

Inspection of a good school: Meadow Primary School

High Street, Balsham, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB21 4DJ

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

Outcome

Meadow Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Meadow Primary School are happy, polite and eager to learn. They enjoy reading and benefit from learning the content of a well-designed curriculum. Pupils are confident to talk about their knowledge and readily give their opinions.

Pupils say that it is a friendly school where everyone looks out for each other. Pupils are safe. If they have any worries, they know whom to talk to. When there are any incidents of unkindness or bullying, pupils are confident that adults will sort it out.

Whether in lessons or out of class, pupils behave well. Older pupils undertake a variety of responsibilities that help them to be independent. They enjoy looking after the youngest children during social times. Pupils take pride in keeping their environment clean and tidy.

Pupils show a wider sense of responsibility by planning events to raise money for local and national charities. They understand that some people are less fortunate than themselves.

Although pupils have access to some extracurricular clubs, they are eager for these to be more than just for sport. Pupils are keen for new clubs, such as for art, writing and cooking, to be set up.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that enthuses pupils from early years to Year 6. Leaders have made sure that the curriculum helps pupils to build on the knowledge they have learned without repeating content in the mixed-age classes.

Leaders provide effective training and support so that staff deliver the curriculum well. The curriculum for all subjects has an appropriate focus on helping pupils to recall key information as well as expand their vocabulary. Teachers know pupils' starting points.

Teachers check pupils' understanding of vocabulary and knowledge before moving on to the next part of lessons.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Children learn the sounds that letters represent when they start in early years. Pupils then quickly apply this learning to spelling and writing words. The phonics programme complements the regular spelling and handwriting sessions. This further equips pupils with the knowledge and skills they need in order to be confident readers and writers. Where pupils need support to catch up, well-trained staff deliver extra sessions of phonics and reading. This successfully supports pupils to improve their reading skills.

Children in early years concentrate well due to the established clear routines and expectations. Adults show children how to use new vocabulary. They provide opportunities for them to rehearse the use of the new vocabulary in all areas of learning. For instance, while exploring materials and finding ways to make ice melt, pupils enjoyed talking about animals that live in cold climates.

Staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Pupils with SEND fully access the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils focus on specific social, emotional or academic targets. Well-trained staff support pupils sensitively to achieve well.

Pupils have high expectations of their own and others' behaviour. Leaders have introduced a new behaviour system that staff have started to implement consistently. Where there has been occasional disruption to pupils' learning, leaders have addressed this.

Leaders ensure that pupils understand diversity and learn about the wider community. Pupils read books and appreciate artists from a variety of cultures and backgrounds. The school's golden-thread question, 'Would you have this in your home?', enables pupils to begin to form opinions about a diverse range of artwork from the start of Reception Year.

Pupils value the opportunities that leaders provide, such as residential trips and visits linked to their learning. They talk fondly of the range of clubs they have previously taken part in. Leaders have been slow to introduce a range of extracurricular clubs following the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that the development of pupils' interests and talents is not as full as it could be.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support received from leaders. They do not have any concerns about their workload.

Most parents and carers are positive about the school and value the education and support their children receive. However, a small number of parents hold a negative view about leaders' actions. Leaders have tried to engage with parents over recent periods, with limited success. Consequently, leaders and those responsible for governance have not been fully aware of parents' concerns.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and those responsible for governance have a robust set of systems to check that pupils are safe from harm. Staff have regular training and updates. They know the signs to look for should a pupil be at risk of harm.

Staff record concerns, however minor, and these are actioned in a timely manner. Leaders are proactive in their actions to get the right support for families.

Pupils learn to keep themselves safe. They can talk about online risks and whom they would talk to if they had concerns.

Those responsible for governance have the correct procedures in place for recruitment checks and allegations about staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The opportunities for pupils to enhance their talents and interests further are not as full as they could be. Leaders should consider ways to develop the wider offer so that pupils have more extracurricular choices linked to their curriculum interests.
- A small number of parents hold a negative view about the leadership of the school. This hinders leaders' discussions regarding potential issues. Leaders and those responsible for governance need to use more effective ways to consult and engage with parents so that leaders have more positive relationships with all families.

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 January 2017.

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	140622
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10211295
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Claire Lawton
Headteacher	Nichola Pickford
Website	www.themeadowbalsham.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 and 27 January 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Meadow Primary School joined Anglian Learning multi-academy trust in April 2020.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club. Children from the age of three who attend the on-site Nursery provision can also attend.
- The on-site nursery has its own early years registration and is subject to a separate inspection.
- Leaders do not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector met with curriculum 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.

- The inspector conducted meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator and the director of primary education for the trust. She also met with three members of the local governing board, including the chair.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes and before the start of the school day. The inspector spoke to pupils, staff and parents during these times.
- The inspector visited the after-school provision and met with members of the school council.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised during the inspection, including curriculum plans, school development plans and behaviour records.
- The inspector explored the school's safeguarding culture through viewing safeguarding records and procedures, meeting with a range of pupils and staff, and talking to the headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector considered the 109 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the 97 free-text comments. The inspector also took account of the 27 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Isabel Davis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023