

# Inspection of The Mead Infant and Nursery School

Newbury Gardens, Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT19 0QG

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Inspection dates: 16 and 17 November 2021

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Children in early years and pupils across the school are happy. They have a real sense of belonging within the school community. Pupils told inspectors that they felt safe and well cared for. However, inspectors found that safeguarding arrangements at the school were not robust and effective.

Leaders have high expectations for every child. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those in the specially resourced provision for deaf children, are fully included in every aspect of school life. They are taught well and receive expert support with their learning, so that they achieve good educational outcomes.

There is a calm and orderly environment throughout the school. In early years, children learn how to manage their feelings and behaviour and develop highly positive attitudes to learning. This work is further developed in Years 1 and 2. Consequently, as pupils move on to the next phase of their education, they are well prepared.

Most parents feel that staff are supportive, caring and nurturing. Parents know that their children get the best start in Nursery and Reception. One parent described their child learning at an 'exponential rate' in Reception, while also genuinely feeling excited about going to school.

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

In many respects, the school has improved since the appointment of the current headteacher three years ago. The quality of education that children in Nursery and Reception receive is now very strong in every area of the early years curriculum. The youngest children are highly engaged in playing and learning. They are beginning to develop the sustained concentration they will need to be successful learners as they move through the school and in later phases of their education. Staff in Nursery and Reception expertly identify when a child might have SEND. Staff ensure that any concerns are investigated thoroughly, and the right support provided.

Over time, most pupils at the school have learned to read successfully. Leaders wanted to ensure that the phonics programme enables all pupils, including those with SEND, to become successful readers by the end of Year 1. To achieve this, leaders implemented a new phonics programme this term. The new approach to teaching early reading is already having a positive impact. Children in Nursery are being supported to develop their listening and attention skills. Children in Reception are successfully learning their letter sounds. Older pupils are continuing to develop their knowledge of phonics and read books that match the sounds they know. Any pupils who fall behind in their reading are receiving a carefully planned catch-up programme. Alongside phonics, staff are expert in ensuring that pupils have

opportunities to listen to high-quality stories and poems. They also learn songs and rhymes. This ensures that pupils develop a real love of reading.

Mathematics is taught following a well-sequenced curriculum. This helps teachers to understand exactly what to teach and in what order. Any gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge are identified through regular teacher checks. Gaps are then addressed in lessons and through intervention if required. Provision for pupils with SEND effectively enables these pupils to make progress through the mathematics curriculum.

Prior to the current headteacher's appointment, the school's curriculum had become too focused on English and mathematics at the expense of other subjects. Since her appointment, the headteacher has been committed to ensuring that pupils receive a good quality of education in all national curriculum subjects. Each subject is now taught on a regular basis. Leaders have developed a curriculum for each subject and children enjoy their learning. Leaders are aware that there is still more work to do to refine the curriculum in some subjects, so that the knowledge that pupils need to learn is set out in a logical sequence.

Leaders understand the importance of both mental and physical well-being and have broadened the personal development programme to ensure these are prioritised. For example, pupils in key stage 1 participate in a weekly yoga session. Leaders encourage the development of pupils' character by building independence, resilience, and responsibility through teaching effective learning behaviours. Behaviour across the school is calm. Pupils are respectful and polite.

Leaders, and those responsible for governance are highly committed to the school. In respect of ensuring that pupils receive a good quality of education, leaders and governors have performed their roles effectively. However, they have not managed the safeguarding arrangements within the school well enough.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders' actions and attitudes towards safeguarding are insufficiently robust. Safeguarding records are typically not detailed or thorough enough to be helpful. Leaders sometimes take what adults say to them at face value and do not give sufficient weight to what children say or do to communicate a possible concern.

Leaders have established procedures for staff to follow when they have a concern about a child. Staff understand these systems. However, when a concern is raised leaders do not consistently take robust and proactive action to reduce the risk of harm. In addition, leaders' actions do not reflect an understanding that a child's presenting behaviours can be an indicator that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm. As a result, leaders have not monitored changes in pupil behaviour effectively enough to be able to share safeguarding concerns in a timely and effective way with the local authority.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Currently, records of initial safeguarding concerns are being retained. However, where pupils have been identified as vulnerable, leaders have not established how these pupils will be effectively monitored over time, and this monitoring recorded, so that key information can be shared with external services in accordance with local safeguarding procedures. This lack of monitoring means that leaders are not able to build up a clear picture of each child and identify risk or possible patterns in pupil behaviour. Leaders need to ensure that they develop their systems to enable them to monitor pupils over time effectively, and record that monitoring, so that information can be analysed and shared effectively.
- Safeguarding leaders do not demonstrate that they understand risk and indicators of potential harm or abuse. Leaders view pupils' presenting behaviours as 'separate' to safeguarding. Leaders need to ensure that they develop their understanding, so that they can effectively identify the signs of potential abuse and harm, including the presenting behaviours of a child.
- Leaders do not always challenge what parents say about what is happening at home when there has been an indicator of potential risk. This means that they may miss opportunities to learn more and identify underlying, or less visible, risk. Leaders must ensure that they are willing to have robust conversations with parents where needed, and that these conversations are fully and clearly recorded. They must ensure that they give sufficient weight to what children say, and how children present. This will enable leaders to build a better picture of the full circumstances for vulnerable pupils and ensure that they do not overlook information which could prove critical.
- The curriculum in some foundation subjects is not yet logically sequenced towards a clear end point. As a result, pupils are not developing their understanding of these subjects as effectively as they could over time. Leaders need to review the sequencing of learning in the foundation subjects to ensure that they are carefully sequenced, and that learning is broken down into the steps that teachers need to teach to reach a clear end point. The transition arrangements have been applied.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124959
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199407
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	328
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Natalie Rogers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tracy Creasey
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mead.surrey.sch.uk/">www.mead.surrey.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 April 2007

## Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for deaf children with nine places available.
- The school is not currently using any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the lead for the resourced provision for deaf pupils. Inspectors spoke with representatives of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, geography and music. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans, spoke to leaders and carried out work scrutiny across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator to discuss provision for pupils with SEND and reviewed a range of pupil documentation including Education, Health and Care Plans.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding, reviewed safeguarding records, checked the single central register and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school improvement plans.
- Inspectors talked to pupils formally and informally about their learning, what behaviour is like at school and whether they felt safe at school.
- Inspectors reviewed staff and parent surveys and also spoke to parents and carers at the gate.

## **Inspection team**

Alice Roberts, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Fiona Henderson	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Keeling	Her Majesty's Inspector

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