

# Meadows First School

Stourbridge Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B61 0AH

## Inspection dates

12–13 March 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, combined with and a knowledgeable and committed team of staff and governors, ensures an outstanding experience of education for all pupils. Meadows First School is a truly inclusive school.
- The exceptional nurture, care and support pupils receive creates a positive climate for learning. As a result, pupils behave extremely well and attain excellent outcomes.
- The curriculum is rich and exciting. It has been carefully planned with the school's values of 'caring, sharing and preparing for life' at its heart.
- The support that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive in all aspects of their education and care is highly personalised and effective. It enables pupils to make strong progress from their starting points.
- A strong safeguarding culture permeates all aspects of the school's work. Pupils are safe and say that they feel safe.
- Teachers have an excellent knowledge of their subjects. They plan lessons well to make sure that all pupils are included and access work well matched to their needs. Teaching is of a high quality and enables pupils to make strong progress.
- Parents and carers speak highly of all aspects of the school and the difference it makes to their children. They say that their children are happy, safe and making excellent progress.
- The early years provision is exceptionally well led. Children make excellent progress from their starting points because of the stimulating and nurturing learning environment, well-planned activities and strong teaching.
- The inspiring school environment promotes pupils' curiosity, knowledge and love of books. Pupils read regularly and read well.
- Governors both challenge and support leaders because they take the time to get to know all aspects of the school's work. They hold leaders to account well.
- The headteacher has developed a cohesive and collaborative leadership team. There is a strong culture of school improvement based on research. Middle leaders are trusted to take risks that are likely to have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. All staff benefit from high quality training.
- Leaders have detailed knowledge of pupils' performance and plan carefully the extra support some pupils may need. They know that some additional support is needed to make sure that a small number of disadvantaged children make even better progress.

## Full report

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

- Continue to provide targeted support for the very small number of disadvantaged pupils at risk of not achieving age-related expectations.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher's unwavering commitment and drive has ensured that the school has improved rapidly. Leaders and staff agree that 'we never stand still.' There is a determination, shared by all, that pupils will be given the very best start to learning. As a result, pupils receive an outstanding educational experience at Meadows First School.
- Leaders know their school and its pupils extremely well. They have high expectations of all pupils and of all aspects of the provision. There is a strong culture of leading improvements in a considered way, and often through a research-led approach, for the benefit of the pupils.
- Leaders' frequent and systematic checks on the quality of teaching and learning are thorough. These checks enable leaders to gain a detailed knowledge of the strengths and relative weaknesses of the quality of teaching, and of the impact of teaching and learning on pupils' outcomes. Leaders use this information to develop a programme of professional development closely linked to the school's priorities and tailored to the needs of staff. Leaders evaluate this frequently to check that it is having a positive impact on school improvement and the quality of teaching. Staff are highly appreciative of the professional development opportunities they receive.
- Leaders seek regular external validation of their work to ensure that their self-evaluation is accurate. The school has two members of staff who lead moderation work for the county. They use their skills to support staff in making accurate judgements about pupils' work. The school-led local clusters enable staff to make further checks and comparisons with other schools in the area.
- The child is at the heart of the curriculum. Leaders have recently revised their curriculum and have clearly stated its intent, as well as how they plan to implement it. The curriculum has firm foundations in the school's values, reflected in the 'well-being wheel': happy me, clever me, unique me, calm me, active me, safe me and friendly me. The curriculum provides pupils with a breadth of learning activities, further enriched through additional experiences such as forest schools, gardening, learning to play an instrument and residential visits.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is integral to the curricular approach. Leaders plan purposeful activities, based on research, which supports pupils' long-term learning. Activities are evaluated in detail and capture the impact of events, such as disability awareness, or work with an artist in residence. Leaders make sure that planned activities enable pupils to develop a knowledge and understanding of different cultures and faiths beyond the local community.
- Leaders' thoughtful promotion of British values, within their 'rights respecting school' context, enables pupils to develop a meaningful understanding of life in Britain, and of the difference they can make in society. Pupils have a strong voice in school and use it productively. Pupils recently invited their local member of parliament, who is also the current Home Secretary, into school. They discussed with him their concerns about parking issues around the school. They were also able to quiz him on other governmental matters, including, 'What difference is Brexit going to make to me?'

