School report

Mead Vale Community Primary School

Kestrel Drive, Worle, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset BS22 8RQ

Inspection dates 6–7 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	**Requires improvement**
Effectiveness of leadership and management	**Requires improvement**
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	**Requires improvement**
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	**Requires improvement**
Outcomes for pupils	**Require improvement**
Early years provision	**Requires improvement**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has not made the progress it should have since the last inspection. Significant changes to staffing have meant that the points for improvement that were identified have not all been dealt with effectively or consistently.
- The quality of teaching and learning is not consistently good across the school. Teachers do not demand enough of pupils. Teaching does not take enough account of gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils, particularly the disadvantaged and most able, do not make consistently strong progress across year groups. Teachers do not check that work challenges pupils sufficiently well, particularly in mathematics and in writing.
- Assessment systems for checking the progress of pupils throughout the year are new. Leaders are not yet able to use them well to check rates of progress for different groups of pupils.
- Teachers lack the subject knowledge in English and mathematics to provide good challenge to pupils.
- Behaviour during lessons of a few pupils sometimes interrupts learning. Leaders have not improved this fast enough.
- Not all subject leaders have the skills they need to check the impact of their actions on pupils' achievement.
- School improvement plans are not clear enough about what needs to improve or how quickly. This makes it difficult for the governing body to monitor the impact of leaders' actions.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has steered the school through a time of significant staff changes, including to senior leadership. The current leadership team has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Pupils' progress in reading is now improving. However, there is more to do to ensure that outcomes are consistently good in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders make pupils' well-being a priority. Pastoral support for pupils and their families is strong. Pupils benefit from interesting outdoor spaces, which help them to enjoy their play.
- Leaders ensure that the school's core values permeate school life.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are effectively and consistently applied so that pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and the most able, make good progress
  - senior leaders make thorough checks on pupils' progress and, when weaknesses are found, act quickly to ensure pupils are given the help they need to catch up
  - leaders support teachers to manage pupils' behaviour effectively
  - subject leaders have the skills they need to check the impact of their actions on pupils' progress and outcomes
  - governors are able to hold leaders to account for the impact of their actions on the quality of teaching and on pupils' achievement.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that teachers:
  - make good use of information about what pupils know, can do and understand so that they make good progress, particularly disadvantaged pupils and the most able
  - have secure subject knowledge in English and mathematics to enable them to plan activities that challenge pupils
  - plan work that enables pupils to make progress in their writing skills in other subjects as well as in English and to use their mathematical skills to reason and solve problems.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement

- The headteacher has shown resilience through a period of significant instability for the school, with numerous staff changes over the past two years. Despite her clear vision, ambition and commitment to providing high-quality professional development for staff, these frequent changes have resulted in inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Pupils' outcomes have not been good enough. Current pupils are not making good progress in all years and classes.
- Governors have secured some good appointments to the senior leadership team. While these new leaders are starting to improve the overall quality of teaching, they have not ensured that the school's systems to assess pupils' learning and progress are robust. Consequently, not enough pupils make strong progress in writing and mathematics. Although the headteacher has introduced more rigorous and frequent checks, it is too soon to see the full impact of this work.
- Staff changes have meant that a number of subject leaders are new to their roles. More experienced leaders support subject leaders to help them develop the skills they need to check pupils' learning and progress. Despite this, some new leaders do not regularly check the impact of initiatives on pupils' learning. This is limiting the pace of improvement.
- Leaders and governors now have a robust approach to managing the performance of teachers. Training for teachers now matches current whole-school priorities. For example, work with staff to help them improve their mathematical subject knowledge is starting to help pupils make more progress in mathematics. However, this is not consistent across the school.
- Leaders have ensured that a broad curriculum is in place. They have focused on ensuring that pupils have the basic skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar, writing and using numbers and calculations in mathematics. Pupils are now making more progress in writing and mathematics. Leaders know that pupils now need to apply these basic skills across a range of subjects so that they deepen their understanding, extend their thinking and make more progress.
- Newly qualified teachers appreciate the strong support they receive. They are able to see good practice and learn from others. This is ensuring a successful start to their careers.
- Effective use of pupil premium funding has improved disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading. This funding also provides additional teaching time to help disadvantaged pupils deal with any gaps in their learning. Additionally, some disadvantaged pupils who lack confidence in mathematics work in targeted groups to ensure they receive the support they need to become independent mathematicians. These pupils say this is helping them to improve. However, leaders do not evaluate the impact of strategies such as these precisely enough to know if they are improving pupils' learning.
- Leaders have ensured that the sport premium helps to improve provision. Pupils enjoy a variety of sports including archery and tri-golf. Because of the training they have received, staff make lessons more active and more pupils, now more than half, attend extra-curricular sports.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. The school's values, including respect, hope and honesty, promote equality and value diversity. Pupils say they appreciate the indoor reflection area where they can spend time in a peaceful space. They have been active in a bid to extend this to an outside reflection space. During outside playtimes, pupils play and mix well. They also have positive attitudes towards each other.
- The local authority provides support and challenge for leaders, including governors. An improvement adviser visits the school frequently and provides accurate and robust reports on progress and the next steps for improvement. She then checks to see that these improvements have taken place. Due to changes in staffing, the school has been too slow to act on the advice so that, despite this support, the school is still not yet good.

