

Inspection of The Meadows School

Springfield Road, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 6EU

Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils in this school feel happy and enjoy school. 'It's grand!' was a comment from a pupil, reflecting the views of many. The relationships between pupils and staff and among pupils are positive. Staff go the extra mile to care for the pupils.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils respect each other. Bullying is rare. If pupils are unkind to each other, the teachers deal with it quickly.

The range of trips and activities offered to all pupils is a strength of the school. These include trips to Germany, Belgium and an outdoor education centre. On Friday afternoons, the school offers a range of activities for pupils to take part in. These include Zumba, music, art and craft, and sport. Pupils enjoy these activities.

Students in the sixth form are well prepared for the next stage in their education. All have work placements and college placements. All students go on to post-16 training or college.

Teachers want all pupils to do the best they can. They enter them for a range of qualifications. As a result, all pupils achieve to the best of their ability. They also help them to become more independent. For example, students in the sixth form can go to a local shop at lunchtime.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have thought about the subjects that pupils follow. They think about what pupils will need to help them succeed in the future. This means getting the qualifications they need. It also means giving them the social skills to be independent.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They expect all pupils to do well. Pupils have the chance to get qualifications in many subjects. This includes up to GCSE level. Most pupils achieve a qualification in English and mathematics.

Teachers plan lessons and sequences of lessons thoughtfully and carefully. This helps pupils to build on what they know and can do. In English, for example, teachers link topics from one year to the next. This helps pupils make sense of the work and they do well.

Teachers use the information they collect about pupils to plan their work at the right level. But, sometimes, if this is not done well, the work can be too easy or too hard for some pupils. Occasionally, pupils do not have the right skills or knowledge to be able to move on in their learning or to build on what they already know. In some areas, pupils do not move on quickly enough when they have a secure understanding of the work.

Extra funding is used to help pupils who need more help. This includes help with

numeracy and literacy, communication and how to manage their emotions. This group of pupils make some progress. Leaders need to make sure that the interventions used give the best results for the pupils.

The school meets the wide range of pupils' needs well. Classes are organised according to pupils' needs. Teachers and teaching assistants have extra training so that they can support these needs. For example, a range of communication aids are used to help pupils improve their literacy.

Pupils are taught how to be a responsible citizen. They raise money for local charities. Students in the sixth form volunteer at local charity shops. Last year, pupils taught a science lesson to Year 3 pupils from a local primary school.

The sixth form is well led. Students are given a lot of different opportunities. They get the right qualifications they need to move on to college or training. Teachers also give them the social skills they need to become more independent. For example, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme teaches them teambuilding skills.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They respond well to staff. Bullying is rare, but some pupils do not understand what the word 'bullying' means. This can cause them to worry. They think they are being bullied when they are not. Staff need to help pupils understand this better.

Pupils learn how to stay healthy. They all take part in physical education. Most go swimming every week. Some pupils use a local hydrotherapy pool. In personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons, pupils learn how to manage their emotions.

Pupils' attendance is good. The school supports families well. If staff are worried about a pupil, they telephone the pupils' home on the first day of absence. Parents and carers value the support given to them.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. They are proud to work at the school.

Members of the local academy board are ambitious for the school and for what the pupils can achieve. They clearly understand pupils' needs. They support the school. For example, last year, many of them attended a parents' evening. They asked parents what they thought about the school so that they could make it better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff provide good care for pupils. They take pupils' welfare seriously. They report any concerns. They are confident that the designated safeguard lead will take the right action.

The family hub provides good support to pupils and their families. Staff work well

with external agencies. They make sure that pupils and their families get extra help when they need it.

The designated safeguard lead has led training for staff on the risks pupils face. These include those related to e-safety. Pupils are told about these risks in PSHE education lessons.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders need to continue to develop the assessment system. It is well developed in English and mathematics. It now needs to be introduced and used in all subjects. This will help all teachers to plan work that matches pupils' needs, aptitudes and ability.
- Not all pupils understand what the word 'bullying' means. This sometimes causes them to worry because they think they are being bullied. Leaders need to make sure that all pupils understand what it means to be bullied. This will help some pupils to feel less anxious in school. It will also help them to be better prepared for the future.
- Extra funding is helping pupils to make progress in a variety of ways. This includes in numeracy and literacy, communication and managing their emotions. However, leaders need to rigorously evaluate the interventions used to make sure that pupils achieve the best possible outcomes.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143346
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10111718
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	38
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Malcolm Sproat
Headteacher	Christopher Best (executive headteacher) Joan Wright (headteacher)
Website	www.themeadows.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- In October 2016, the school became an academy special converter and became part of Manor Hall Academy Trust.
- The school is federated with Springfield School. The two schools share an executive headteacher and local academy board.
- The school caters for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. These include profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan.
- No pupils attend alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- We started this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. Inspectors found some concerns about safeguarding so the inspection was converted into a section 5 inspection under the same act.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, head of school, assistant headteachers, senior leaders, teaching assistants, members of the local academy board, including the chair of the board, and the business manager. An inspector spoke on the telephone with the chief executive officer of the trust and a trustee.
- The inspection focused deeply on English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. We met with subject leaders, teachers and a group of pupils. We visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- An inspector checked the single central record and the procedures for the recruitment of staff. An inspector met with the designated safeguard lead and checked pupils' records.
- Inspectors reviewed the 29 responses from the staff survey. There were insufficient responses to Parent View for inspectors to consider. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lesley Yates, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Pollitt

Her Majesty's Inspector

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