

Meadowcroft School

24 Bar Lane, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 4AD

Inspection dates

14 November 2018

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 9, 9(a), 9(b), 9(c)

- Leaders know that pupils present challenging behaviours, in particular on their arrival at school. Many pupils have had significant disruptions to their education before coming to this school. Many have not attended school for some time. Leaders work tirelessly with staff, pupils, their families and agencies to develop and refine their work with pupils to identify what works best to develop good behaviour and engage them in learning.
- The school has a well-considered written behaviour policy. It is known and understood by both staff and pupils. Pupils like the rewards system that form part of the policy and understand the sanctions that may be imposed for poor behaviour.
- Pupils behave well as a norm. They develop the skills they need to manage themselves and know adults will help them do so, when they need help to keep their composure. Pupils improve their behaviours as they settle into the school and adjust to the school's high expectations of them. Over time, incidents of serious misbehaviour have reduced overall. For individual pupils, incidents of serious misbehaviour reduce considerably, as they begin to attend regularly and re-engage in learning.
- Leaders keep detailed records of the sanctions imposed on pupils and analyse them carefully. This helps leaders to refine their support for pupils, enabling them to de-escalate unwanted behaviours and challenges more effectively.

Paragraph 11

- School leaders pay careful attention to ensuring that they have in place an extensive health and safety policy. Documentation shows that records of checks on safety equipment and maintenance of equipment are carried out regularly and recorded in appropriate logs.

Paragraph 12

- The school approaches its work to ensure that it complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 with rigour and attention to detail. Fire safety equipment and alarms are checked regularly. Fire safety training is up to date. The school carries out

regular drills to ensure that the building can be evacuated rapidly, following the fire safety plan.

Paragraph 14,

- Pupils enjoy positive relationships with staff. Staff know their pupils and their needs very well. This enables staff to supervise pupils carefully and sensitively. High staffing ratios mean that pupils can always be given additional support and attention, if they are struggling to maintain their concentration or to manage themselves well.
- Leaders ensure that supervision is appropriate during lessons, at break and lunchtimes and during off-site activities and visits. Leaders ensure that the premises on all sites are well maintained and tidy, thus reducing risks to pupils and staff.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Leaders see their well-focused work to ensure that each site complies with relevant health and safety laws, as a starting point in safeguarding pupils. This work is underpinned by a written risk assessment policy.
- In addition to ensuring that the school complies with health and safety laws, leaders carefully consider risks as part of their day-to-day work. As part of this work, they provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which involves learning on different sites, and trips and visits out of school. Risk assessments for all such activities are detailed and well considered.
- Leaders work with staff, families and outside agencies to draw up personal plans for pupils that help reduce risks to individual pupils and others.
- Leaders ensure that staff are well trained and know what to do if they have any concerns or worries about a pupil. Leaders make sure that contact with parents and carers is frequent, so that they can be involved in keeping pupils safe and engaged in learning.
- The personal, health, social and economic (PHSE) programme provides opportunities for pupils to learn about and consider how to manage risks, for example relating to the misuse of drugs or alcohol. Leaders provide additional support to pupils, for example on how to manage their feelings and anger, or how to reduce and stop smoking. Leaders involve external professionals as well as school staff to support pupils.
- All the independent school standards in the scope for the emergency inspection are met.

The school's application to make a material change to its registration

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b), 11, 12, 14, 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- Leaders have ensured that the school's safeguarding policy is up to date and available on the school's website. The policy takes into account the current guidance of the Secretary of State. Leaders ensure that staff have all read at least Part 1 of the guidance in 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2018). The designated safeguarding leader and other staff have appropriate up-to-date training.