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors now have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. However, they are unable to hold leaders to account fully and provide the stronger challenge needed to move the school forward more quickly because the school's improvement plans lack clarity about what good progress will look like.
- Governors' checking of safeguarding is detailed and effective. There have been improvements to some procedures following a safeguarding audit.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils are safe and say that they feel safe.
- The designated leader for safeguarding provides strong leadership and ensures that records are well organised and of good quality. She knows families very well and responds appropriately to any concerns raised. She makes good links with other agencies.
- Staff are trained for all aspects of safeguarding, including in protecting pupils from the influence of extreme or radical ideas. Staff receive safeguarding updates at staff meetings. They understand how to spot signs of abuse and are vigilant in reporting concerns. This contributes to the strong culture of safeguarding in the school.
- The school provides an additional support for pupils' well-being called 'the swan's nest'. Here, well-trained learning mentors are available to provide extra support and a 'listening ear'. Pupils say they know who to talk to if they have problems.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment — Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because the quality of teaching is not typically good across the school. As a result, the outcomes for pupils are not as good as they should be. In 2016, too few pupils made the progress needed to achieve their full potential. Staff changes were a barrier to improvements in the quality of teaching.

- Teachers do not have the in-depth subject knowledge they need to challenge pupils to think deeply, especially in writing and mathematics where pupils' progress is not as good as it is in reading.
- Not enough teaching fully motivates pupils because the work does not sufficiently match their needs. Teachers do not build on what pupils already know, can do and understand in mathematics and writing. Expectations of pupils are too low. Some work is too easy. Gaps in learning go unnoticed. In particular, the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- Where teaching is stronger, there is more challenge and pupils are keen to learn. The work encourages all pupils, especially the most able, to do as well as they can. Pupils work hard at their tasks and show a sense of pride in their work. Teaching assistants support learning well.
- The school uses specialist teachers well, such as in music. Year 5 pupils show good subject knowledge about reading a musical score and performing as a class ensemble. Work in art is not as well developed and pupils told us that they would like to learn about art and develop their skills more.
- Pupils value the homework they are given. Older pupils say that the regular work 'helps me with my learning'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare — Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are cared for well.
- A strong values-based culture supports an ethos of respect and of caring for one another. Older pupils are proud of how this underpins all they do at school.
- The outside space and equipment encourages physical play and this, along with the wide range of sports available to pupils, supports their physical development.
- Leaders ensure that pupils with more complex needs have adaptations to the curriculum and to the organisation of their day. Staff work hard to include these pupils with their peers so they are able to learn and play together whenever possible.
- Pupils are aware of the dangers of bullying. They understand the different types of bullying, including cyber bulling. They know what to do if they are worried, but told inspectors, 'this is a caring school and bullying gets sorted out'.
- The well-being of pupils is a priority across the school. Pupils appreciate 'the swan's nest' as a place to go to for support. Parents value the extra support their children receive from learning mentors, saying 'the school goes the extra mile'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- There are occasional instances of poor behaviour in classrooms despite leaders' high expectations of how pupils should behave and conduct themselves. Pupils told us that, although greatly reduced, there are still occasions when other pupils disrupt their learning. Some parents also raised concerns about a few instances of poor behaviour in

classes. Some teachers do not have the skills to prevent these disruptions or deal with them effectively. Exclusions are rare.

- Leaders have ensured that parents know the benefits of good attendance and, as a result, attendance is in line with the national average. A small number of pupils with complex medical needs are not able to attend school regularly. The school provides good support for these families to ensure pupils get the help they need.