- The use of additional funding is planned purposefully and is based on the information that the school gathers about the pupils. For example, leaders have invested in weekly support from a speech and language therapist, as well as additional training for staff. This enables the significant number of pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties to receive high-quality support. Funding has also strengthened the 'quality first' teaching in class, ensuring that teachers have high expectations of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, or those with SEND.
- The physical education (PE) and sports premium funding for primary schools is used to provide excellent PE and sport opportunities for pupils. Leaders and governors ensure that the use of all additional funding is checked regularly to make sure it is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Pupils engage in a variety of activities, including those that promote healthy diets and exercise.
- Leadership of the school's SEND provision is effective. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a detailed knowledge of each pupil and their additional needs. She ensures that appropriate support is put in place to meet those needs, enabling pupils to make good and often very strong progress. The additional support these pupils receive is monitored and interventions are analysed to determine which are having the most impact. Frequent checks on the progress of pupils with SEND are made. The school's assessment system has been enhanced to ensure that smaller steps of progress for pupils working below age-related expectations are being captured. Pupils with SEND usually receive additional in-class support. Teaching staff are skilled at making sure that work is matched closely to their abilities.
- The autism resource base, which also supports pupils from the co-located middle school, provides a high standard of education for the small number of pupils who attend. Pupils are making strong progress in their academic, and social and emotional areas of learning. They are supported well by skilful staff, who structure activities to enable pupils to work together and develop their social skills, and their ability to co-operate with others. Staff ensure a truly individualised approach for each pupil, planned in detail, and enabling pupils to engage in learning with just the right amount of help. Pupils regularly access lessons with their mainstream classmates, which ensures that their planned transition is seamless.
- Middle leaders have a secure understanding of the progress that all pupils are making in their respective subjects or phases, including the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Termly progress meetings enable teachers to check on the progress pupils are making. Leaders have invested in additional time for teachers to meet with pupils on an individual basis, every term, to discuss their work. Teachers say that they feel valued and trusted because they are given the freedom to organise these days as they see fit. They collaborate with other colleagues, focusing on a shared purpose for the reviews, which then inform the formal pupil progress meetings.
- All staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey strongly agreed that they were proud to be a member of the school. They are particularly appreciative of the steps that leaders have taken to address their workload, such as trialling an alternative approach to marking.

## Governance of the school

- Members of the governing body are extremely knowledgeable and capable. They have a broad skill set that enables them to give both appropriate challenge as well as support to leaders. They carry out their statutory responsibilities effectively. Governors know the school very well and share, with leaders and staff, the vision for the school. Governors are highly reflective and can identify the improvements to the school that have made a difference to pupils' overall outcomes.
- Governors use the information that leaders give them to challenge leaders suitably, with questions such as, 'How do you check that monitoring is robust?' In addition, they support the frequent external checks on the school and use the reports from these checks to further scrutinise and validate the information they have been given by leaders.
- The additional visits governors make to the school enable them to have a first-hand experience of life at Meadows. In addition to link governor visits, the annual 'governor morning' visit is well attended. Governors meet with subject and phase leaders, visit classes via a pupil-guided tour and have lunch with the pupils. Governors then formally report back their findings at the next governing body meeting. As a result, they have first-hand experience and understanding of the work of the school.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and is well supported by her deputy DSLs. Robust systems are in place so that staff can follow up any concerns they have about a child's welfare quickly. The DSL recognises that pupils with SEND can have additional vulnerabilities and has put in place additional checks to make sure that this group of children are safe. Weekly pastoral meetings are held to monitor any welfare concerns closely.
- Staff receive suitable safeguarding training, including additional training in the Prevent duty and child sexual exploitation, as well as weekly safeguarding updates. Training is sourced from a range of providers. The DSL ensures that there is a thorough safeguarding induction programme for new staff. Governors have all received suitable safeguarding training.
- In her role as a county safeguarding champion, the DSL has developed the Bromsgrove DSL champion network, bringing together schools and other external agencies in the local area so that they can work collaboratively. They share good practice in safeguarding matters and staff receive regular supervision of their work, through anonymised case studies.
- Leaders carry out thorough checks on staff to ensure that they do not pose any risks to pupils. Several staff and governors are trained in safer recruitment, which ensures that staff are suitable to be employed at the school. A governor, with responsibility for safeguarding, checks records and procedures every term to ensure compliance and good practice.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Outstanding

