

Inspection of Meadow Bridge School

The Old School House, High Street, Cricklade, Swindon, Wiltshire SN6 6DD

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 April 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at Meadow Bridge School. They say staff are kind and care for them well. Pupils and staff have positive working relationships built on trust and respect. This is a much more positive experience of school for the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) compared to their previous time in education.

Pupils recognise that with help they are 'getting better at working with others'. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They trust adults to help them if they have difficulties.

As part of their personal and social development, pupils explore what it means to be part of a community. They take the lead in community projects. For example, the 'enterprise curriculum' encourages pupils to make planters for the town of Cricklade. They learn the importance of national events, such as Remembrance Day.

Parents and carers have mixed views about the school. Some say they do not receive enough information about their child's time in school. Others are pleased with their child's provision and the communication with staff. Leaders acknowledge that there is work to do to strengthen communication with parents and build positive working relationships.

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

When pupils join the school, most have not been in full-time education for a significant length of time. Leaders and staff focus on helping pupils be ready to learn. They carefully plan pupils' individual timetables and curriculum to match their personal, social and emotional needs as set out in their education, health and care (EHC) plan. This includes working with a range of external agencies to meet pupils' needs. Pupils start on the 'overcoming barriers' phase of the school's curriculum. This successfully prepares pupils to face challenges and succeed.

Leaders and teachers plan 'up-skill sessions' in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE) to help pupils close gaps in their knowledge. Leaders support teachers to check pupils' learning and agree on the next steps. This ensures that teaching helps pupils know and do more over time. However, teachers do not currently have a secure knowledge of the school's curriculum in order to correctly identify pupils' next steps.

Leaders are passionate that pupils develop a love of reading. They have carefully selected a wide range of texts for the school's library to interest and entertain pupils. Some pupils are developing their early reading skills. Regular phonics sessions help these pupils to learn to read successfully. Staff attend training to secure their knowledge of the school's new phonics curriculum. Pupils understand it takes practice to read well. They are proud of their reading achievements.

Pupils' social and emotional needs are woven into lesson structure and content. Adults are skilled and change learning activities when necessary to re-engage pupils in their learning. Leaders' approach to behaviour management helps pupils to increase their understanding of what they are feeling and their ability to explain themselves. This work is successful.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and school life. They attend school regularly. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their 'enterprise' learning with members of the local community. Staff encourage pupils to think about what job they want to do in the future. A well-designed careers curriculum supports pupils to find out about further education and employment options. This includes the opportunity for pupils to complete 'hands-on' learning experiences. For example, pupils can attend one of Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's care farms.

Leaders prepare pupils for life in modern Britain well. Pupils are starting to take part in debates about current affairs. They are learning that it is okay to have different opinions. This is useful when holding student council meetings. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online and in the community. This includes how to form positive and healthy relationships. There is a comprehensive relationship and sex education and health education curriculum in place. This is taught by staff and an external provider.

Leaders, including the governance team, monitor and evaluate the quality of education and provision at the school regularly. They meet their statutory duties, including schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Staff feel valued and supported. They believe leaders take workload into account, and are open and approachable. Staff are proud to work at Meadow Bridge School.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The governance team check that staff recruitment is completed correctly. They regularly review safeguarding records to assure themselves of their accuracy.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They know how to report concerns. Staff are confident that leaders follow up on their concerns for pupils' safety and well-being. Referrals to external agencies are made in a timely manner.

The curriculum is adapted appropriately to deal with any current issues. For example, the police community support officer works with pupils to understand how to use social media appropriately.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Teachers do not have a secure knowledge of the school's curriculum. Leaders support teachers to plan and write pupils' next steps linked to their EHC plan

targets. Teachers now need to secure their knowledge of the curriculum to independently write small-step, achievable, individual pupil targets accurately.

- Some parents and carers say that communication received from the school is poor. This leads to parents not knowing how their child is doing socially, emotionally or academically. Leaders should improve communication with parents to build positive working relationships.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	149026
DfE registration number	865/6060
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10267721
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	6 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Proprietor	Daniel Alipaz
Chair	Stephen Bradshaw
Headteacher	Faye Causer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£57,450
Telephone number	01793 268 100
Website	www.meadowbridgeschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@meadowbridgeschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Spaghetti Bridge Ltd is the proprietor body.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2022.
- The school opened in September 2022. It provides places for pupils in receipt of an EHC plan.
- Pupils from Gloucester, Oxon, Swindon and Wiltshire counties attend the school.
- The school uses four unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils, CEO and the Meadow Bridge governance team.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, design and technology and PSHE. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum 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.
- The inspectors also observed pupils during social times, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils and leaders about opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. The inspectors spoke to pupils, staff and the governance team about safeguarding practices.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including policies and record-keeping for behaviour management and attendance.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Hilary Goddard

Ofsted Inspector

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