

The Mead Community Primary School

Hackett Place, Hilperton, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 7GN

Inspection dates 25–26 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Leadership, including governance, is outstanding at all levels. This results in teaching that ensures rapid and sustained progress for pupils in all subjects, including English and mathematics, throughout all areas of the school.
- Teachers are extremely well trained. They have excellent subject knowledge and plan exciting activities for all groups of pupils that are totally appropriate for their level of ability and needs.
- Provision in the Reception Year is outstanding both inside and outside the classroom. Adults have a deep understanding of how young children learn and plan activities that inspire them to learn extremely quickly and deeply.
- Pupils love coming to school. They respond to the high level of care the school shows to them by caring for each other and behaving impeccably in lessons and around the school. They dress smartly, are very well mannered and extremely proud of their school. The school's procedures for keeping pupils safe and secure are outstanding on both sites.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is exemplary. Adults who support these pupils are highly trained and so are able to help pupils make exceptional progress.
- The curriculum is continually adapting to the needs of the pupils. As a result, it inspires them to work hard and totally immerse themselves in their work. When pupils leave the school, all aspects of their learning and well-being have been very well developed so they are fully prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The school is highly successful in reaching out to other schools, which not only benefits those institutions but brings back ideas and innovations which benefit the school and the pupils.
- Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's work and so provide a very strong strategic lead and a high level of challenge to the school's senior leaders. This contributes to the school's culture and ethos of always trying to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, of which six were joint observations with the executive headteacher and assistant headteachers. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons. They also looked at pupils’ books and observed other aspects of the school’s work, including the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Academy Trust, two members of the local governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and teachers and school leaders. Pupils took inspectors on a tour of the school. The inspectors also listened to pupils read and spoke with them about their reading.
- Inspectors took account of the 106 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also spoke to parents and carers at the school gate on both sites and took account of three letters from parents and carers and a telephone conversation with a parent or carer. Inspectors reviewed 51 questionnaire responses from staff.
- A number of documents were looked at, including the school’s own information relating to pupils’ achievement, the school’s self-evaluation summary and plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, checks on teaching, and documents relating to safeguarding. The inspectors also visited the school’s website.

Inspection team

Martin Marsh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Rowan

Additional Inspector

Terry Payne

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average primary school based on two sites which are five miles apart: one at Hilperton and the other at Wingfield. Both sites cater for the full primary age and ability. The Hilperton site has two classes in each year group from Reception to Year 6 while the site at Wingfield has a mixed Reception/Year 1 class, a mixed Years 2 and 3 class and a mixed Years 4, 5 and 6 class.
- The school is part of The Mead Academy Trust comprising two schools: The Mead Community Primary School and Castle Mead Primary School, the latter due to open in September 2014. An executive headteacher oversees both schools. Heads of school have been appointed and are due to take up post in September 2014.
- The school's governance functions at two levels. The first is the board of directors of The Mead Academy Trust, which oversees the work of both schools. The second is the local governing body, which is responsible for The Mead.
- The executive headteacher is a National Leader of Education and the school has 10 Specialist Leaders of Education. It is a National Training School and also a national lead school for disabilities and special educational needs, the Arts, Early Years Foundation Stage and research and development.
- The school runs a breakfast club and provides after-school care.
- One in seven of the pupils is known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding which supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families). This is below average. In this school, eligible pupils belong to all three groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is double the national average. Pupils mostly have moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or speech, language and communication needs.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion of pupils are from other ethnic backgrounds, some of whom speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The Mead converted to become an academy school in May 2012. When its predecessor school, with the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding. An inspection of English by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in February 2013 judged achievement, teaching, the curriculum, and leadership and management of English all to be outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve communication with parents and carers so that an even greater proportion understand what the school is trying to do and become even more involved in its work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children enter the school in Reception with skills below the levels typical for their age and make rapid progress throughout all areas of school to reach standards in English and mathematics that are well above average by the time they leave in Year 6.
- In English, pupils quickly learn to read because of very well-planned programmes that ensure they learn their letters and the sounds they make (phonics). Those that are slower developing fluency in reading are given excellent additional support so that they continue to enjoy reading and eventually become confident readers. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, they have a real love of books. They have frequent opportunities to read a variety of different texts – both books and digital text – which enables them to find out things for themselves or just enjoy a book for pleasure. The strong focus on reading is a significant reason why pupils' written work is of such high quality.
- Standards in mathematics are equally high. Able pupils in Year 6 can find the equations of straight lines drawn on coordinate axes and compare them by considering their gradients. All pupils develop confidence and accuracy in doing mental and written calculations and the lowest ability pupils in Year 6 are able to recognise equivalent fractions and calculate the area and perimeter of shapes made up of different-sized rectangles.
- The high level of challenge, both in terms of content, particularly in mathematics, and the frequent opportunities for pupils to research and find things out for themselves, enables the most able to make the same outstanding progress as other pupils.
- Highly trained adults with a deep understanding of the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs support them to make exceptional progress. As a result, their attainment overall when they leave in Year 6 is a year ahead of similar pupils nationally in English and mathematics. High-quality interventions by teachers and other adults also enable pupils eligible for additional funds to learn extremely well. 2013 Key Stage 2 statutory assessments indicate that in writing they make exceptional progress and are six months ahead of their peers. Although they are six months behind in mathematics and four months in reading, this is due to lower starting points and their progress is still rapid.
- The school's strong focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills is benefiting all pupils, especially the increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are from families who are not White British. As a result, they make similar progress to their peers. This shows the school is highly successful in providing equality of learning for all pupils.
- Pupils make outstanding progress across all subjects, not just in English and mathematics. The use of specialist teachers and flexibility in how classes are organised contribute significantly to this. In Year 4, one of the class teachers with an expertise in teaching physical education and dance teaches both classes while the other teacher with an interest in humanities teaches both classes those subjects. Pupils make fast progress in each subject as a result. Pupils in Year 2, taught by a specialist music teacher, have an excellent understanding of pitch and are introduced to language such as *crescendo*, *piano* and *forte* when learning about the sounds that different percussion instruments make.
- There is no difference in the achievement of pupils at the Wingfield or Hilperton sites because teachers plan together and there is the same level of high-quality provision.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge which enables them to finely check pupils' learning and progress and plan activities that meet the needs of all different groups of pupils. Pupils are inspired by the range of different activities which challenge their thinking, help them to learn new skills quickly and deepen their learning.

