

# Inspection of Meadowside School

Pool Lane, Woodchurch, Wirral, Merseyside CH49 5LA

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Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Sixth-form provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

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

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, enjoy their time at Meadowside. They feel safe and happy. Pupils described the school as 'a happy place with nice staff'. Parents and carers appreciate the care and support that staff provide.

Pupils and students behave well. They move between activities in a calm and orderly way. They work hard in lessons. They also socialise appropriately with their friends and staff at breaktimes. Pupils and students are confident that staff would deal with any bullying quickly and effectively.

Pupils and students do not achieve as well as they should. This is because the early reading curriculum is in the early stages of development. At times, in other subjects, teachers do not provide pupils with the most suitable activities to help them to remember the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy many opportunities to learn about the wider world. They proudly report these opportunities in the 'Meadowside Magazine'. A wide range of visits enhance the curriculum. These include trips to places of worship and to listen to orchestras. Pupils told inspectors that they value the many activities available to them. They appreciate the popular parkour club, swimming in the on-site pool and learning about first aid.

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

Leaders have improved the curriculum. It is ambitious and broad. They have ensured that the curriculum identifies the important knowledge that pupils and students will learn and the order that they will learn it. Leaders have made sure that this is the case in a wide range of subjects.

Leaders have improved some aspects of the reading curriculum. They have ensured that pupils and students who have well-developed reading skills experience a rich and ambitious curriculum. This curriculum includes plays and popular novels that build in complexity over time. Pupils and students who use symbols to communicate learn from regular activities delivered by well-trained staff. This helps pupils to remember how to use their communication symbols with increasing confidence. These pupils achieve well.

Leaders have only recently introduced a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics and early reading. Staff have not received appropriate training to deliver the phonics curriculum with confidence. Some staff do not use phonics to teach pupils to read. This is despite leaders identifying that some pupils and students would benefit from learning phonics. Teachers do not deliver the phonics curriculum, and pupils do not read, often enough. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Teachers check pupils' and students' progress through the curriculum. This ensures that they identify gaps in pupils' and students' knowledge. Leaders work closely with staff to provide further opportunities for pupils and students to learn this knowledge. But, at times, teachers do not provide the most appropriate activities to enable pupils to learn the curriculum. This means that some pupils do not remember the curriculum as well as they could.

Leaders quickly and effectively identify pupils' and students' emerging and changing special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff put suitable support in place to meet these needs. When required, leaders seek specialist advice from a range of agencies.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils and students understand these expectations. Staff act swiftly and effectively to tackle any signs of low-level disruption. As a result, learning is rarely disrupted. Leaders work closely with parents and specialists when pupils need bespoke support to improve their behaviour. This support is suitable and effective.

Pupils and students learn to respect people of different faiths and backgrounds. Leaders provide pupils with supportive and impartial careers information, advice and guidance. This includes well-planned work experience opportunities. Pupils learn about life in modern Britain. During the inspection, pupils and students were highly engaged in a celebration marking Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Experienced governors hold leaders to account for their actions. However, the training they have received has been focused on mainstream education. It has not given them useful information about developments in special schools. This includes how the curriculum should be delivered for pupils with a range of SEND. This limits governors' ability to check the appropriateness of leaders' actions.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They told inspectors that leaders consider their workload carefully.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular safeguarding training to staff. This means that staff can quickly spot any signs of neglect or abuse. Staff report any concerns in a timely way. Leaders involve other agencies quickly when pupils or students and their families need help and support.

Leaders track the attendance of pupils and students closely. They work effectively to make sure that pupils are safe when they are not in school.

Pupils and students learn about healthy relationships. This includes learning about sexual health and consent. Pupils learn to stay safe online and in the community.

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

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

- Leaders have not embedded a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics and early reading. Teachers have also not received suitable training to deliver the recently introduced phonics curriculum as intended. Pupils and students who need it do not receive phonics teaching often enough. This means that pupils, and students in the sixth form, do not learn to read with fluency as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that staff receive suitable training and support to confidently deliver the phonics curriculum in a systematic and effective way.
- At times, teachers do not set the most useful activities to help pupils learn the curriculum. This is because they do not have a secure knowledge of how best to deliver the curriculum. This means that pupils, and students, do not progress through the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that staff receive useful guidance and support so they deliver the curriculum so pupils and students can remember more.
- Governors have not received suitable training and guidance about the most useful approaches to delivering the curriculum, including phonics, for pupils with a variety of SEND. This limits their ability to hold leaders to account. Governors should ensure that they receive training so that they have the knowledge they need to better check if leaders' actions are having a positive impact.

## 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>	105133
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226165
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	99
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	17
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Bryan Douglas-Dala
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paula Wareing
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.meadowsideschool.com">www.meadowsideschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- All pupils in this school have SEND. The school provides education for pupils and students with complex learning difficulties. Many pupils have autism spectrum disorder and complex medical needs.
- All pupils and students in the school have an education, health and care plan.
- Due to the increased number of pupils and students at the school since the previous inspection, several new staff have been appointed. There have been recent changes to the school building to accommodate this increase in pupil numbers.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, physical education and personal, social and health education. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed students' and pupils' work and spoke to teachers, students and pupils.
- Inspectors also met with the leaders for science, religious education, music and art and design. They reviewed pupils' and students' work and evaluated these curriculums.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation. The lead inspector spoke to the headteacher and senior leaders throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector met with six members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also met remotely with representatives of the local authority.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised the single central record. Inspectors considered leaders' safeguarding processes and procedures. They observed pupils and students during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors discussed safeguarding with pupils and students.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to the staff, student and pupil surveys.

## Inspection team

Adam Sproston, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dawn Farrent

Ofsted Inspector

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