

Inspection of Meadowpark School

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

Inspection dates: 8–10 June 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

The culture of safeguarding is weak. The proprietor has brought in specialists to bring about improvements. They have introduced new systems, but gaps in teachers' understanding of safeguarding remain. The quality of education at the school has declined since the previous standard inspection. The headteacher left recently. This had an unsettling effect on this small school.

The interim headteacher joined six weeks ago. He has quickly stabilised the school and begun to give staff confidence that it can improve. Many aspects of leadership have improved since the emergency inspection in February 2021, but the arrangements to keep pupils safe are still not fully effective.

Pupils are articulate, keen to learn and enjoy being at school. In particular, they enjoy the many sporting activities that are now restarting as COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions begin to ease.

Pupils' polite, calm behaviour is the hallmark of the school. Pupils respect their teachers and each other. As a result, they collaborate well. For example, in Year 2, pupils work together well to solve problems such as sorting materials into different groups.

Very few pupils are worried about bullying. Pupils respect each other and their teachers. This leads to a distinctive family atmosphere at the school. Parents and carers value this highly.

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

The proprietor has not ensured that the arrangements for keeping pupils safe are secure. Consequently, the independent school standards (the standards) are not met in full. The proprietor has not yet established a sufficient level of expertise in safeguarding practice among staff. New policies and systems, however, ensure that any welfare concerns can be formally logged.

Over time, leaders have not evaluated the school's performance accurately or enacted necessary changes. There has been a lack of cohesion in improvement planning. Although subject reviews have taken place, these have not brought about much-needed improvements.

Subject leaders lack the knowledge they need to plan learning effectively in many subjects. Therefore, they are unable to support colleagues to improve their teaching. Some teachers have sought opportunities to develop their skills, but there is no plan in place to ensure that this need is tackled strategically.

Leaders have made some efforts to develop well-sequenced plans in English and mathematics over the last two years. These have been successful, but teachers have not established cohesive plans in other subjects. In some subjects, such as science,

French, computing and physical education, the curriculum is not planned effectively. These curriculum plans lack detail. Some teachers are not specific enough about what they want pupils to know and remember. In these subjects, learning is fragmented, and pupils do not always build on what they have learned before. Sometimes, pupils repeat work they have done previously, or miss important learning and so have gaps in their knowledge.

Teachers are aware of the importance of developing pupils' phonics knowledge. From the start of Reception Year, children begin to recognise written letters and practise making the sounds these represent. Leaders have invested in new books that are better matched to pupils' reading abilities. However, leaders know that further work is needed to ensure that teaching is specific about the skills pupils should learn.

Teachers focus on the development of pupils' language throughout the curriculum. This supports pupils to extend their reading in Years 3 to 6 and to gather many cultural insights. However, pupils' comprehension of the texts they read is sometimes not strong enough. Pupils show an enthusiasm for reading, and told inspectors about their favourite authors.

Pupils write well. Their work is imaginative. Pupils understand the different purposes of writing, and they are able to analyse authors' intentions. For example, in Year 6, pupils craft analytical essays about 'The Body', a short story by Stephen King.

Mathematics teaching is well structured. Teachers introduce ideas sequentially and coherently. Pupils achieve well, particularly in number work. Some pupils find graphical work difficult; nevertheless, they say that teachers explain ideas clearly. This helps them overcome any difficulties.

Teachers' assessment of pupils' knowledge in mathematics and English is accurate. However, the school has not established a consistent system for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding in some subjects. Therefore, the reliability of checks on pupils' learning varies considerably.

Staff pay careful attention to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works closely with parents to identify pupils' needs. Parents appreciate the additional support that teachers provide. This extra help enables pupils with SEND to achieve well.

The personal, social and health education curriculum provides pupils with many experiences that build their knowledge of the world. For example, visits to the Houses of Parliament and studies of different cultures help pupils to understand values such as democracy and tolerance. Leaders plan events, such as staging a production of the musical 'Grease', that foster pupils' social skills.