- In all lessons, teachers enjoy excellent relationships with pupils. Pupils listen intently, responding enthusiastically to questions and always working very hard. When asked to work together, pupils help each other very supportively. In a Reception class, pupils were working together to plan a wedding. They had designed the transport to get them to the church, decided who was going to attend, built the church, made the after-service food and even had a photographer. The inspector was delighted to be a part of the congregation at the 'ceremony' and was even provided with a flower for his lapel. This activity resulted in pupils making rapid progress in communication and language and in their understanding of the world.
- Additional adults are very knowledgeable and well trained and, because they attend planning sessions with teachers, know exactly what is expected to be learnt in lessons. They ask challenging questions, enabling the pupils they work with to make similar progress to their peers in lessons.
- Marking is very thorough and gives pupils a clear understanding of what they are learning and excellent guidance as to how they can improve. Pupils typically act upon the advice given in teachers' comments and so improve their work. Presentation of pupils' work is of the highest quality and it is very rare for a piece of work not to be finished. Handwriting is excellent and pupils present their work neatly.
- The learning environment is outstanding. Classroom displays are excellent and changed regularly depending on what is being studied. A chemistry laboratory and an Anderson air raid shelter were two examples of learning spaces that were set up in shared areas. In classrooms, reading is celebrated through the creation of engaging reading areas. Even at playtime there are plenty of opportunities for learning to take place because there are many things for pupils to do, both inside and outside.
- The Reception Year is very well resourced, both inside and outside the classroom. Adults make the best of these resources because activities are very well planned, based on an excellent understanding of how young children learn and what each child knows and understands. 'The Hub', where children regularly spend time to enable teachers to observe children closely and check their progress, is a vibrant space for them to use their imaginations and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. A high level of engagement between adults and children ensures that children are always thinking and working hard and making exceptional progress as a result.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils love coming to school and the parents and carers almost unanimously agree. 'It's a great place, a happy place', 'just hunky-dory' and 'He's so happy, so well supported' were typical of the views of parents and carers spoken to at the school gate. This is one reason why attendance is above average and pupils are punctual for school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary and contribute significantly to their outstanding achievement. They work extremely hard and develop a remarkably mature attitude to learning. One boy in Year 3 was able to explain what a chameleon was because he had found out about it during his research about rainforests. This is typical of pupils' interest and love of learning promoted by adults' enthusiasm and love of teaching.
- The school shows a high level of care to all pupils. Pupils repay this by showing the utmost respect for adults, behaving extremely well and caring for each other very well. There are a number of pupils who find managing their own behaviour difficult. 'They find learning difficult,' was how one pupil described them. The school manages the behaviour of these pupils very well enabling them to make similar rates of progress to other pupils and not to interfere with the learning of others. There are notable examples of how the school has helped pupils with behavioural and social difficulties to get the most of what the school has to offer. All adults deal with the rare occasions that behaviour falls short of the very highest expectations in a totally consistent way that is understood by everyone.
- Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They delight in taking responsibility, whether it is serving on the school council, being eco monitors, helping out in the dining hall or donning a high-visibility jacket to be a friend to younger children in the playground. Pupils take equal

