

# Meadow Wood School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117691
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339051
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Goodchild

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	24
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Ken Morris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr James Boylan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Coldharbour Lane Bushey Hertfordshire WD23 4NN
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The majority of time was spent looking at learning. Six lessons were observed and all four teachers were seen, as well as sessions led by therapists. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of pupils' progress, teachers' planning, evidence of the school's self-evaluation and monitoring, and safeguarding documentation. They analysed 13 parental, eight pupil and 15 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- what particular features of leadership enable the school to sustain high quality provision
- to what extent the school involves parents fully as partners in their children's learning and development
- how well the curriculum meets pupils' increasingly complex needs.

## Information about the school

This is a special school for primary-aged pupils with a statement of special educational needs for physical and neurological impairment, most of whom have cerebral palsy. The pupils' needs are becoming more profound: nearly all have complex needs, including sensory impairment, epilepsy, extensive medical needs and associated learning difficulties. The pupils communicate in a variety of ways, mostly through vocalising, signing and the use of technological aids. Almost all are wheelchair users. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the percentage from minority ethnic backgrounds, most of whom speak English as an additional language. Meadow Wood is an integrated education and health setting, designed to meet pupils' learning, developmental, medical and social care needs. The school has gained a number of awards, including Healthy Schools, Eco-Schools, and the Activemark. A holiday play scheme uses the school premises but is inspected separately because it is not managed by the governing body.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

In the words of a parent, 'Meadow Wood is an excellent school. It makes everyone feel comfortable and welcome.' The school has sustained and built on the outstanding quality found at its last inspection. The clear direction provided by the headteacher and the seamless work of all the staff underpin an absolute commitment to meeting pupils' increasingly complex needs. High expectations and accurate self-evaluation inform the continuous drive for school improvement. The outstanding leadership of teaching and learning is based on rigorous monitoring which provides teachers with precise information about how to improve their practice. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully developed the way it analyses pupils' progress to measure its effectiveness. Leaders are very clear about the school's strengths and those areas where aspects of its work could be refined. These factors combined mean that it has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

The school is a happy place with a warm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils enjoy school a great deal. As one said, 'I have a really good time here.' Another conveyed her appreciation by saying, 'I would like to stay here forever, and when I have to leave, I wish I could take my teachers with me.' Pupils make exceptionally good progress in lessons because teaching is outstanding. The curriculum provides a wide range of learning experiences that are carefully adapted to pupils' individual needs. Outstanding multi-professional working between teachers, learning support and care assistants, therapists, health and social services staff ensures that pupils receive exactly the right care, support and guidance, and enables them to achieve exceptionally well.

The school uses its links with other educational establishments and specialist agencies extremely well to extend pupils' learning and support their personal and social development. It has identified the potential to offer an outreach support role for other schools, but has not yet developed this valuable tool for sharing expertise and further developing the teachers' skills. The school engages well with parents and carers. It regularly surveys their views and keeps them well informed about their children's development. For instance, parents receive an information sheet about the learning planned for the week ahead and home-school diaries are completed on a daily basis. However, the next small steps in the progress of individual pupils are not always communicated as precisely as they could be to parents through diaries, nationally recommended 'developmental journals' or through media such as video. The school promotes community cohesion particularly well locally, but is only just beginning to forge links with a school overseas and identify a suitable school in a

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different part of the United Kingdom.

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

- Extend the ways in which parents and carers are engaged as partners in their child's learning through better use of media such as home-school diaries, 'developmental journals' and video.
- Increase the extent to which the school looks outwards from its own practice by:
  - making greater use of its existing expertise to develop an outreach role with other schools
  - extending global and national links to more effectively promote community cohesion.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>1</b>
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The school's own tracking data show that pupils make at least good and often outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science. They do particularly well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1, and some older pupils have also made exceptional progress over time. In lessons, pupils' learning and progress are outstanding, especially in developing their communication, personal, social and independence skills. Pupils are enthusiastic and active participants because teachers and support staff are highly skilled in enabling them to stay on task. All pupils meet a high proportion of the individual targets set for them by physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists, contributing to a picture of outstanding achievement in their overall development. The achievement of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, those with the most complex needs and those for whom English is an additional language is at least as good as that of their peers.

Pupils very much appreciate the way they are cared for and say that the best thing about the school is that it makes them feel very safe. They enjoy excellent relationships with the adults who support them and learn and play happily together. Pupils' attendance is good and their behaviour is outstanding. The school is committed to ensuring pupils have a wide range of sporting and physical experiences. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the school's celebration of diversity. For instance, in a lesson on special objects from a range of world faiths, they handled artefacts with extreme care and maintained a very high level of eye contact and concentration throughout. In caring for one another, they show an outstanding respect for each other's differences. Pupils have a voice in decision making through the school council and wherever possible, take responsibilities around the school. They are actively involved in a wide range of fundraising and gaining the Eco-Schools award was led by the pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school does much to promote pupils' self-esteem, ensuring that

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they feel highly valued as individuals. Pupils develop a real enthusiasm for learning, a wide range of personal skills and become as independent as possible in preparation for the next stage of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently at least good and frequently outstanding. Teachers have an excellent understanding of pupils' individual needs and use this knowledge exceptionally well in their planning. Lesson plans identify a range of different learning objectives for each pupil, reflecting the targets in their individual education plans. Teachers are highly skilled in capturing pupils' interest and keeping them focused through a strong emphasis on clearly-structured, practical activities based on a multi-sensory approach. This maximises pupils' involvement in learning and instils a real joy in communicating. For instance, in an outstanding lesson, the class teacher and two support assistants created a magical atmosphere by using a resonance board to give pupils the experience of vibration, sound and rhythm. The pupils expressed their delight and made it very clear that they did not want the activity to end. Teachers consistently assess pupils' progress and record the small steps in their learning, and this detailed information is used in setting challenging targets. Where teaching is good rather than outstanding, lessons still contain many exceptional features, but there is not always enough challenge for more able pupils in some parts of the lesson, the pace drops slightly, and pupils have to wait their turn for too long while the teacher works with individuals. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers make

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low. In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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exceptionally good use of the highly skilled learning support and care assistants, who contribute significantly to pupils’ progress.