- The high-quality teaching in the school is purposeful and engaging and is developed through strong relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are supported well in their learning and tasks are matched closely to their abilities. Because of effective teaching, pupils are making very strong progress over time.
- Teachers are skilled in adapting activities in a subtle way that ensures that all pupils feel included in the lessons. At the same time they ensure that pupils are challenged to move on quickly in their learning. Pupils are resilient; they are open to sharing mistakes with others so that they can make better progress, because teachers have developed a culture of risk taking in the classroom. Work in books shows that pupils are reflecting on their work and thinking about how to improve it. The design technology curriculum, for example, enables pupils to frequently evaluate their designs, checking that they are fit for purpose.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support, often in a discreet way, so that pupils feel part of the group. Access to additional resources in the classroom, such as equipment in the 'helping hands' box, gives pupils the little bit of extra help they may need with their learning.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that pupils' subject-specific vocabulary is developed well. Pupils are encouraged to apply their learning in other subjects. For example, in an English lesson, Year 1 pupils applied their scientific understanding of classifying animals using vocabulary such as omnivore and mammal.
- Teachers use practical equipment well to support pupils' development of mathematical understanding. Pupils use these materials to demonstrate their understanding of some trickier mathematical concepts. Teachers provide open-ended challenges for pupils to further extend their reasoning skills.
- Pupils' learning behaviours are exceptional. They can both articulate and demonstrate the school's expectations of learning dispositions – determined, organised, focused and independent – in lessons and around the school. Lessons begin quickly, and pupils apply themselves to learning with confidence. On the very rare occasions where pupils need additional support to manage their behaviour, this is given by staff in a sensitive and discreet way.
- Teachers plan activities carefully so that pupils have the necessary knowledge and skills to complete the final challenge. Inspectors saw pupils strengthening their vocabulary to enable them to create a 'wanted' poster for Pig the Pug who had gone missing. Pupils constructed helpful sentences for their audience such as, 'Don't go too close...he will dribble on you.'
- Teachers promote all aspects of language development in lessons, including spoken language. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils were challenged to use a range of mathematical vocabulary to describe the properties of a shape to their partner, so that their partner could identify the shape correctly.
- Pupils are supported to develop their phonic skills effectively and apply these well to their reading and writing. Reading has high priority in the school. The school environment provides quiet areas where pupils can read, as well as a well-stocked library, and displays of interesting books aimed to grab pupils' attention. Pupils have

frequent opportunities to read aloud in lessons, and every class reads daily.

- Leaders have introduced an additional reading challenge for all pupils to further promote a love of reading. Pupils are highly engaged and say that they are reading books now that they would not normally choose. Pupils earn points when they complete challenges such as joining the library or reading to a cuddly toy. Parents are very supportive of this initiative.
- Teachers regularly reinforce high expectations of spelling and handwriting in pupils' written work. There is a consistent approach to handwriting, and pupils' work shows how it is becoming more refined over time. Pupils develop good writing stamina, which is reflected in other curriculum subjects. Pupils in Year 2 are writing increasingly detailed reports about their science investigations, using appropriate language, for example, 'the bulbs have transformed into green shoots'.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The school provides a calm, nurturing environment that enables all pupils to be successful learners.
- The school's work to promote pupils' rights threads through the work of the school and underpins all aspects of the curriculum, including personal, health and social education. There is a strong culture of listening to pupils, ensuring that they have a voice. In every class, pupils have reflected on their own rights, such as 'the right to special care for my special needs'.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to be listened to. They enjoy the responsibilities they are given, through groups such as the school council, eco-council, and as digital leaders. Staff ensure that pupils learn to take responsibilities at an early age. In Reception, children enjoy being 'target tigers', carrying out tasks and helping others.
- Members of the eco council take their responsibilities seriously and promote their work around the school. Pupils pay close attention to environmental issues, and recently took part in the 'great plastic pick up project', following their concerns about the litter in the local environment. Some pupils enjoy being 'secret snoops' at the end of the school day, by checking that lights have been turned off and computers have been shut down. Pupils told inspectors about how they learned even more about wider environmental issues through their whole school performance of 'Eddie and the penguins save the world'.
- Pupils are very respectful of each other. They say that bullying rarely happens. The school's information as well as parents' views supports this. The school focuses on 'friendship' rather than anti-bullying. Friendship buddies in the playground support other pupils well.
- Pupils are developing a good understanding of different faiths and beliefs, such as Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam, through the curriculum and assemblies. Opportunities to talk to visitors to the school about their faiths and beliefs enhance this work further, with a clear focus on listening to the views of others. Other pupils agreed when one

pupil said, 'I don't have a faith, but everyone accepts that.'

