



Meadlands Primary School

Purpose of review:

The Headteacher, together with the Chair of Governors commissioned the review. There was a focus on evaluating the impact and effectiveness of leadership and management on all aspects of school life.

Methodology:

- The review was carried out by two senior school improvement advisors from AFC, one of whom is the school's improvement partner (SIP).
- This was a one day review conducted on Friday 18 January 2019.
- Activities were conducted jointly with senior leaders within the school.
- The activities undertaken included the following: lesson observations to all year groups, work scrutiny, observation of pupils' behaviour, discussion with parents, meeting with a focus group of pupils, discussions with senior leaders, a meeting with representatives of the governing body and examining a range of the school's monitoring records.

Context:

- The school is inclusive and serves a wide range of families in the community. In particular, the following contextual factors impact on the school's overall performance:
 - Pupils with English as an additional language are significantly above national average
 - Pupils join the school in the early years and key stage 1 with high levels of speech and language needs
 - Approximately 16% of pupils are disadvantaged.
- Following the promotion of the long-standing deputy Headteacher, two Deputy Headteachers were appointed and have now been in post for a term. The Headteacher has taken on the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Early Years Leader promoted to Deputy DSL.

Main Findings:

- The Headteacher, together with her senior leadership team are relentless in their drive to provide the best learning opportunities for their pupils. The school's vision, 'At Meadlands, we dream big!' is embedded within this strong learning community.
- Leaders have high expectations of all staff and inspire them to give their best for their pupils. Pupils thrive because they are well looked after in a nurturing and encouraging environment that puts their needs first.
- 'Outside the box' thinking from the Headteacher, propels the culture of innovation in this school. To this end, leaders seek new ways to enhance teaching and learning. Staff are encouraged to use evidence-based research to improve their pedagogy, to good effect. Consequently, staff are becoming increasingly skilled in ensuring that pupils make strong gains in their learning.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and astutely identify key priorities to further develop as evidenced in the school improvement plan. There is a continued focus on improving provision and practice.
- Middle leaders have increasing accountability and autonomy meaning that they are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility. They use data analysis to revise their priorities and measure impact of their actions throughout the year. There are more opportunities in the school-led system to increase their impact through collaboration within and across schools. They have a working understanding of the strategic direction of school and are making increasing contributions to whole school improvements.
- Developing mathematics pedagogy has been a high priority for leaders. Actions taken have resulted in equipping teachers to improve pupils' enjoyment, resilience and understanding in mathematics. This is reflected in the strong mathematics outcomes at the end of each key stage.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of where teaching is strongest and where additional support is required. They use this information to improve teachers' practice and provide good support to staff. Consequently, teaching across the school is consistently strong.
- Leaders meet regularly with staff to check and analyse pupils' progress. They use the assessment information to review the school's effectiveness and analyse how well different groups are performing. This enables leaders to effectively identify emerging strengths and areas for development.
- Leaders have already given considered thought to the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum. This ensures that pupils acquire the necessary knowledge and

skills in a wide range of subjects. The curriculum provides pupils with experiences that sustain and build successfully on their positive attitudes to learning. Themes are chosen that grasp pupils' interest, so that they work enthusiastically across subjects.

- The school's ethos of 'Work hard and be kind' is threaded through the curriculum. Leaders are aware of the challenges that some of their pupils face and sensitively implement a range of well-chosen strategies to help pupils stay motivated and to believe in their abilities.
- The curriculum is further enhanced with specialist provision in the performing arts, developing pupils' creative passions. The 'Music Factory' is an inspiring and innovative use of space enabling pupils' to immerse themselves in a rich musical environment. Here, pupils learn to read music and play a variety of musical instruments, including the ukuleles, drums and recorders. Pupils have many opportunities to showcase their musical talent by performing at various events. A LAMDA specialist tutor, coaches pupils to develop their language and drama skills, helping them to communicate confidently.
- There is a clear rationale for the pupil premium spend. Leaders make sure that staff are clear about the needs of pupils. They identify which teaching strategies best meet pupils' learning needs, and check on pupils' progress. Subsidised trips and visits help these pupils engage fully in the life of the school.
- The school provides well for the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and they make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders work effectively to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes. Leaders ensure that training is available for all staff. Professional development opportunities are carefully linked to teachers' personal targets and the school's priorities for improvement.
- Governors are passionate about securing further improvement at the school. There is a grit and determination to excel. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They hold leaders to account for pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching by asking challenging questions.
- The governing body is well organised. Governors' skills and expertise are used to effectively support and challenge leaders. Governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They undertake regular training, to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Through the well-considered curriculum design, pupils become avid readers at Meadlands. The school's libraries ('Beach Hut and Roald Dahl Hut)) have been purposefully set up to create a quiet and relaxing environment, conducive to reading. Pupils have access to a wide range of carefully selected books that encourages them to discover different genres and authors.

