

Inspection of a good school: Meadowhead Community Infant School and Nursery

Shorrocks Lane, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 4TT

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 December 2022

Outcome

Meadowhead Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils skip happily into school each day. There is always a member of staff to welcome them warmly as they arrive. Pupils who are new settle in very quickly, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children in the early years develop confidence because they feel secure. Parents had many positive things to say about the school.

Leaders and staff want pupils to try their best at all times, both in their work and in their behaviour. Right from the start, children learn how to listen carefully and to be 'ready for learning'. Pupils stay focused on their lessons because teachers know how to make learning interesting. All of this helps pupils to achieve well, including those with SEND.

Pupils understand the school rules and follow them well. For example, they know that running is for outdoors, whereas indoors, they must walk quietly. Even when exciting things happen, such as a visit from Father Christmas, they behave sensibly. Pupils feel happy and safe. Adults put a swift stop to bullying should it ever occur.

There are plenty of opportunities for pupils' wider development. For example, pupils can take on special responsibilities as school council members, or as lunchtime helpers. They contribute to community life when they sing in the local supermarket. Pupils learn about diversity and difference in ways that are appropriate to their age. Pupils feel and are safe in school.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that covers a broad range of subjects. They have put careful thought into deciding what they most want pupils to learn in each subject. Leaders have organised the curriculum to build up this important knowledge in a

logical order, from the early years to Year 2. All pupils benefit from this strong curriculum, including those with SEND.

Teachers check carefully in lessons to make sure that pupils have understood their learning. They provide extra help for pupils if it is needed. Teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to keep revisiting their earlier learning so that they remember it. Pupils know that some of this knowledge is very important. They said that, 'This is the knowledge you remember until you are an adult.'

In most subjects, teachers make sure that pupils are able to see the connections between their current learning and their earlier learning. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding in these subjects over time. On a few occasions, in a small number of subjects, these connections are less clear for pupils. This hinders them from developing an understanding of the bigger ideas in these subjects.

Subject leaders have plenty of training to help them to lead their subjects. This enables them to provide teachers with expert guidance to help them to deliver the curriculum effectively for pupils.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils are surrounded by a wonderful selection of books to entice them to read. The school library is a magical place where pupils can snuggle down with a favourite story or choose a book to take home. Children in the early years start to learn about phonics straight away. They learn to break down and build up sounds in order to read words successfully. This continues into key stage 1, where they read more complex words. Teachers provide prompt support for any pupils who need to catch up. Pupils, including those with SEND, develop a real love of reading and learn to read very well.

Pupils with SEND are identified quickly. Leaders and staff are skilled at making adaptations so that these pupils can access the curriculum with their classmates. Leaders work effectively with a wide range of professionals, such as psychologists and therapists. This enables leaders to secure timely support for pupils if it is needed. Parents are fully involved in this process. Pupils with SEND achieve similarly well to other pupils in school.

Teachers across all classes set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour in lessons. Pupils learn when it is time to talk and when it is time to pay attention. These sensible attitudes help everyone to get on with their learning.

Pupils enjoy the trips and visits that leaders provide for their wider development. For example, pupils learn to paddle canoes when they visit Coniston Water. They learn about their local environment when they visit the local woodlands. Pupils develop an awareness of British values, such as democracy when they vote for members of the school council. Pupils are well prepared for key stage 2 by the time they leave the school.

Governors take a keen interest in the life of the school. They ask a range of challenging questions in order to hold leaders to account for their work. Staff enjoy working at the school and appreciate the concern that leaders show for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff have regular safeguarding training that follows the latest government guidance. Staff know how to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. They promptly report any concerns that they may have about the welfare of a child.

Leaders communicate effectively with other professionals, such as local authority early help services. This enables them to secure help for pupils and their families if it is needed.

Pupils learn how to stay safe when they work online. They know who to speak to in school if they have any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to make connections between their current learning and their earlier learning. This prevents pupils from developing a deep understanding of key concepts in these subjects. Leaders must ensure that in all subjects, the curriculum helps pupils to understand key ideas so that they can apply their knowledge in an increasing range of situations.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2016.

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.

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	119122
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10210963
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stephen Jones
Headteacher	James Waddington
Website	www.meadowheadinfants.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 and 5 October 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and a new deputy headteacher have been appointed to the school.
- A number of new governors have been appointed recently.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders, and with members of the governing body. The inspector also spoke on the telephone to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about

their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. The inspector also spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe.
- The inspector considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils. The inspector also spoke with some pupils about school life.
- The inspectors spoke with staff to discuss leaders' support for their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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