

Meadow View Farm School

Kirkby Road, Barwell, Leicestershire LE9 8FT

Inspection dates

15–17 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The proprietors, who are also joint headteachers, believe in the pupils who are placed at the school. They have created an exceptional shared commitment with the staff, to ensure that all pupils experience success.
- A large majority of pupils enter the school with standards of attainment which are below those expected for their age. They make outstanding progress across a wide range of subjects, rapidly closing the gaps in their learning compared with other pupils with the same starting points.
- Pupils are placed at the school because of their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They learn how to manage their emotions and regulate their responses. They make good progress with the improvement of their behaviour. However, many require more time to achieve outstanding progress.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding because the curriculum, tasks, and activities are planned precisely to match the learning needs of each individual pupil. Excellent assessment provides clear evidence of success.
- Pupils make above average progress with the development of their reading, comprehension and numeracy skills. Their progress with writing is not always as rapid as other aspects of their literacy.
- Pupils' progress in science is not presented as prominently in the school's evaluation of its work. As a result, leaders do not have a complete view of pupils' progress in all core subjects.
- The school provides a secure environment for learning and pupils' personal development. Pupils state that they feel safe in school, and parents agree.
- The farm is at the heart of the school. Pupils' daily duties provide them with rewarding therapeutic experiences. They quickly develop responsible attitudes and effective teamwork.
- The school has made strong progress with the breadth and quality of the curriculum since the previous inspection. These improvements have a strong impact on the quality of pupils' achievements.
- The proprietors, through their daily work in the school, set high expectations for the quality of teaching and the standards that pupils achieve. They keep the work of the school under continuous review, and work effectively with a range of external partners.
- Arrangements for governance contribute to effective self-evaluation and improvement planning. However, these measures include only limited external, independent accountability.
- Proprietors and senior leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend governance arrangements by including regular, independent review and evaluation of the school's provision and outcomes.
- Further improve all aspects of pupils' writing, including handwriting, spelling, punctuation and the quality of extended writing.
- Include analysis of pupils' progress in science in whole-school evaluation of learning and outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The proprietors, who are also joint headteachers, have created an outstanding culture of achievement throughout the school. Pupils who experience complex emotional and social barriers to achievement learn to believe in themselves and recognise that they can succeed.
- Staff form a cohesive team with an excellent shared commitment to ensure that each pupil feels secure in school. This provides the environment in which pupils begin to recognise that they can manage their behaviour and make progress with their learning.
- Senior leaders and staff analyse the quality of their work rigorously, seeking constant improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Senior leaders implement robust arrangements for the appraisal and supervision of staff.
- Senior leaders demonstrate an exemplary commitment to the professional development of staff, securing regular opportunities for colleagues to enhance their qualifications and improve the quality of their contribution to the school.
- Staff trust each other and there is a culture of mutual respect between staff and pupils. All parents and staff who completed inspection questionnaires state that the school is well led and managed. Parents would unanimously recommend the school to another parent.
- Senior leaders have established strong and supportive relationships with pupils' families and carers. The school's family support worker provides particularly strong and valued help to parents in managing their children's anxieties and behaviour.
- The curriculum is constantly under review and opportunities are taken to provide continuous challenge and rewarding experiences. Pupils state that they enjoy school and that their teachers help them to improve both their behaviour and learning. They speak extremely positively about their work on the farm.
- Staff give strong and effective attention to developing pupils' resilience, both to maintain a positive focus on their work and to establish successful relationships with others. Arrangements for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent.
- Pupils' views play an important part in staff awareness of their feelings and ideas. Pupils experience a democratic process in electing their representatives to the 'pupil voice' group. There is a clear focus on understanding British values in the mutual respect shared by staff and pupils. Also through experiences such as the Remembrance Day activities, and visits by police and paramedics to demonstrate the services that they provide.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to understand and respect the diversity of cultures and beliefs represented in their local and wider communities. Photographic evidence demonstrates, for example, pupils' visit to culturally diverse shops in Leicester and experience of aspects of the Diwali festival of light.
- The school places a strong emphasis on providing equality of opportunity and ensuring that there is no discrimination through the curriculum or in relationships throughout the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff understand the needs of individual pupils and all risks are suitably assessed and addressed. Arrangements for the recruitment of staff, training in child protection and first aid, and all aspects of health and safety, including fire safety, are exemplary.
- Staff are aware of current national priorities in child protection and senior leaders ensure that regular, well-focused training is shared by all staff.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the school has made excellent progress with the development of the curriculum, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. They demonstrate excellent capacity for continued improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The proprietors draw upon a range of external, professional support to strengthen their evaluation of the work of the school and to ensure that appropriate priorities are addressed.
 - Arrangements for internal evaluation and staff development are robust and given a suitable profile. However, there are limited arrangements for external accountability through regular independent evaluation of the school's provision and outcomes.
 - The proprietors have ensured that staff work to appropriate targets, which are set and reviewed regularly. They tackle any underperformance sensitively but rigorously, and ensure that outstanding contributions are rewarded.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is outstanding**