- Staff know what to do if they have a concern. They understand fully that they must report any concerns, so that early help can be provided to pupils who need it. There is clear guidance and advice for staff, including a whistleblowing policy, which supports them effectively in knowing what they have to do to meet their responsibilities. Staff are committed to keeping pupils safe.
- A single register of the pre-employment checks which are carried out on staff is kept carefully. All checks are dated and there are no gaps. This confirms the school's determination to use effective safer recruitment and induction protocols, which include a strong focus on how the school keeps pupils safe.
- Leaders shape the curriculum, including the PHSE programme, so that it takes into account the vulnerabilities and potential risks to pupils. Leaders direct additional support with a different focus in respect of each pupil's identified needs. By personalising the curriculum, leaders help pupils keep safe.

Paragraph 11

- Leaders give considerable priority to ensure that the school complies with relevant health and safety laws. They see compliance as the first step of keeping pupils safe and well and in the process of re-engaging them in education.
- The written health and safety policy is expansive. Alongside the extensive documentation relating to maintenance and checks for safety, detailed risk assessment for activities with pupils, on and off site, help keep them safe.

Paragraph 12

- Leaders approach fire safety with the same attention to detail as all other aspects of health and safety. Regular maintenance and checks ensure that equipment is fit for purpose. Staff are appropriately trained as fire marshals and regular fire drills are carried out to ensure the rapid evacuation of the building if there is an emergency.

Paragraph 14,

- Pupils are supervised at all times. Staff use their knowledge of pupils' needs and their positive relationships with them to supervise sensitively and carefully. They know when to intervene to help pupils maintain good standards of behaviour. Their conversation with pupils is positive and supports them to develop their social skills effectively.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- The school's written risk assessment policy underpins the whole-school focus on keeping pupils safe. Specific risk assessments reduce hazards and risks on all sites. Risk assessments that take into account pupils' needs minimise risks during a wider range of activities across the school's sites and during visits out of school.
- It is likely that the school will continue to meet the standards in this part of the independent school standards, if the requested increase in pupil numbers is agreed.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3)

- The proprietor and school leaders ensure that all the checks required to make sure

that suitable adults work with pupils are carried out and recorded carefully on a single central register for the school. Checks are carried out on a person's identity, and on whether they have been debarred or prohibited from working with pupils. Checks are carried out before staff take up their post.

Paragraph 19(2), 19(2)(a), 19(2)(a)(i), 19(2)(a)(i)(aa), 19(2)(a)(i)(bb), 19(2)(a)(i)(cc), 19(2)(a)(i)(dd), 19(2)(a)(ii), 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(d), 19(2)(d)(i), 19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 21(5), 21(5)(a), 21(5)(a)(i), 21(5)(a)(ii), 21(5)(b), 21(5)(c)

- The proprietor and school leaders ensure that all the relevant checks on a person employed as supply staff have been carried out, before they begin work in the school. Written confirmation that these checks have been completed, received from a teacher supply company, is recorded on the single central register. Leaders ensure that, on arrival, the identity of supply teachers is checked.

Paragraph 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c)

- The proprietor ensures that all the relevant checks required of members of the company's board and centrally employed persons who work regularly in the school are carried out. The school records written confirmation that these checks have been completed.

Paragraph 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)

- The proprietor and school leaders ensure that the single central register records all the relevant checks on staff, supply staff, members of the board and centrally employed staff who visit the school regularly. Records of checks of other regular visitors are also kept.
- It is likely that the school will continue to meet the standards in this part of the independent school standards if the requested increase in pupil numbers is agreed.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1), 23(1)(a), 23(1)(b), 23(1)(c), 23(1)(c), 28(1)(b)

- On each of the school sites, there are suitable toilet and washing facilities for pupils' use. Toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water. Washing facilities have cold and hot water, which is regulated to ensure that it does not pose a risk of scalding.
- There are suitable changing accommodation and showering facilities.

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(1)(c), 24(2)

- On each site, there is a medical room to cater for pupils' medical needs, and care for pupils who may be sick. There are ample facilities for the medical examination and treatment of pupils. There are washing facilities within the medical rooms and toilet facilities nearby. The medical rooms are currently not used for other purposes.

