

Meadow View Farm School

Kirkby Road, Barwell, Leicestershire LE9 8FT

Inspection dates

26–28 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher and proprietors have a clear vision for the school. They are ambitious and aspirational for the pupils. They set extremely high expectations and are uncompromising in their efforts to provide an excellent quality of education. They have ensured that all independent school standards are met.
- The highly effective staff team provide personalised support for pupils. The caring ethos of the school enables pupils to thrive and make sustained progress towards their individual goals.
- The curriculum is broad and carefully balanced, allowing pupils to develop a range of academic and life skills. Outdoor learning enables pupils to work with growing independence and confidence.
- Pupils make excellent progress from their individual starting points, some of which are much lower than might be expected for their age. An increasing proportion of pupils are closing the gaps in their knowledge to achieve standards close to or in line with expectations for their age.
- Pupils' welfare and well-being is central to the school's work. Pupils are supported to feel safe and develop positive attitudes to their learning.
- Teachers plan lessons effectively to meet the learning needs of the pupils. They also take into account the personal challenges experienced by individuals and find ways to engage and motivate them.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is excellent. They participate well and respond to the challenges set by their teachers. Pupils are able to work cooperatively under the guidance of the adults working with them.
- The school works very effectively with pupils' families. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and are full of praise for the staff.
- School leaders constantly check the progress pupils are making. They make sure that if pupils need extra help, tailored support is quickly provided. Sometimes, pupils find it difficult to record their work so it does not always reflect what they are capable of.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed strategies to help pupils develop their fine motor skills, improve handwriting and record their work in appropriate ways.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher sets a clear direction in the school's drive for continued excellence. He has ensured that there is a strong, cohesive team who are committed to the aims of the school and are well trained to deliver an excellent quality of education that reflects the ambition and high expectations of leaders. The school's premises and outdoor facilities are well maintained and fit for purpose. Senior leaders and the proprietors have ensured that all independent school standards are met.
- Senior leaders insist on consistently high standards for all members of staff, whatever their role. They ensure that staff have regular training and professional development opportunities. Staff meet regularly to discuss and evaluate their work. The contribution of each member of staff is valued. As a result, staff strive to achieve the best outcomes for the pupils in their care. One member of staff commented, 'I wake up every morning feeling motivated for the day ahead.'
- Pupils' welfare and well-being are central to the school's work. All leaders are focused on improving outcomes for pupils and this includes their personal development as well as academic achievement. The school works closely and effectively with pupils' families. The work of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and family support worker is instrumental in ensuring that new pupils have a settled start to their time at the school. There is a programme of meetings and visits, including home visits, before a pupil starts at the school to ensure that the individual needs of the pupil can be met.
- The curriculum is planned in themes which link different aspects of learning and help pupils develop skills for later life as well as building their knowledge in a range of subjects including English and mathematics. Reading is a high priority, not only as a way of finding information, but also as an enjoyable activity. Teachers carefully choose texts that interest pupils but will also challenge them and support learning in other areas, for example Year 6 pupils have been reading 'Warhorse', which has also given them an insight into life during the First World War.
- Pupils have access to a range of opportunities that enrich the curriculum and help pupils to learn about life beyond their home and school communities. For example, they have learned about celebrations in different religions, supported charitable work and taken part in a Remembrance Day service. They learn about British values such as democracy through school council activities and are able to take into account the views and opinions of others.
- The learning that takes place outdoors in the woodland area (Forest School) and on the school farm enables pupils to develop confidence, independence and practical skills, for example feeding and caring for the animals on the farm. This also provides opportunities to support pupils' personal development and respond to their interests.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They praise the staff for their commitment, for example saying, 'They don't give up and the children know that.' Parents appreciate the support from the staff, saying 'how pivotal they have been in laying foundations for our child's future' and that 'any issues or concerns are dealt with in a caring and sensitive manner'.

Governance

- The proprietors work with the senior leaders to set the strategic direction of the school and ensure that it maintains its distinctive character and continues to be successful. They do this by:
 - promoting the ethos and core values of the school and monitoring the school's work carefully
 - having a clear understanding of their statutory duties and responsibilities
 - providing support and challenge to school leaders so that the school's high-quality provision is maintained.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school website and reflects the most recent government guidance. There are clear procedures for reporting and recording concerns. All documentation is detailed, thorough and high-quality. Staff receive regular training, some of which is completed online, for example how to recognise signs of abuse and how to protect children from radicalisation and extremism.
- The school's caring ethos is reflected in the day-to-day work of all staff. All pupils are monitored closely and staff know them very well so they are alert to any small worries a pupil may have. Any minor concerns are addressed quickly so they do not escalate.
- Leaders are very aware of potential risks to pupils. They ensure that risk assessments are carefully carried out and implemented, with additional consideration for the individual needs of pupils. This is particularly pertinent where the outdoor learning is concerned. Within the curriculum pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including online and when using social media.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They plan lessons very effectively enabling pupils to learn step by step, increasing the amount of challenge a little at a time. For example, in a mathematics lesson on fractions, the teacher skilfully checked pupils' understanding and gradually introduced key vocabulary such as numerator, denominator and equivalence. Pupils successfully completed work on identifying fractions of the same value.
- Carefully targeted questioning fosters curiosity and encourages pupils to take an active part in the lesson. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce what pupils already know and to add value to the current learning.
- High expectations and well-established routines enable pupils to feel secure and able to take risks or try new ideas. For example, in an English lesson, pupils were writing poems and encouraged to make 'brave choices' when choosing adjectives to describe animals.
- Pupils learn to work cooperatively with others, though some need support to do this successfully. Additional adults are highly effective in supporting pupils in different ways. They focus on what the pupil is learning rather than the completion of an activity and

reinforce the teacher's input, using the same vocabulary and promoting the same expectations.