- Teachers and teaching assistants work extremely well together. They demonstrate exemplary commitment and sustained focus on the individual learning needs of pupils.
- The quality of teachers' planning is outstanding. Learning objectives for each lesson identify tasks and planned outcomes specific to the current stage of progress of each pupil. Teaching assistants working alongside individuals and small groups of pupils provide excellent support and challenge. They challenge pupils to think through problems and provide encouragement to develop and extend their answers.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and how best to create activities which will engage pupils and enable them to learn.
- All adults working with pupils have an excellent understanding of how to deepen and challenge understanding through effective questioning. Teachers continuously monitor the learning that is taking place and make well-judged interventions to move learning along at an appropriate pace.
- Teachers are skilled in re-shaping learning, often through varying the language they use to ensure that misunderstandings and uncertainties do not become barriers to progress.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrated outstanding skills in the use of computer software as they constructed computer games and developed their own advertisements. Staff intervened or advised as requested, recognising the skilled self-management acquired by pupils.
- All adults working with pupils implement the school's policy and procedures for managing behaviour consistently. They recognise that some pupils find it difficult to sustain their concentration, and that some may require brief 'time out' to re-focus. Staff maintain their patience and optimism continuously, resulting in a calm atmosphere which gives pupils the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Staff use imaginative approaches to reinforce basic concepts in literacy and numeracy. Pupils in Years 4 and 5, for example, applied their developing understanding of fractions as they interpreted the recipe for making chocolate truffles. This resulted in accurate measurement, effective teamwork and considerable personal satisfaction.
- Pupils are aware of their personal targets for improvement of their work. These relate primarily to the development of skills in literacy and numeracy. Evidence in pupils' books and results from regular assessment illustrate the excellent progress they make from very varied starting points.
- Senior leaders are aware that pupils' progress in writing is not as rapid as in other aspects of English. A whole-school focus on agreed priorities is not consistently evident in the marking of written work across all subjects and year groups.
- Pupils develop a range of strategies to help them manage their behaviour so that it does not become a distraction to their own learning or that of others. Staff work tirelessly to enable pupils to develop resilience and to consolidate lessons learned.
- Staff provide suitable time for pupils to process instructions and information and to complete items of work to an appropriate standard. Younger pupils sustained their concentration and enjoyed success as they took part in challenging practical activities producing Christmas stockings and bags for Christmas presents.
- Arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progress and the evaluation of outcomes are excellent. Staff have a clear picture of the extent of pupils' progress from their starting points, particularly in English and mathematics. Science is taught well but does not feature sufficiently prominently in the school's analysis of pupils' progress information.
- Staff report regularly to parents and carers. Annual written reports provide comprehensive information about progress in the full range of subjects studied. This is supplemented by regular, informal oral updates.
- Pupils' work demonstrates measurable improvement in their ability to manage their own learning and a positive response to effective teaching.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils demonstrate considerable growth in their self-confidence and emotional well-being.
- Most pupils have had previous negative experiences of school. They have significant individual emotional and social barriers to effective learning. The highly skilled work of the staff provides them with a range of

individualised strategies to overcome these barriers.