- Leaders have made sure that the curriculum enables pupils to learn how to keep healthy and safe. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy lunches and have had the opportunity to work with a visiting chef to think about balanced diets. They learn about sugar in food and consider other alternatives.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school, and both staff and parents are confident that pupils are safe. Pupils learn about internet safety and know that if they have any concerns when online they can click on the on-screen dolphin icon. In addition to online safety, pupils learn about wider aspects of health and safety that are important to them. These include road safety, the importance of wearing helmets when cycling and applying sunscreen.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They conduct themselves in an orderly way, and pupils are happy in each other's company. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well and show that they have a real insight into individual needs. There is gentle but firm and consistent management of behaviour around the school. The school's well-established routines support a sense of security for pupils.
- Pupils understand the 'zone' system for managing behaviour well. Leaders track this information closely. When they have any concerns about a pupil's behaviour they ensure that they receive personalised support, which may extend to working with families.
- Pupils can articulate their feelings well and refer to the 'wellbeing wheel' when talking about making good choices. Pupils have been helped to develop a range of strategies to keep themselves calm and talk about these positively. They are proud of their contribution to the design and development of different areas of the 'well-being garden' in the school's grounds.
- Almost all pupils attend school regularly. Overall attendance is improving and is above the national average. For some groups of pupils, absence, including persistent absence, has been higher. Leaders have taken decisive action to improve the attendance of these pupils. The appointment of an attendance officer has enabled greater scrutiny of information, resulting in improved support for pupils and families.
- The number of pupils who are persistently absent has decreased significantly this year. Leaders also know that, for a small number of pupils, their medical needs have had an impact on their attendance. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has also improved this year. When pupils' attendance is low, leaders carry out checks to make sure pupils are safe and well.
- Staff take additional steps to encourage pupils to attend regularly, including half-termly awards for pupils with good attendance. Awards, such as book vouchers and bronze, silver and gold awards, provide an additional motivation for pupils to attend school.
- The school does all it can to ensure that pupils are included in the life of the school and attend well. No fixed term or permanent exclusions have taken place.



## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- Throughout their time at Meadows First School, children make strong progress from their starting points and achieve well.
- The proportion of children in the early years who reach a good level of development by the end of the academic year has been above the national average for the last three years and continues to improve.
- These high standards continue into Year 1 and attainment in phonics shows a similar trend. In 2018, 93% of pupils reached the required standard in phonics, which is well above the national average.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. This is also the case for the most able pupils. The proportion of pupils who attained a greater depth of learning in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of year 2 was much higher than the national average.
- While there is a slight variation for the small group of disadvantaged pupils, and pupils with SEND, work in books and progress information shows that these pupils are making strong progress from their starting points.
- Work seen in pupils' books supports these strong outcomes. The high expectations of pupils' work in English and mathematics is reflected in other subjects, such as science and design technology. Attainment in science is also better than the national average.
- Pupils with SEND, including those in the resource base, are making strong progress over time, from their lower starting points. This is because of the good support they receive, which is well matched to their needs. More pupils with SEND are achieving age-related expectations over time.
- Pupils are making strong progress in all aspects of their emotional development. The SENCo checks individual pupil's progress carefully and ensures that pupils are given the additional support they need for their well-being, tailored to their specific needs.
- The strong outcomes that pupils achieve, as well as positive support for transition, ensure that pupils are ready for their next move. Pupils benefit from their school being co-located with the middle school, but leaders make sure that transition is planned purposefully. This is achieved through activities such as regular visits, shared assemblies and music events.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- Early years is extremely well led by a skilled leader. She ensures that high expectations for the children are established as soon as they join the early years, so that they can achieve excellent outcomes. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen year on year and is currently well above the national average. Almost all children, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND are making substantial and sustained progress.
- Safeguarding is of the highest priority in early years and children are helped to develop their awareness from an early age. When the teacher asked some nursery children why

it was important to take the register, they replied, 'because it helps to keep us safe'. All of the welfare requirements are met.

