

Inspection of The Meadows Primary School

Bristol Road South, Northfield, Birmingham, West Midlands B31 2SW

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils try hard to live out the school values of 'aspiration, equality, respect, resilience and integrity' every day at The Meadows Primary School. The school works hard to ensure that pupils attend regularly and on time. Most pupils do. Pupils know the school rules 'be ready, be safe, be respectful'. They are well behaved at social times and enjoy spending time with their friends. Any pupils in need of additional support to manage their behaviour get the help they need.

Pupils enjoy taking part in sports activities and competitions. They are proud of their many sporting achievements, including in ping pong and tag rugby. There are a wide range of opportunities that help pupils to develop their talents and interests. These include a choir, board games, art and dance clubs. Older pupils develop teamwork and independence skills during an outdoor residential experience. Visits and visitors to school support pupils to understand the curriculum better.

Pupils enjoy learning a wide range of subjects. However, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Pupils do not read or write at the level expected for their age. In addition, there is too much variability in how well the curriculum is taught across the school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has designed a curriculum that in most subjects is clearly ordered with ambitious endpoints. However, the sequence of learning in writing is unclear. This means that teachers do not always know what to teach and when to teach it. Gaps in teachers' subject knowledge and instability in staffing causes variability in how well the curriculum is being delivered across the school. This slows pupils' learning.

Teachers' checks on how well pupils learn in lessons and over time are inconsistent and vary from class to class. This means that pupils do not always know what they have done wrong or how to improve it. At times, pupils disengage in their learning because they struggle to complete their work, or expectations are not high enough. This means pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as leaders intend. In addition, pupils do not write with the clarity and accuracy expected for their age.

Recent improvements in the identification and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) across the school are positive. Staff support pupils in the specialist resource base well. This helps these pupils to be successful in school.

The teaching of reading across the school is inconsistent. This is because staff do not have the knowledge and skills that they need to teach reading well, including when teaching phonics. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to read in school. Those that fall behind are not effectively supported to catch up quickly and a few pupils fall further behind. This means that pupils do not read with the confidence and accuracy required for their age.

Children in the early years do not get off to a great start in their learning. Staffing changes over time mean that routines are not well established and the curriculum is not consistently taught well. Early writing is not given sufficient priority and children's language and communication skills do not develop quickly enough. This impacts on the progress children make, particularly in reading and writing, as they move through school.

In many instances, pupils develop an understanding of what it means to be respectful while learning about different faiths, including Sikhism, Islam and Judaism. They learn about a range of cultures and festivals, such as Diwali, through story and dance. Pupils learn about healthy and safe relationships and what it means to be a good friend. They know how to keep safe when working online. Police workshops help pupils to learn about risks and safe decisions. Pupils enjoy voting for school council representatives during school elections. They take on roles such as classroom monitors. However, at times, the delivery of the school's personal development offer is inconsistent.

Turbulence in staffing, including leadership, has impacted on the quality of education across the school. Governors are working hard to secure improvements. The majority of staff are positive about recent improvements and the support from leaders to manage their workload and well-being.

Parents and carers have mixed views about the school. They raise concerns about staff turnover, low expectations of pupils and a lack of support with reading.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

However, the school does not consistently maintain safeguarding records accurately. As a result, although effective checks are made, there are some gaps in the school's recording systems.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum across the school, including in the early years, is inconsistent. As a result, pupils are not learning the curriculum well and at times they struggle to engage in their learning. The school should ensure that the curriculum is taught consistently well so that pupils know and remember more.
- There is too much variability in the teaching of early reading, particularly in phonics. Pupils, particularly those at the early stages of reading, do not learn to read well. The school needs to ensure that the reading curriculum is taught consistently well so that all pupils learn to read with the fluency and accuracy expected for their age.

- Expectations of pupils' writing are not high enough and the sequence of learning does not build towards ambitious end points. This impacts on the progress that pupils make towards becoming independent writers. The school needs to ensure that the writing curriculum is clearly sequenced and taught effectively so that all pupils learn to write well.
- The school does not always maintain safeguarding records accurately. As a result, although effective checks are made, there are some gaps in records of important documentation. The school should ensure that safeguarding records are effectively maintained.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	103296
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10290519
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	540
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Katherine Watkins
Interim Headteacher	Di Waeland
Website	www.meadowsprimary.org
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The substantive headteacher was not in school during the inspection.
- The interim headteacher has been in post since September 2023. She is seconded from the Robin Hood Multi-Academy Trust. The trust is providing support to the school.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, design and technology, history, mathematics, science and English. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of sessions, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also held discussions with leaders about the geography and physical education curriculum.
- The inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult and reviewed reading resources.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation on the school's website.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times during the day.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, the safeguarding leader, curriculum leaders and governors. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, pupil surveys and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Harwood	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey O'Keeffe-Pullan	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Ogden	Ofsted Inspector

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