Paragraph 25, 26, 27, 27(a), 27(b)

- The proprietor and school leaders ensure that all sites are kept clean and are very well maintained. This reflects the school's determination to ensure that they keep

pupils safe, as far as is practicable.

- The acoustic conditions in rooms on all sites are suitable in respect of the activities normally taking place in them.
- There is plenty of natural light in teaching and learning rooms and areas. Electric lighting is effective, so that learning is not impeded. Emergency lighting has been installed on all sites to aid rapid evacuation if needed.
- External lighting is installed on all sites to assist the safe arrival and departure of pupils, staff and visitors.

Paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d), 28(2), 28(2)(a), 28(2)(b)

- Suitable drinking water is available at all times for pupils and is marked as such. Facilities for drinking water are separate from the toilet facilities.
- The temperature of hot water is regulated to ensure that it does not pose a scalding risk.

Paragraph 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b)

- There is suitable outdoor space on all sites, where pupils can play games and socialise. The school chooses to provide physical education off site at local sports centres.
- It is likely that the school will continue to meet the standards in this part of the independent school standards if the requested increase in pupil numbers is agreed.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c), 34(2)

- The proprietor has ensured that suitably experienced and qualified staff have been appointed to a new leadership structure. They have already taken up their posts. As a result, there is confidence that the effective leadership and management of all sites of the school will be continued and sustained.
- Leaders have ensured that they use their knowledge and skills effectively to ensure that all the independent school standards have been met in the past. They ensure that all those in scope for this inspection are also met currently.
- Leaders ensure that they and staff make careful use of the information they have about pupils to tailor programmes of personal development for individual pupils. As a consequence, pupils attend better than in their previous schools, behave better and re-engage in learning.
- It is likely that the school will continue to meet the standards in this part of the independent school standards if the requested increase in pupil numbers is agreed.

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

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|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 135216 |
| DfE registration number | 384/6348 |
| Inspection number | 10080526 |

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.

The inspection of the school's provision in relation to the material change that the school has applied to make, was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

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|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Independent other special school |
| School status | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 61 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 8 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 0 |
| Proprietor | Acorn Care and Education Group |
| Chair | Julie Taylor |
| Headteacher | Lynette Edwards |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £55,416 |
| Telephone number | 01924 366 242 |
| Website | www.meadowcroftschool.com |
| Email address | info@meadowcroftschool.com |
| Date of previous standard inspection | 21–23 February 2017 |

Information about this school

- Meadowcroft School provides day education of boys and girls aged between 5 and nineteen years. The pupils attending the school all have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A high proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school provides for a range of pupils' needs. Some have social, emotional and mental health needs. Some also have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and associated learning difficulties.
- The vast majority of pupils come from the surrounding areas. Each pupil is referred and funded by a placing local authority and the school currently provides for pupils from five different local authorities. There are currently 61 pupils on the school's roll.
- The school's previous inspection was conducted in February 2017.
- The school does not make use of alternative education provision.
- The school is owned by the Acorn Care and Education Group. The school does not comply with its current registration details. The school is seeking approval to increase its pupil numbers from 60 to 96. However, it has already brought into operation the two additional sites relating to that application.

Information about this inspection

- The regulatory body for independent schools, the Department for Education (DfE), commissioned an inspection of the school to consider concerns raised about pupils' behaviours and aspects of their well-being and safety.
- The inspection was conducted without notice. The inspection also considered whether the school is likely to continue to meet the independent school standards if its application to the DfE to increase pupil numbers is approved.
- Inspectors toured all three sites of the school. They checked facilities and safety equipment and arrangements for the safe evacuation of the premises.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils. They scrutinised the school's documentation and records and talked with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the school arrangement to meet relevant health and safety regulations and requirements. They reviewed checks and maintenance records of safety equipment, including fire safety equipment.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders in school, and spoke with the managing director of the Acorn Care and Education Group, other officers of the company. They spoke with a range of pupils and staff throughout the day.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Chris Campbell, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Steve Rogers | Ofsted Inspector |

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