- Pupils respond well to staff instructions and advice, even when in personal crisis. Younger pupils, and those new to the school, take time to manage and improve their social relationships and responses. Older pupils demonstrate considerable maturity in their behaviour and attitudes to others.
- Pupils state that they enjoy school and they are extremely positive about the quality of their relationships with the staff. They develop an increasing awareness of the needs of others and the value of mutual respect and support.
- Pupils' work on the farm illustrates the extent of their learning and their ability to cooperate and create effective teams. Pupils have daily responsibilities, including feeding sheep, goats, alpacas, pigs and chickens. They contribute just as effectively when 'mucking out' shelters, moving bales of hay or re-planting shrubs grown in the poly tunnel.
- Pupils not only learn social skills and develop scientific understanding, but they benefit enormously from the therapeutic experience of working with animals and enjoying the outdoor environment. These experiences make a strong contribution to pupils' readiness to learn in the classroom.
- The school provides an extremely safe environment in which pupils learn to relax and cooperate. They learn how to keep themselves safe. Themes in the curriculum introduce them to healthy diets and lifestyles; healthy options at lunchtime reinforce this learning.
- The views of pupils and staff, together with evidence in school records, demonstrate that bullying is not a problem in the school. Pupils are taught about different forms of bullying and learn how to behave towards each other.
- Good attention to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils contributes to their increasing ability to understand themselves and make appropriate choices.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are provided with considerable support and strategies to manage their behaviour. School records demonstrate a reduction of incidents over time and clear evidence of strong improvements in behaviour. Staff and parents endorse the view that pupils' behaviour improves considerably over time.
- Individual pupils do display incidents of uncooperative behaviour or the occasional inability to manage emotional reactions. Staff adopt a consistent approach to the management of incidents and implement the school's agreed procedures effectively. Younger pupils, in particular, take time to develop sufficient maturity to embed strategies for managing their emotions in everyday behaviour.
- Pupils recognise that incidents do occur but they state that the behaviour of others rarely prevents them from learning effectively. A major strength of the school is in the understanding shown by staff about the conditions affecting individual pupils and the continuous support and sensitive encouragement for pupils to self-regulate behaviour.
- Attendance is in line with the national average and there are no concerns about persistent absence.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils join the school with a wide variety of starting points in their learning. The great majority, on entry, are working at levels below those expected for their age.
- Over time, and overall, they make outstanding progress in their literacy and numeracy skills. The majority make progress more rapidly in reading, comprehension and number, than in writing.
- The proportions of pupils making or exceeding expected rates of progress in English and mathematics are high compared with national averages. As a result, pupils make substantial progress towards closing the gaps in their attainment compared with other pupils with similar starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs make similar rates of progress to their peers; over time, they progress towards appropriate standards for their age.
- Pupils enjoy reading, including reading works of fiction for pleasure. A number demonstrate fluent and accurate reading skills, sometimes in excess of the standard expected for their age. While some pupils are able to produce excellent items of extended writing, overall skills in writing are less well-developed than their reading and comprehension skills.
- The majority of pupils develop fluent and articulate speaking skills. For many, this represents considerable progress in overcoming their anxiety in social situations. They show the ability to reflect on what they

have read or heard, to identify the most significant facts, and to interpret meanings.

- Pupils also demonstrate increasing ability to listen and respond to the ideas of others. Teachers are skilled at encouraging discussion based on effective listening to each other.
- Pupils also make strong progress in science, including practical activities supported by work on the farm. However, scientific learning is not presented routinely as part of the school's continuous evaluation of pupils' progress in core skills.
- School records and work in pupils' books demonstrate that progress is effective across a wide range of subjects. Progress through practical learning, such as cooking, art and design, physical education and the use of computers is substantial and sustained through the effective curriculum. Pupils enjoy a wide range of subjects and demonstrate consistent, outstanding progress.
- The school is relatively new and has not yet transferred many pupils into the next stage of education. However, arrangements for transition to mainstream schools or local specialist provisions are underpinned well by an excellent emphasis on preparation for transition.

School details

Unique reference number	136949
Inspection number	10006317
DfE registration number	855/6019

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Day special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Jayne Riley and Jonathan Read
Chair	Jayne Riley
Headteacher	Jonathan Read
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45,600–£48,000
Telephone number	01455 840825
Website	www.mvfs.org.uk
Email address	mvfs@btinternet.com
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 May 2012

Information about this school

- Meadow View Farm School is an independent day special school located in Barwell, Leicestershire.
- The school is registered to admit up to 25 boys and girls in the age range five to 11 years; the school is currently full to capacity.
- Since the time of the previous inspection, the school has re-located to a new site on a farm small-holding on the outskirts of Barwell. The farm facilities form part of the school provision.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Pupils' needs relate to their social, emotional and mental health difficulties. A number of pupils have autistic spectrum conditions.
- Disadvantaged children, those living in the care of their local authority or entitled to free school meals, represent about one quarter of the school population.
- Current pupils are admitted to the school from Leicestershire, Leicester City and Warwickshire.
- The school's previous inspection was in May 2012.
- The school aims to work with children to enable them, if appropriate, to return to a mainstream or local area special school setting.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning and looked at samples of pupils' written and practical work across a number of subjects and the full age range of the school. This included observations of pupils at work on the school's farm.
- Meetings were held with seven pupils, and informal discussions with a number of others. Consideration was given to 12 responses to Ofsted's 'Parent View' questionnaire and a small number of conversations with parents. The inspector also took account of questionnaires completed by 11 members of staff and the representatives of two placing local authorities.
- The inspector scrutinised a number of school policies, procedures and records in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Conversations were held with the joint headteachers, who are also the proprietors, and with members of staff with senior and middle leader responsibilities. Informal conversations took place with a number of additional staff members.

Inspection team

David Young, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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