

Inspection of a good school: Meon Junior School

Shelford Road, Southsea, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO4 8NT

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 September 2021

Outcome

Meon Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this happy and calm school. It is a friendly and fun place to be. Pupils are thoughtful and kind to each other. For example, if someone has a problem, other pupils help them out. Pupils feel safe and well looked after by adults. Pupils say that there is very little bullying. They trust adults to listen and sort out any issues they may have.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. Staff work hard to help pupils achieve and behave well. Pupils listen carefully to staff. Pupils are keen to answer questions and there is a buzz in classrooms as they work together productively.

Staff at the school nurture pupils' wider personal development very well. There are many clubs and activities beyond the normal school day. Pupils love these, including the new morning running and gymnastics clubs. Pupils also go to places they might not otherwise visit, such as the mosque, the theatre and a rock climbing centre.

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

This is a happy, harmonious community. Parents thoroughly recommend the school. Staff all enjoy working here and agree that leaders are considerate of staff's well-being.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. As soon as pupils join the school, teachers check how well they can read. If pupils need extra help, they receive it. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are not yet fluent readers have books suitable for their reading ability. They quickly start to catch up if they need to.

Teachers introduce pupils to exciting, challenging books. They teach pupils new words before they encounter them in the class reading book. Pupils grow to enjoy words. They become increasingly articulate and speak confidently. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors and relish the time they spend absorbed in books and

stories. They like to challenge themselves and read books that have complicated plots. Teachers open unfamiliar worlds and experiences to pupils. For example, in Year 6, pupils were gripped listening to a story about a girl trying to survive in modern-day Afghanistan.

Pupils learn well across the curriculum. Leaders have introduced a new approach to the teaching of mathematics because they recognise that pupils were good at arithmetic, but not so strong at understanding and applying mathematics. Teaching now helps pupils to gain a clear understanding of what they are learning. Using equipment and diagrams helps pupils to visualise exactly what they are learning and to apply it.

Leaders have also introduced new approaches in other subjects. They are ambitious that pupils will know and remember more as they move through the school. Pupils can often explain clearly what they have been learning about recently. However, they are not as secure about what they have learned over time. In some subjects, leaders have not been precise enough about what knowledge pupils need to remember, so that teachers can make sure they focus on this.

Pupils learn without unwanted disruption or interruption. Lessons flow smoothly. Pupils listen carefully when teachers are speaking. Pupils work together in an industrious atmosphere. Everyone behaves well when moving around the school. Pupils show manners and consideration to adults and peers alike.

Leaders and teachers make sure that pupils' personal development is very well catered for. This includes their physical and mental health. There is a wide range of clubs on offer to develop pupils' interests, including in sport and the arts. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils have every opportunity to join in as many activities as possible. Pupils learn about sensitive matters in an age-appropriate way, such as healthy relationships and online safety.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff work closely with parents to help keep pupils safe. Leaders know pupils' families well. They identify and tackle concerns promptly, so that they are dealt with quickly and effectively. When the need arises, leaders work with external agencies to support pupils' well-being.

Staff receive up-to-date training. They are alert and on the lookout for signs that pupils may be at risk of harm, including from their peers. The academy trust understands the vital importance of safeguarding. Trust specialists provide leaders with regular information, advice and expertise. They also undertake careful checks on safeguarding arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils enjoy learning in a range of curriculum subjects. For example, they talk knowledgeably about what they have learned recently in history and science. However, they remember much less about what they have learned over time. Although curriculum plans contain a great deal of knowledge for pupils to learn, leaders have not yet identified the specific knowledge that pupils need to remember. Leaders should continue to develop the curriculum by ensuring that teachers know exactly the most important knowledge that pupils must learn and remember in each unit of work. In this way, pupils will be better equipped to build and connect subject-specific knowledge in the longer term.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Meon Junior School, to be good in January 2014.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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	144581
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10200847
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	347
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Martin
Headteacher	Sara Paine
Website	www.meonjuniorschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Thinking Schools Academy Trust in September 2017.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the lead inspector met with senior leaders, curriculum leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read to an adult, listened to pupils read and discussed reading with them.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with a representative from the Thinking Schools Academy Trust to discuss how they keep pupils safe. As part of this

meeting, the lead inspector considered the school's record-keeping of concerns. The lead inspector checked the school's single central record, talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding and spoke to a range of staff and pupils.

- The lead inspector also met with the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND. Together, they discussed plans and targets for pupils.
- The lead inspector met pupils in the playground and around the school. He also had a separate meeting with five pupils from Year 6 to discuss their learning and their views of the school.
- The lead inspector met with those responsible for the governance of the school. This included the chief executive officer, the director of education and representatives of the regional governing body and the academy advisory board. Two of those present attended remotely.
- The lead inspector considered 41 responses to the survey for staff, 60 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 38 free-text responses. There were no responses to the pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Bruce Waelend, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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