

Meredale Independent Primary School

15 September 2016

Solomon Road, Rainham, Kent ME8 8EB

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)

- The school's arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are effective. School leaders have ensured that the culture to ensure that pupils are safe is strong. Staff are able to articulate very clearly why they feel this is the case. Parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the day-to-day procedures that make the school a safe environment for everyone.
- The safeguarding and child protection policy is published on the school's website and is compliant with current requirements. Staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding the safeguarding of children and have been trained at an appropriate level by suitably qualified professionals. This includes first aid and safer recruitment training.
- The single central record of checks on staff suitability is maintained in a satisfactory manner. Pre-employment checks to ensure that staff are safe to work with children are robust.
- Site security and procedures to ensure that children are safe at the start and finish of the school day are sound. Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school, including on the playground, and that staff care for their welfare. Parents feel their children are safe at school and that staff provide for their pastoral needs very well.
- The school's buildings and resources are well maintained. A considerable amount of refurbishment has been carried out since the current proprietor took over the school in March 2014. Pupils benefit from a bright and spacious learning environment. Appropriate risk assessments are in place to ensure the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors to the school.
- Since the last inspection, there have been no instances that would require school leaders to make a notification to the Disclosure and Barring Service regarding the actions of any member of staff. The school is aware of its duty to refer any person deemed to be unsuitable to work with children.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b) and 9(c)

- The school's behaviour and discipline policy is published on the website. The policy includes suitable references to both the rewards and sanctions available in order to ensure the good conduct and behaviour of pupils. Staff receive regular training and updates about different aspects of its implementation. Because of this, their expectations of behaviour are high.

- School leaders keep comprehensive records of poor behaviour, including a written record of sanctions imposed on pupils for serious misbehaviour. However, incidents of serious misbehaviour are very rare, with only one incident recorded since the present proprietor took over the school.
- The headteacher also maintains a log of minor incidents, when pupils break the golden rules for instance. These records form the basis of a monthly behaviour report to the proprietor's representative, the school's executive leader, who has responsibility for overseeing the school's performance. Any incidents of bullying or safeguarding concerns are also included in this report.
- Pupils were happy to talk to the inspector about their impressions of how well they behave both inside and outside classrooms, including on the playground. During the inspection, classrooms were calm and orderly. Pupils were respectful to each other and to their teachers. During the morning break, pupils played together well. A group of older girls told the inspector that pupils 'normally' behave well, but boys sometimes argue when playing football.
- Parents who spoke to the inspector were extremely positive about the way that staff promote good behaviour within the school. A small minority of parents who recently completed the school's own parent survey expressed concern about how effective staff were at dealing with poor behaviour. However, all parents who completed the survey agreed that their children were happy at the school.

Paragraph 10

- It was clear during the inspection that the school takes the prospect of bullying very seriously. Displays in classrooms and communal areas of the school include pupils' work about bullying. Plans are already in place for the school's participation in national anti-bullying week during November.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website. It shows clear links to other policies in the school, including the school's behaviour and discipline policy. The policy has a clear rationale for dealing with incidents of bullying and the consequences of bullying behaviour.
- Staff, including school leaders, parents and pupils, all agreed that bullying takes place from time to time. Parents and pupils who talked to the inspector said that they think bullying is rare and is always dealt with well. A minority of parents who completed the school's own parent survey expressed concern about bullying.
- The headteacher maintains detailed records of the few incidents of bullying that take place and was able to demonstrate the impact of actions taken to resolve conflicts when they happen. Sanctions are proportionate and founded on the need to make perpetrators understand the impact of their actions on others.
- Pupils appreciate the school's work to help them understand what constitutes bullying and what to do if it happens to them. They particularly appreciate the 'listening ear' initiative which allows them daily access to a member of staff if they have any worries or concerns. Other initiatives such as confidential 'worry boxes' are also available for pupils who do not want to talk directly to staff.

