moving on to the local high school. The school has also invested significantly in the creation of 'The Boulevard Club' which provides effective after-school support for newly-arrived pupils and their families. The breakfast club ensures all pupils start the day having had something to eat and drink. Additional adults, such as well-trained teaching assistants and learning mentors, make a significant impact throughout each day, supporting learning in classrooms and working effectively with vulnerable individuals and small groups around the school. All members of the school community understand the principles underpinning the school's approaches to 'restorative justice'. The consistent application of policy and practice is a key feature in helping all pupils to feel safe.

Teachers plan thoroughly to address pupils' wide-ranging needs and engage them in learning. Their classroom management skills and subject knowledge are secure and good use is made of interactive whiteboards to introduce new learning. Lessons are often enlivened by activities such as the teacher working 'in role' or the frequent use of 'talk partners' that supports the development of pupils' speaking and listening. The pace of learning varies from class to class. Inspectors saw several lessons that started promisingly but lost momentum. Sometimes, the teacher talks for too long or their questions lack the necessary sharpness to deepen pupils' thinking. Although planning identifies tasks for different abilities, some teachers are slow to spot when pupils have understood new learning and are ready for additional challenge.

Feedback to pupils is positive and encouraging. In some classes it is evident that pupils know the levels at which they are working and what to do to improve. In addition, the teacher's questioning refers pupils to their targets and marking reinforces this. Expectations for neat presentation are high and pupils regularly revisit work to improve it. There are no endemic weaknesses in teaching, but the features of the most effective practice are not yet embedded throughout the school.

The school's curriculum provides effective opportunities for learning and is enriched by a good range of additional activities within and beyond the school day. Opportunities for pupils to practise and apply the core skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum are developing well. Staff are adept at ensuring that the curriculum is adjusted to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and there is effective support for those who are at the early stages of learning English. However, inspectors' analysis of pupils' work shows that in subjects such as science, history and geography, the challenge provided for the more able is inconsistent.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of teaching</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:   |          |
| The use of assessment to support learning  | 3        |
| <b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>   | <b>1</b> |

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management have developed well since the last inspection. Approaches to monitoring the work of the school are more rigorous and clearly linked to the assessment of pupils' progress and attainment. As a result, morale is high and staff at all levels are strongly committed to ensuring the best possible outcomes for pupils.

Subject leaders demonstrate a strong sense of accountability for what is happening in their particular areas of responsibility. In English and mathematics, there is good oversight of recent initiatives to improve teaching. The assessment tracking system enables senior leaders to identify with precision the achievements of each pupil. As a result, ambitious targets for individuals and groups systematically inform the review of pupils' progress and the performance management of staff. Recent work to improve the attainment of White British and Black African pupils in reading and writing has been successful. The effective inclusion of pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds, including many from vulnerable backgrounds, or with special educational needs and/or disabilities also reflects the school's effective promotion of equality of opportunity.

The school adopts robust approaches to all aspects of risk assessment and the safeguarding of pupils. The headteacher and staff work productively with other agencies, such as family support services, police and health professionals, to address the specific needs of individual pupils and their families.

The school is a welcoming and cohesive community that is successfully responding to the increasing diversity of its population. Pupils get on well together and effective plans promote engagement with other schools locally and beyond, including regular visits to France. Pupils speak knowledgeably and sensitively about their own community and the countries and languages of those new to the school. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and a few are regularly involved in the life of the school. The views of parents are canvassed on a regular basis and used to inform the planning process. Despite the transient nature of a significant part of the school community, governors have recently been successful in recruiting four new parent governors who are currently being trained in their new role. Although governors have a secure view of the school's performance data, their involvement in setting priorities for improvement and monitoring the impact of actions is less well developed.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 2        |
| <b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>  | <b>3</b> |

## Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents who returned questionnaires and spoke to inspectors are pleased with their children’s experience of school. A very few expressed concerns about a number of aspects of the school’s work, including behaviour and helping their child to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors agree with the views of the majority of parents and found no evidence to support the concerns expressed by parents.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meadfurlong School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 267 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |   | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | % | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 39             | 58 | 24    | 36 | 3        | 4 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 39             | 58 | 27    | 40 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress   | 43             | 64 | 22    | 33 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 33             | 49 | 34    | 51 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 33             | 49 | 34    | 51 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 31             | 46 | 33    | 49 | 2        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 28             | 42 | 34    | 51 | 4        | 6 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 24             | 36 | 40    | 60 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 25             | 37 | 36    | 54 | 3        | 4 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 28             | 42 | 34    | 51 | 4        | 6 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 22             | 33 | 37    | 55 | 3        | 4 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 27             | 40 | 34    | 51 | 3        | 4 | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 38             | 57 | 26    | 39 | 1        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

| Grade   | Judgement    | Description  |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding  | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.  |
| Grade 2 | Good         | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.  |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.  |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate   | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

### Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school       | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) |      |              |            |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
|                      | Outstanding   | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools      | 51  | 45   | 0            | 4          |
| Primary schools      | 6   | 41   | 42           | 10         |
| Secondary schools    | 8   | 34   | 44           | 14         |
| Sixth forms          | 10  | 37   | 50           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 32  | 38   | 25           | 5          |
| Pupil referral units | 12  | 43   | 31           | 14         |
| All schools          | 9   | 40   | 40           | 10         |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement:               | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.   |
| Attainment:                | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.  |
| Capacity to improve:       | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.  |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.  |
| Learning:                  | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.  |
| Overall effectiveness:     | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul> |
| Progress:                  | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.   |

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



7 May 2010

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Meadfurlong School, Milton Keynes, MK6 2LB**

Thank you all for the help you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school. Your friendly welcome made us feel part of your community during our two days with you and our conversations were extremely useful in finding out all about Meadfurlong. We consider that the school provides you with a satisfactory education. You are making the expected progress in your learning during your time at school.

All the staff work very hard to make sure you are safe and well cared for. Several of you told us that behaviour is good and that any problems will be sorted out quickly. We agree. You were polite and courteous throughout the inspection. Well done for achieving the Healthy Schools Award! You have lots of opportunities to keep fit and stay healthy and it is good to see so many of you joining in these activities after school. Almost all of you say you enjoy school and we could see that in most lessons and in much of your work. However, there are one or two things we want to happen that will make your school even better.

You are making good progress in reading and writing and we want to see the same in mathematics. We have asked your teachers to ensure that you keep practising division and solving problems, as well as making sure that the tasks they provide are closely matched to your needs. It is important that the questions they ask you make you think hard and that you have time to talk about your answers so you can explain them. This is an important skill to develop for your future learning. In some classes you know the level at which you are working and what you have to do to reach the next one. You also know you have to present work neatly and find ways to improve it, so that you are always doing your best. We want this to happen in every class in the school.

With every best wish for the future

Yours sincerely

Hugh Protherough  
Lead inspector

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