

Meadowpark School

The Old School House, High Street, Cricklade, Wiltshire, SN6 6DD

Inspection dates

4 February 2021

Overall outcome

The school does not meet 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, 7a, 7b

- Safeguarding is weak. The headteacher and senior leaders responsible for safeguarding do not demonstrate sufficient understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep pupils safe from harm. Important systems and procedures to safeguard pupils are not in place.
- Pupils' welfare and needs have not taken priority. Actions that leaders have taken have not been in the best interests of pupils. Leaders have not reported concerns about pupils in accordance with their safeguarding policy. They have not worked with other professionals to ensure that pupils get the help that they need and are safeguarded from risk of harm.
- Leaders do not have clear enough procedures in place to manage and oversee any allegations against staff. Although the safeguarding policy sets out a process to report concerns, this is not well established. Leaders are not clear about the action that they would need to take to protect pupils.
- There are very few records of concerns about pupils' welfare. Those that do exist are poor. They do not show the actions or decisions that leaders have taken, when they have taken them, or the reasons why. Seniors leaders say that staff share incidental concerns about pupils with them. However, there are no detailed records of these. There are no established systems to support leaders in piecing together information about a pupil that may build to a serious concern. A lack of oversight, vigilance and action means that pupils are at risk of harm.
- Leaders stated that they do not use physical restraint to manage pupils' behaviour. There is currently no agreed approach to do so safely, should they need to. However, records show that staff have used physical restraint several times. There is no evidence of effective oversight of this practice and staff have not completed training in this. As a result, pupils are at risk of harm.

- Recently, the school has received some support and challenge from the local authority. The proprietor is starting to implement some changes and new policies related to safeguarding. There is limited impact of this work so far.
- The safeguarding policy meets current requirements and is published on the school website. Teachers and teaching assistants can explain how they would follow the school's policy if they were concerned about a child or an adult's behaviour towards children. Staff training in safeguarding is up to date. Staff have recently received some specific training to support them in identifying pupils at risk from the harm of domestic abuse.
- Pupils say that they learn about safety at school. They could recall learning about keeping safe online, fire safety and attending an assembly with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). Pupils know that they can contact the NSPCC if they are worried about something that happens at home.
- The single central register that records checks on the suitability of staff to work with children meets requirements.
- The standard relating to safeguarding is not met.

Paragraph 16, 16a, 16b

- Leaders have not collected or used information about pupils' welfare or circumstances well enough to assess the potential risks that pupils face. Records about pupils' circumstances are incomplete. Leaders have not used information they do have to inform their decision making. Consequently, leaders have not taken effective action to mitigate risk of harm to pupils or followed the guidance set out in their safeguarding and risk assessment policies.
- Staff complete suitable risk assessments for off-site visits, premises, activities and equipment. These identify appropriate hazards, measure risk and identify actions effectively to reduce the likelihood of harm.
- The standard relating to risk assessment is not met.
- The standards in this part are not met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34, 34a, 34b, 34c

- The proprietors have not ensured that there is effective implementation or oversight of important safeguarding work. As a result, pupils have been left at risk of harm because leaders have not taken appropriate action to keep pupils safe.
- The proprietors and leaders do not demonstrate sufficient understanding of current safeguarding requirements. Two of the independent school standards relating to welfare, health and safety are not met.
- The leadership structure is new and has not had a significant impact on improving the school. Senior leaders are new to their roles and systems to hold them to account are limited. The headteacher's expectations of leaders or their proposed impact are not clear. The headteacher's current improvement plans are narrow and lack detail. The role that leaders will play to strengthen the school has not been determined well enough.

- The proprietors, who are also the headteacher and the bursar, are responsible for the governance at the school. There has been one sole governor since 2017. A new safeguarding governor has just been appointed to replace the previous postholder. The proprietors say that they would like to establish an advisory board to help oversee the school. This plan is very new, and it is not clear how the governor or an advisory board would hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account. It is also unclear how the proprietors will respond to any external challenge that this board or the safeguarding governor might provide.
- The standards in this part are not met.

Statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- The arrangements to keep children in the Reception class safe are the same as those in the rest of the school. Leaders do not show that they understand and follow the safeguarding policy well enough. Child protection concerns are not dealt with in line with statutory requirements. Children are at risk of harm.
- The proprietor does not oversee the work to keep children safe well enough so that children's interests are promoted at all times.
- Information kept about children does not provide sufficient detail to support staff in keeping children safe. Records lack detail and are poorly maintained.
- The safeguarding and welfare requirements 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 3.21, 3.22 and 3.72 are not met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet 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, as set out in the annex of this report. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	130321
DfE registration number	865/6027
Inspection number	10177118

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Education Plus Limited
Headteacher	Mrs R Kular
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,545 to £9,840
Telephone number	01793 752600
Website	www.meadowparkschool.co.uk
Email address	info@meadowparkschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	12–14 September 2017

Information about this school

- Meadowpark is an independent day school for pupils aged between four and 11.
- The school is in the small town of Cricklade, North Wiltshire. The proprietor also owns a nursery that is located in the same town. The nursery is on the Early Years Register and inspected separately.
- At the start of September, a new leadership team was introduced. Three teachers have been identified as senior leaders.
- The two proprietors, who have formed a limited company, are the headteacher and the school bursar. They are responsible for the governance at the school. A safeguarding

governor appointed in 2017 recently left and a new safeguarding governor has just been appointed. The proprietors intend to set up an advisory board.

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The last standard inspection took place in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. This was in response to a serious complaint relating to safeguarding, risk assessment and leadership and management. Inspectors checked the school's compliance with some independent school standards relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils and the quality of leadership and management.
- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. The inspection took place with 30 minutes' notice. This was so that inspectors could check leaders' arrangements for having visitors on site.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils and the proprietor.
- A range of documentation was reviewed, including minutes of meetings, policies and safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Caroline Dulon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paula Lahey

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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