Paragraph 14

- During the inspection the levels of supervision of pupils by staff were excellent at all times. This included the morning and lunchtime breaks, where staff numbers were appropriate for the number of pupils at play. In classrooms, the ratio of staff to pupils is high. Small classes are the norm, each class having a dedicated teacher and a teaching assistant.

- As a result of a recent incident, school leaders have reviewed the way pupils are supervised during breaktimes. Consequently, a new policy for the supervision of pupils on the playground has been introduced to ensure that staff fully understand their responsibilities when undertaking these duties.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school and that they enjoy playtimes. They know that there are consequences if they misbehave, including in unstructured times outside the classroom. They also said they feel that staff care for them and are always there if they have problems.
- All standards that were checked in this part of the independent school standards are met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school's website is comprehensive and contains a number of policies detailing the arrangements to safeguard pupils and further promote their welfare. These include the school's policies for safeguarding and child protection, health and safety, behaviour and discipline, and anti-bullying. Paper copies are also available on request.
- The standard that was checked in this part of the independent school standards is met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii) and 33(k)

- The school's policy and procedures for handling complaints are implemented effectively.
- The complaints policy is published on the school's website and is reviewed annually. The policy sets out clear timescales for the management of a complaint, allowing any complaint to be considered initially on an informal basis. During the inspection, parents who spoke to the inspector said that their concerns or problems, including those about the behaviour of pupils, were always dealt with effectively by school leaders.
- The complaints policy gives clear details of the stages available for parents to have their complaints heard formally, including the provision of a panel of at least three people who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint. The policy further provides that where there is a panel hearing, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school.
- The complaints policy allows for a parent to attend and be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish. It also provides for any such panel to make its findings and recommendations available to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about.
- The complaints policy advises that complainants have the option to complain to the Secretary of State if they are not satisfied with the final decision of a panel.
- The proprietors have ensured that copies of any complaints and the outcomes and actions taken as a result of a complaint are available for inspection on the school premises. All correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints are kept confidential.
- In the course of the inspection, the headteacher was able to demonstrate that the complaints policy is implemented effectively.

- It is the inspector's view that the school deals with complaints appropriately and in accordance with the school's policies, specifically, the complaints, anti-bullying, and behaviour and discipline policies. All standards that were checked in this part of the independent school standards are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- The quality and impact of the headteacher's leadership and management skills are very effective. The academic and pastoral needs of pupils have continued to be well met since the last inspection.
- Because all of the preceding independent school standards checked in this inspection were met, the standards in Part 8 are also 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 that were checked during this inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	134858
DfE registration number	887/6007
Inspection number	10020523

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	Primary day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mrs Margaret Randles
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Mrs Michelle Homer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,300–£7,086
Telephone number	01634 231 405
Website	www.meredale.kent.sch.uk
Email address	schooloffice@meredaleindependent.com
Date of previous standard inspection	2–4 December 2014

Information about this school

- Meredale is an independent day school for boys and girls from four to 11 years of age. There are 72 pupils on roll. All pupils attend full time.
- The school was purchased from Kinder Groups Ltd by its current owner, Busy Bees, shortly before the previous inspection that took place in December 2014.
- There is no chair of governors or governing board. The headteacher is accountable to an executive schools' leader who oversees the school's performance on behalf of the proprietor.
- Pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is low.
- There is a separately registered Nursery on-site which shares the school's premises.

Information about this inspection

- This was an emergency inspection commissioned by the Department for Education.
- As an emergency inspection, it was conducted without notice.
- The inspector carried out a learning walk visiting every class and year group, talking to pupils and looking at the quality of their work. Pupils' behaviour was observed in classrooms and on the playground.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, a representative of the proprietor, teaching and support staff and a group of parents. The inspector also met with a group of pupils and discussed with them their views of the school, particularly their views about pupils' behaviour and the school's work to protect them from bullying.
- A range of policies, records and documents were scrutinised, including those published on the school's website. The school's own pupil and parent surveys were also taken into account.
- The school's policies and procedures to keep children safe were also examined.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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