- This strong culture of promoting a ‘love for reading’ coupled with effective teaching and learning of comprehension skills results in pupils achieving highly in reading across the school.
- Leaders continue to implement wide-ranging actions to promote writing skills. Through the cross curricular approach to the curriculum, pupils are given good opportunities to practise their writing skills in a range of subjects.
- Support staff provide effective support to those pupils that they work with during lessons. This further contributes to the strong outcomes that pupils achieve.
- The school’s marking and feedback policy is consistently implemented. Pupils use the feedback they get from their teachers to further develop their learning.
- Pupils’ welfare is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils develop the qualities of kindness, empathy and tolerance for each other through explicit teaching and implicit guidance. Positive mental health is also a key focus. For example, outside each classroom a poster reminds all pupils to ‘be a warrior NOT a worrior.’
- A strong moral purpose underpins the staff commitment at Meadlands. The warm and friendly relationships between adults and pupils across the school is evidence of the strong culture of nurture and care at this school. Pictures capturing pupils’ individual talents and interests are celebrated on a display. As a result, pupils feel a sense of belonging in this closed knit community.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes towards learning. This is reflected in pupils’ high levels of attendance which are consistently above the national average. Leaders are tenacious in reinforcing the links between high-quality learning and pupils’ presence at school.
- Pupils with complex needs receive effective support. Consequently, these pupils settle well into school life. Careful consideration is taken to ensure that support is tailored to strengthen pupils’ resilience and emotional well-being. Collectively, pupils are respectful and supportive of each other’s differences and staff manage pupils’ behaviour very well. As a result, the school provides a highly inclusive learning environment in which all pupils can succeed.
- Pupils understand the different types of bullying and say that it rarely happens. They are confident that adults take their concerns seriously and take quick action should any problems arise. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of how to keep safe.
- Parents are extremely positive about the school. They told reviewers that through the Junior Leadership Team, they have many opportunities to contribute to new ideas for the school. Pupils also said that they loved learning and felt that they get good support and challenge from their teachers. Typical of pupils’ comments, one stated, ‘Meadlands is the best – there’s nothing we don’t like– we don’t want to leave!’

- The early years environment is exciting and well organised. Children’s good- quality work on display shows that they take care and have pride in their learning. Children flourish in well-resourced classrooms that motivate and inspire them to learn in all areas of learning. Teachers plan learning that ensures that tasks are carefully matched to children’s abilities and interests. Children sustain interest for long periods of time at a range of activities that develop their confidence and social skills well.
- The early years provision has acknowledged the need to develop early language; it is language-rich. Children talk and socialise with each other, calmly and purposefully.
- Children form letters with care and want to do well. Children have opportunities to apply their phonics knowledge to writing routinely. Teachers use high expectations to challenge children appropriately.
- Because of the effective provision in the early years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is consistently above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check are consistently above the national average. Pupils apply their phonics skills well and swiftly learn to read with fluency and understanding.
- In 2018, key stage 2 pupils’ attainment was well above the national average in the combined reading, writing and mathematics measure, as was their progress in reading and mathematics. Pupils’ progress in writing was broadly in line with the national average.
- In 2018, outcomes for pupils in key stage 1 were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at both the expected standard and the greater depth standard.

Recommendations

- Further enhance the curriculum by fine tuning how knowledge and skills run concurrently through the curriculum to ensure progression and challenge for all pupils.
- Ensure that the Pupil Premium Strategy is reviewed in light of the following questions:
 - Have pupils’ barriers to learning been correctly identified? Does the PPS address how these barriers are going to be overcome?
 - Which aspect of the PPS has had the most impact? Why?
 - Which aspect of the PPS has had the least impact? Why? What are we going to do differently?
- Critically evaluate the reasons behind any findings from the school’s monitoring records so that leaders are confident about the reasons for any differences in

pupils' achievement e.g. progress in writing for boys, SEND and Disadvantaged pupils.

- Further embed the strong partnership between the Headteacher and the newly appointed Deputy Headteachers to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and meticulously executed.
- Ensure that teachers who demonstrate the best practice of creating the optimum learning environment through creative tasks and enquiry approached learning, share their expertise with all teachers resulting in establishing a consistently high level of high engagement for all pupils.
- Maximise pupils' learning time so that all pupils, especially the most able pupils are consistently challenged throughout lessons and don't waste time doing tasks that are too easy for them.
- Review the effectiveness of the school's assessment tool, 'Target Tracker' to determine the extent to which it enables staff to correctly capture the progress of pupils who have SEND. Consider capturing progress for this group of pupils using a more bespoke method.

Cathy Clarke
Senior School Improvement Advisor
and SIP

Jenell Chetty
Senior School Improvement Advisor