delight in the success of others as they do in their own success. This was seen in a celebration assembly where pupils listened well and showed genuine appreciation for groups of pupils in Reception and Year 1 who could write all their 'phonemes and digraphs' or who were 'Readers of the Week'.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding on both sites. The school is very secure and leaders take all aspects of pupils' health and safety very seriously. Child protection systems and procedures are very rigorous and staff are well trained to deal with any situation that might arise. Pupils feel very safe and nearly all parents and carers who responded on Parent View agreed with this.
- Pupils understand about different forms of bullying and are confident that if it were to happen to them that the school would deal with it quickly. They know how to keep safe on the internet and how to avoid cyber bullying and other potential hazards of electronic media. They also understand about the importance of keeping healthy and how eating well and exercising regularly is good for them. After-school clubs that offer aerobic exercise are well attended.
- Pupils know that it is wrong to use derogatory language and so racist and homophobic incidents are almost unknown. If a problem were to occur, they are confident it would be dealt with quickly. This shows the school is highly successful in fostering outstanding relationships and tackling discrimination, resulting in an extremely harmonious school community.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's inspiration, passion and vision are significant factors in why all aspects of the school's work are outstanding. 'This is a very special place' was one teacher's comment on the staff questionnaire. Teachers and leaders spoken to during their inspection expressed their happiness and great pride in working in the school and are totally behind what the school is doing.
- Leaders are remorseless in ensuring that teaching is of the highest quality. There is a total commitment by all teachers to improve and leaders facilitate this by working alongside them in their classrooms, supporting planning and providing training that will move teachers to the next level. Their expertise is such that they are able to spread their practice wider in their role as a teaching school by supporting other institutions and bringing back to The Mead the best practice they see elsewhere.
- Middle and senior leadership is exceptionally strong. Ten members of staff are Specialist Leaders of Education and experts in their particular field. The school's commitment to research and development results in a continuous dialogue about teaching and learning which means that the curriculum and other aspects of the school's work are always being reviewed and developed. 'There are always things we can do better' was one leader's comment. Rigorous checking on the impact of developments on pupils' progress ensures that leaders know if the changes are working and need to be adapted or stopped.
- Systems to check on the progress of pupils are extremely robust and rigorous. One leader likened it to a 'forensic analysis' of pupils' achievement. This attention to detail results in no pupil being allowed to fall behind and new strategies and methods being developed to help overcome any difficulties in learning a pupil might have. This is another factor in why achievement is outstanding.
- The curriculum is expertly tailored to the needs of groups of pupils and continually under review. A large number of visits and visitors to school, together with a wide range of well-attended lunchtime and after-school clubs, enhance everything that is done in lessons. The way the curriculum promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is a major factor in why the school is such a harmonious learning community. Whether it is tending to the school's garden, visited in July 2013 by the Duchess of Cornwall, taking part in school productions at a local professional theatre or representing the school in a sports event, the pupils have great pride in whatever they do.
- The school's breakfast club is very well organised and, as well as providing pupils with

something to eat, gives them the opportunity to engage in a range of activities, including sports.

- The school is using additional government sports funding to provide a specialist sports coach and specialist physical education teacher to increase teachers' subject knowledge in teaching physical education. It is also using it to train lunchtime supervisors to introduce and play games with pupils. The school's research indicates that pupils are enjoying lessons even more and that it is leading to a greater participation in local competitive sport.
- An increasing number of parents and carers are getting more involved in the school's work. The school works very hard to engage with its parent community. It provides workshops to support parents and carers with helping their children to learn and the school's website is an excellent source of help and advice. The school's leaders are always available to speak to parents and carers at the school gate in the morning and at the end of school. Nevertheless, there are some parents and carers the school has been unable to engage with. As a result, they do not understand what the school is trying to do and are not involved as much as they could be.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Board of Directors of the Academy Trust and the local governing body have clearly identified roles and responsibilities which they carry out highly effectively.
 - The Trust ensures that financial management systems are rigorous and robust, matters related to personnel, including the appointment of staff, are dealt with appropriately and aspects of health and safety and site security are outstanding. They also ensure safeguarding meets statutory requirements. They provide very strong strategic leadership.
 - The local governing body receives excellent information from school leaders about the progress towards achieving targets in the school's plans and uses it to challenge all aspects of the school's work. Governors have an excellent understanding about how all groups of pupils are performing, including those eligible for the pupil premium. Governors also know about how the school's appraisal systems reward teachers' performance and the continual and rigorous checking of the quality of teaching by school leaders. Regular visits to school enable governors to check on developments through meetings with school leaders and visits to classrooms. As a result they understand about all aspects of the school's performance, particularly the quality of teaching.

What inspection judgements mean

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

School details

Unique reference number	138133
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	441142

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	505
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Melanie Jacob (Chair of the Board of Directors of Mead Academy Trust), Tracey Wright (Chair of the Local Governing Body)
Headteacher	Lyssy Bolton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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