- Outdoor learning enriches pupils' experiences and helps them develop confidence and independence. Teachers use these opportunities to enable pupils to develop the skills that will help them back in the classroom and in their daily life. For example, pupils carry out jobs on the farm such as looking after the animals and growing food. Adults provide support as appropriate, but for older pupils this support is minimal.
- Pupils' books show how learning builds, demonstrating considerable progress over time. Teachers assess pupils' work carefully so they can plan the next steps of learning precisely. Some pupils find writing to be physically demanding and their recorded work does not always reflect the pupil's capabilities, despite being carefully completed and presented in line with the school's expectations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils develop into confident learners. They are motivated and enthusiastic during lessons. They say they like to learn life skills such as cooking and working on the farm. Pupils also enjoy social times, such as eating lunch with friends and teachers. Healthy lifestyles are promoted and the multi-use games area enables pupils to increase activity levels, improve their physical skills and learn to work as a team when they play games.
- Pupils have aspirations for the future, for example to be a paramedic or a police officer. They are beginning to see how they might fit into the world of work. The school provides opportunities for pupils to gain understanding of the world beyond school. For example, during the inspection, a pupil with a particular interest in farming and veterinary work was able to watch the vet treat one of the animals and ask questions about her work.
- Pupils are taught about online safety. They know about the potential dangers of the internet and social media. They understand the need to adhere to rules and routines when working outside so they stay safe. Pupils who spoke to the inspector and who responded to the online survey said that they feel safe in school and have confidence in adults to sort out any concerns they may have.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons is excellent. Staff have consistently high expectations of pupils and skilfully manage behaviour so that any disruptions are avoided. Occasionally pupils have times when they find it hard to manage their own behaviour. Adults help them develop strategies to cope with difficult times when they may feel anxious or frustrated.
- Behaviour management is consistent and highly effective throughout the school. There is no reward system as such. Pupils are encouraged to take a pride in their achievements and enjoy the successes that come from their own efforts. Adults always take the time to discuss outcomes with pupils so that positive behaviours are praised and reinforced.

- Behaviour incidents are recorded carefully and analysed regularly. When pupils arrive at the school, behaviour incidents can sometimes be frequent until a pupil has settled into the routines of the school. Monitoring information shows that pupils make rapid progress and the number of incidents reduces drastically.
- Attendance continues to improve and is now broadly in line with national average. A significant proportion of pupils have excellent attendance. Where attendance is lower, the school follows up the reasons for absence and works with families to improve attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- From various individual starting points, pupils make excellent progress. Pupils often start at the school with skills and knowledge below what is typical for their age. However, pupils make rapid progress over time and an increasing proportion are working at standards appropriate to their age, particularly in reading.
- Pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills by using what they have learned in different ways. The curriculum themes enable pupils to link aspects of their learning and develop knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects. They transfer what they learn in Forest School and on the farm back to the classroom.
- Pupils are able to read confidently and some clearly enjoy the stories they are reading. They have strategies to help them tackle difficult words and demonstrate a good understanding of the books they choose. Approximately one third of pupils can read at a standard appropriate to their age. Others are making excellent progress and are improving their reading skills.
- Pupils' writing has improved since the last inspection. Rates of progress have increased so that pupils progress as quickly as in reading and mathematics. Pupils can write for different purposes and use a range of punctuation accurately. Some writing is now close to the standards expected for their age.
- Pupils are making excellent progress in all subjects, supported by the many practical activities provided for them. By the end of key stage 2, pupils have developed the skills they need for a successful transition to the next stage of their education, leading one parent to comment, 'I know he will cope in his new setting.'

School details

Unique reference number	136949
DfE registration number	855/6019
Inspection number	10053982

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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietors	Jayne Riley and Jonathan Read
Headteacher	Ryan Kilby
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,000 to £67,800
Telephone number	01455 840825
Website	www.mvfs.org.uk
Email address	mvfs@btinternet.com
Date of previous inspection	15–17 December 2015

Information about this school

- Meadow View Farm School is an independent day special school, registered for 36 pupils. The school is currently full to capacity.
- The school has a farm as part of its provision and has exclusive access to some woodland adjacent to the school site which is used for Forest School activity.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils' needs are mainly social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Some pupils have autistic spectrum disorder. A number of pupils are looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils are admitted to the school from Leicester City, Leicestershire and Warwickshire.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all classes to observe learning. She also observed pupils outside at Forest School and working on the farm. Observations were carried out jointly, some with the headteacher, some with the deputy headteacher.
- A tour of the school and its grounds was carried out to check on the suitability of the premises.
- The inspector held meetings with the proprietors, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and a group of middle leaders.
- Samples of work were reviewed with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspector also scrutinised the school's assessment information.
- During the inspection the inspector reviewed a range of documentation including school policies and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector spoke with pupils at different times during the inspection. She also heard some pupils read.
- A check on the school website was carried out to confirm the required information, including the safeguarding policy, is available.
- The inspector held a meeting with a number of parents and took into account 16 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. She also took into account the 26 responses to the online staff survey and the nine responses to the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Jane Salt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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