- Staff have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of each child, because of the thorough range of assessments they carry out with the children. Staff work as a team to plan children's next steps in learning. The early years leader, who is also a specialist leader for education and a county moderator, ensures that assessments are accurate. Staff use the information they have about the children to identify precisely which children may need additional help to improve their rates of progress. Parents speak positively about the school's online assessment system as it enables them to see their children's work online.
- The curriculum is well organised and imaginative. As a result, children are highly motivated to learn and eager to join in with activities. They sustain their attention in activities for increasing lengths of time. Engaging activities are carefully planned and provide children with a variety of opportunities to learn and develop. The outdoor area provides an engaging environment, which fuels children's imagination and creativity.
- Teaching is highly responsive to the children's needs. Teachers make sure that personalised activities at the beginning of the day set the tone for challenge and engagement. Staff do not put a limit on their expectations of what the children can do. Inspectors saw a group of Nursery-aged children working confidently with numbers beyond 20, helping the crocodile to get his teeth back. In Reception, some children were writing sentences independently, using their phonic knowledge as well as capital letters and full stops appropriately.
- Children with SEND are well supported because leaders have ensured that all staff are well trained to enable them to give the right help. Staff adapt the provision appropriately to children's needs, and engage with a range of external agencies to make sure that children who need additional support, receive it.
- Staff are attuned to the speech and language difficulties that some children experience. They model appropriate language and articulation for all children, and especially for those whose spoken language is less well developed. Staff use questioning in a skilful way to further develop children's communication and language skills.
- The clearly stated routines and expectations in the early years help children to know how to behave well. Staff skilfully manage the few children who need additional support with a gentle but consistent approach.
- The science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) approach is promoted well in the early years. Children engage in cross-curricular units of work that enthuse them, and the STEM room provides a stimulating learning environment. Inspectors saw children's STEM-based learning reflected in their work about trains, with a focus on magnetism, construction and two- and three-dimensional shapes.
- Children are well prepared for the challenge of Year 1. They access well-structured and effective phonics teaching. Leaders are responsive to the needs and abilities of the children and have adjusted their curriculum accordingly this year, with additional opportunities to develop children's phonics, writing and number skills.
- The early years leader has developed learning networks with other providers across the local area. This means that good practice can be shared, and that standards of

children's work can be checked and agreed.

## School details

Unique reference number	116662
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10058505

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

Type of school	First
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andi Lynch
Headteacher	Sue Hewitt
Telephone number	01527 872508
Website	<a href="http://www.meadows.worcs.sch.uk">http://www.meadows.worcs.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@meadows.worcs.sch.uk">head@meadows.worcs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2018

## Information about this school

- Meadows First School is a larger than average primary school. It is co-located with Parkside Middle School.
- The school runs a resource base for pupils with an autism spectrum disorder. Pupils from the first school and the middle school attend the base for some of their education.
- Most pupils who attend the school are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including those with an education, health and care plan, is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than the national average.
- The school has recently been reaccredited with the Early Years Quality Mark and the Eco School silver award.
- The school has recently achieved the 'Rights Respecting Schools' silver award.

- In December 2018 the school was awarded the platinum School Games Mark Award.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups and classes in the school. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- An inspector listened to a group of pupils read.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and staff to talk about their experience of Meadows First School. Another group of pupils gave an inspector a tour of the school and talked about their work.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject and phase leaders. The lead inspector met with six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books across a range of different subjects, both in the classroom and as a separate work scrutiny activity.
- The lead inspector spoke on the phone with a school improvement adviser from Worcestershire local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to parents on the playground at the start of the day and considered the 89 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. They also took into account the 57 free-text responses to the survey.
- Inspectors looked at the 31 responses to the confidential staff questionnaire.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including: the school's website, self-evaluation, improvement plans, monitoring records, progress and attainment information, governing body minutes and external checks and awards. A range of information relating to safeguarding was considered, including: pupil files; training, behaviour and attendance records; and the school's checks on staff recruitment.

## Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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