Children in early years form strong relationships with adults. Staff record children's development in detail. They share in children's successes at each step with parents.

Children develop empathy and compassion in this environment. Parents feel involved in their children's early education and are highly satisfied.

The proprietor's oversight of the quality of education at the school is weak. The proprietor has recently set up an advisory board, but this group does not yet have a clear vision for the curriculum. There is little strategic planning for the development of the curriculum across the school.

The interim headteacher communicates well with staff and parents. He has begun to focus teachers' attention on the things that make the most difference to pupils' learning. Consequently, in a short period of time, he has gained the trust of staff and parents alike.

The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The school does not meet the standards contained in parts 3 and 8 of the standards. It does not meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Staff have received training in safeguarding practice. Even so, they do not consistently follow the guidance in the school's safeguarding policies when concerns about pupils' well-being are first raised. Therefore, pupils are still at risk of harm. Some policies that leaders have recently introduced are not yet established in teachers' practice. For example, staff do not have a thorough understanding of the policy on physical intervention that has recently been introduced.

The interim headteacher has a good understanding of safeguarding practice. Senior leaders now understand their roles more clearly. They have taken action to formalise processes that were not robust enough in the past. Records of concerns about pupils' well-being and referrals to external agencies are now more detailed.

The proprietor has ensured that planning for improvements to safeguarding practice is detailed and is reviewed regularly. This has brought about some improvement in systems and processes. The latest safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Curriculum planning in many subjects is not precise. Consequently, pupils' learning does not build sequentially and coherently over time. Leaders should ensure that curriculum planning in all subjects pays specific attention to the knowledge teachers want pupils to learn.

- Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not secure in many subjects. As a result, teachers are not clear about what pupils know, understand and can do. Leaders should ensure that the assessment of pupils' learning is suitably rigorous and that it is coordinated effectively across all subjects.
- The proprietor and the advisory board have not ensured that the standards are consistently met. The proprietor should ensure that senior leaders are appropriately challenged and supported across all aspects of the school's work to ensure that the standards are met in full.
- Staff do not understand the school's safeguarding procedures clearly. Therefore, when concerns are raised about pupils' welfare, they do not follow the procedures closely enough. Senior leaders should strengthen the culture of safeguarding by making sure that all staff have a secure understanding of how to respond appropriately to all concerns.

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

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

School details

Unique reference number	130321
DfE registration number	865/6027
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10189001
Type of school	Primary day school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Education Plus Limited
Interim headteacher	Gareth Thomas
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 inspection	12–14 September 2017

Information about this school

- Meadowpark School is an independent day school operated by the proprietor, Education Plus Limited. The school's bursar is a director of this company.
- The school operates from one site in the town of Cricklade, six miles north west of Swindon.
- The headteacher left the school in March 2021. The interim headteacher was appointed shortly after this. He took up his post on 19 April 2021.
- The proprietor has appointed three people to form an advisory board. This board began its work in April 2021.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

- Ofsted carried out an emergency inspection of the school on 4 February 2021 because of safeguarding concerns. This inspection found that the school did not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked.
- The previous standard inspection took place in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors met with the interim headteacher, senior leaders, the proprietor, the safeguarding governor and one member of the advisory panel.
- The lead inspector toured the site with the interim headteacher to evaluate the suitability of the premises.
- The lead inspector spoke with the designated safeguarding lead, scrutinised safeguarding documents, including records of pre-employment checks and safeguarding referrals to the local authority, and considered information about staff safeguarding training.
- The lead inspector held telephone conversations with two officers of Wiltshire County Council.
- Inspectors did deep dives in early reading, mathematics, English and French. In each of these subjects, inspectors met with teachers, reviewed curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and considered pupils' written work.

Inspection team

Paul Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Aykin

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to 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.

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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Early Years Foundation Stage

- Safeguarding and welfare requirements: paragraphs 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 3.21, 3.22 and 3.72 .

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