Outcomes for pupils — Require improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement. Due to the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, the progress of current pupils across the school is inconsistent. There are recent signs that some pupils are making up lost ground and making more progress.
- The outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2015 were broadly average, showing an improvement from the previous year. Last year, the outcomes were not as strong, particularly in mathematics. In addition, not enough pupils who had previously achieved well in mathematics reached higher standards. Outcomes in reading at the end of Year 2 for the last academic year were just above the national average, which represents expected progress from pupils' starting points. In writing and mathematics, fewer pupils achieved higher levels when compared to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils in the early years achieving a good level of development by the end of the year was in line with the national average. However, the progress of current pupils is uneven due to instability in staffing arrangements.
- Expectations for the most able pupils are too low and they are not achieving as well as they could. Activities do not take account of what these pupils already know, can do and understand.
- The progress of the small number of disadvantaged pupils is inconsistent across the school. Disadvantaged pupils do less well in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 compared to other pupils nationally. By the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils have caught up with others nationally in reading, but not in writing or mathematics.
- Leaders are aware that they currently do not always accurately identify pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities. However, when identified, these pupils have appropriate help and resources and most make expected progress from their starting points.
- The work in current pupils' books shows that pupils are now starting to make more progress, particularly in building skills in writing and mathematics, which has been leaders' focus for improvement. Some pupils show a real pride in their work and present work in their books well. This is not, however, consistent across year groups.
- Pupils' current books show that pupils can generally use grammar and punctuation well to improve their writing. However, pupils do not always use these skills in other subjects to extend their understanding and learning.
- In mathematics, the focus on ensuring all pupils have sound number and calculation skills is evident in the better progress some pupils are now making. Work in books

shows that pupils now sometimes use these skills to solve problems and deepen their understanding.

- In science, outcomes for pupils at the end of the last academic year were lower than national averages. New curriculum resources are in place to support teaching in science across the school. Current pupils' books show some improvement in skills, knowledge and understanding in science.
- Phonics outcomes in Year 1 have been at, or above, the national average for the past two years. By the end of Year 2, nearly all pupils reach the expected standard. In the last academic year, fewer pupils in Year 1 achieved the expected standard. These pupils are currently receiving phonics catch-up support and the school's current assessments show that they are on track to make the improvements needed.
- There is a strong culture of reading across the school. Pupils enjoy reading and benefit from the well-resourced, inviting library area. Pupils can talk about a wide range of books and authors and enjoy responding to their reading using the online system. Pupil reading volunteers and a series of intervention programmes support pupils well. These strategies are having a positive impact this academic year on progress in reading.

Early years provision — Requires improvement

- The provision in the early years requires improvement because the progress children make is uneven. For some children, particularly disadvantaged children, progress is too slow. This year, there has been instability in the teaching arrangements and inconsistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across classes.
- Children come into school with skills and knowledge typical for their age, except in the area of communication and language, in which some have weaker skills.
- Where the provision is more effective, there is a productive, calm learning environment with a wide range of interesting activities both inside and outside on offer to children through the day. Children share well together as they go about their activities. Staff focus on developing communication and language skills so that children can develop their skills in these areas. Staff use information from pre-school providers as well as their own assessments to form an accurate picture of children's development at the start of the year.
- Teaching assistants support learning effectively and, together with teachers, observe children to see what they know, can do and understand. Staff record these observations in learning journals. Based on these observations, teachers plan further activities in order to move children forward in their learning. However, due to the instability in teaching arrangements, this system is not currently working well for all children. Observations for some children, including disadvantaged pupils, are not complete. As a result, some children do not make as much progress as they could.
- Parents are encouraged to take part in their child's learning and come into school each week to share learning experiences.
- Safeguarding is effective, with appropriate risk assessments in place.

School details

Unique reference number	109112
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10012348

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanna Rawlins
Headteacher	Beverley Hartland Smith
Telephone number	01934 511 133
Website	http://www.meadvale.n-somerset.sch.uk
Email address	meadvale.pri@n-somerset.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils reported to have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also below average.

- The school has an additional resource centre called 'the swan's nest', which provides pastoral support for pupils.
- The school has been receiving intensive support from the local authority and additional support from external consultants and the local teaching school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons or parts of lessons, often accompanied by senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils throughout the inspection, including at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors, together with the deputy headteacher, looked at pupils' work in their books to establish current progress and progress over time.
- Inspectors heard different groups of pupils read from different year groups.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team, the English and mathematics leader, teaching assistants and lunchtime staff. In addition, the lead inspector talked to a representative from the local authority, a representative from the local teaching school and school governors.
- The lead inspector took account of 87 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of each school day. In addition, responses to the Parent View free text service were analysed. An inspector met with a group of parents to hear their views about how pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities are supported.
- Inspectors took account of 33 questionnaires returned from members of staff. An inspector met with newly qualified teachers and gathered their views.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paula Marsh	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Wigley	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Green	Ofsted Inspector

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