A very wide range of visits and visitors enriches pupils’ learning. They have excellent opportunities to work with their mainstream peers and with pupils from other special schools to extend their learning and experience new places and people. The school has particularly productive links in sport and the arts. For instance, pupils took part in a rock and roll workshop with students from the nearby secondary school, undertook a 10-week cheerleading programme with a local rugby club, a ‘digital dance’ day with a primary school and are now building on these skills to develop dance in the curriculum. The school makes exceptionally good use of the support provided by a range of external agencies in meeting pupils’ needs and there is extensive liaison with members of the therapeutic and medical team. Therapists frequently contribute to lessons so that pupils are able to have physiotherapy or speech and language therapy without missing their other learning activities. The school makes good use of bilingual support for pupils learning English as an additional language and ensures that interpreters are provided for parents who need them, for instance for the reviews of their children’s statements of special educational needs.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher is ambitious for the school and is determined to give pupils the best possible experience while they are at Meadow Wood. He is very ably supported by staff and governors. The loss of the deputy headteacher at the end of the last academic year has been used very strategically to increase the school’s capacity for improvement by developing the management expertise of staff. Each half term, a different class teacher shadows the headteacher and fulfils a deputy role. In the headteacher’s own words, ‘This has had a brilliant effect in pulling everything together.’ It has increased teachers’ understanding of the ‘big picture’ of the school’s work, strengthened teamwork, which was already strong and instilled a spirit of shared responsibility. As one teacher said, speaking about her own teaching, ‘Anything less than outstanding would not be good enough.’ The school is rightly beginning to plan for an outreach role as the next step in providing opportunities for teachers to develop their skills further by sharing expertise with other schools.

The governing body provides good support and challenge to the school. Regular

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visits by governors and frequent meetings with staff ensure that they have a very good understanding of the school’s work. The school has met the standard for the Financial Management in Schools and it provides outstanding value for money. Records and risk assessments are exceptionally well maintained and very regularly updated. Policies provide an excellent basis for ensuring pupils’ safety, and the children’s committee of the governing body places outstanding emphasis on safeguarding.

The school has a very good understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of its community. It makes an excellent contribution to the local community and the school itself is a highly harmonious environment that draws on pupils’ home experiences and varied cultures as a starting point for many activities, but it has been slow to develop the broader national and global dimensions. The school promotes equality of opportunity exceptionally well: its effectiveness is underpinned by the very thorough attention it gives to proving every pupil with the best possible opportunities. As a parent put it, ‘A particular strength of the school is the way it supports the individual child, encouraging their gifts, skills and abilities.’

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in developing their communication skills. Before a child joins the setting, staff may visit the home or childcare settings where necessary and plan for transition very carefully. The curriculum has a strong physical and sensory dimension, and physical development is regularly monitored by health specialists. Observation and assessment are

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continuous, with close planning to meet children’s individual needs. The curriculum is rich and varied and therapists work as a seamless team with the teacher and learning support and care assistants. Children are happy and quickly gain in confidence. Links with parents are good: they receive daily information through the home-school diary but the school has not yet involved them fully in their child’s assessment and learning. As in the rest of the school, improvement is continuous, with high expectations and regular monitoring of progress against children’s targets. The learning environment is safe and nurturing.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

**Views of parents and carers**

Nearly all parents and carers are pleased with the education and care the school provides for their children. They particularly appreciate the fact that their children love coming to school and that they know they are kept safe while they are there. The vast majority feel that the school is led and managed well and are satisfied with the experience provided for their child. Inspection findings confirm these positive comments. Where a very few parents are less satisfied with aspects of the school’s work, this relates mainly to the amount of therapy provided and to specific aspects of their child’s progress. Not all parents believe that teaching is good, whereas the inspection found that teaching is consistently at least good and frequently outstanding.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meadow Wood School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 13 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 24 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	85	2	15	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	11	85	2	15	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	10	77	2	15	1	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	62	3	23	1	8	1	8
The teaching is good at this school	10	77	1	8	2	15	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	9	69	3	23	0	0	1	8
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	69	3	23	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	7	54	3	23	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	9	69	2	15	2	15	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	54	4	31	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	54	4	31	1	8	1	8
The school is led and managed effectively	11	85	1	8	1	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	10	77	2	15	1	8	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



1 March 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Meadow Wood School, Bushey, WD23 4NN**

I really enjoyed my visit to your school, seeing you having so much fun in lessons and talking to some of you. Thank you for sharing your views about the school. I agree with you that you go to an outstanding school.

The school has many strengths and these are some of the most important ones.

- You are very happy at school and get on really well together.
- The teachers and other adults make learning exciting and you try very hard.
- The school looks after you extremely well and you care very much about each other.
- You have plenty of opportunities to meet people from other schools and get involved in exciting activities with them in dance and sport.
- The headteacher leads the school really well and everyone wants to give you the best possible experiences there.

There are only a few things that could be improved about your school. The headteacher has agreed that the staff are going to communicate even better with your parents and carers so that they know more precisely how well you are doing and how they can help at home. The school is also going to share its expertise more with other schools and build more links with schools in other parts of this country and abroad. This will help to make learning even more interesting for you.

Keep enjoying every day at Meadow Wood and doing your best – I know that you will!

Yours sincerely

Margaret Goodchild  
Lead inspector

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