

Inspection of Meadows School

Egerton House, Wardle Road, Wardle, Rochdale, Greater Manchester OL12 9EN

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 October 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 Good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils have had a disjointed and fractured education before they join Meadows School. However, they said that, soon after they arrive, they quickly feel settled. Pupils strike up supportive friendships with their peers and they develop strong and trusting bonds with staff.

Pupils said that they feel happy and safe at school. If they feel vulnerable or concerned, they know that they can talk to any member of staff, including the school's therapists.

Staff expect pupils to engage fully with their learning and try their hardest. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. These factors help to ensure pupils learn and achieve well. Pupils thrive because of the school's nurturing environment.

Pupils are active citizens, with a keen sense of community spirit. For example, they recently organised a charity event in partnership with a neighbouring school. Pupils donated the proceeds to support elderly residents in local sheltered accommodation.

Many pupils enjoy learning at a local community interest centre. They enjoy looking after the alpacas, goats, chickens and an array of small animals. Pupils become knowledgeable about ponies, which they groom and prepare for regional horse shows.

Pupils pursue their interests, and develop their talents, in sports such as rugby and in different visual and performing arts.

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

The school has developed a well-constructed curriculum and it has identified clearly what it wants pupils to learn. The school's work to enhance pupils' language, communication, mathematical and social skills is especially effective. The school has carefully considered the order in which curriculum content should be taught. This helps to ensure that pupils develop the knowledge and skills necessary for the next stages of their education, employment or training.

In most subjects, the curriculum is delivered well by skilled staff. In these subjects, staff plan appropriate activities which help to deepen and consolidate pupils' knowledge and skills. Staff regularly check how well pupils are learning. This helps them to identify when pupils' learning is less secure. However, in a few subjects, some staff do not have the expertise that they need to teach the curriculum consistently well. From time to time, this hinders how successfully pupils learn in these subjects.

The school focuses closely on reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling. To raise the profile of reading, the school has recently introduced regular reading sessions.

Typically, such sessions provide opportunities for pupils to select an appropriate book to read quietly. This helps to broaden pupils' vocabulary, as well as develop their appreciation of different styles of writing. Pupils also enjoy poetry. For example, some pupils are familiar with the work of the war poets.

Most pupils have been out of school for extended periods and have significant gaps in their reading knowledge. In the main, pupils receive the support that they need from staff to catch up in reading. However, a few pupils who are in the earliest stages of learning to read do not receive the support that they need to catch up with their peers. This hinders these pupils in becoming fluent and accurate readers as quickly as they should.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has appropriate systems to identify pupils' additional needs soon after they join the school. The school works well with different external specialists, as well as parents and carers, to make sure that pupils with SEND get the help that they need promptly. In addition to this, school experts, including therapists and educational psychologists, work well with staff to help pupils to remove barriers to their learning. Consequently, most pupils can access all areas of the curriculum.

Pupils listen carefully in class. If they are struggling to manage their own behaviour in lessons, staff are well equipped to support pupils. Pupils abide by the rules. Staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently and fairly. Pupils and staff ensure that the school is calm and orderly.

The school promotes pupils' personal and social development effectively. Pupils respond well to their leadership responsibilities. For example, the head pupils recently worked with staff to review the school's behaviour and curriculum policies.

Pupils understand the fundamental British values, including democracy and the rule of law. They also understand, and celebrate, different cultures and religious diversity. Pupils learn a range of ways to look after their own mental health, including through different therapies. They understand the importance of regular exercise and eating a balanced diet. Pupils know how to sustain safe and healthy personal relationships. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships, sex and health education.

Pupils benefit from suitable in-house and external careers information, advice and guidance. For example, they gain valuable work experience, including at a local community interest centre. Pupils are informed well about the options available to them when they leave the school. All pupils who left the school in July 2023 went on to further education.

Staff told inspectors that they feel well supported to manage pupils' needs. Staff said that they have the freedom to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for each pupil. Staff said that they do not feel burdened with unnecessary work.

Both the proprietor body and governing body know the school well. They challenge and support leaders and staff effectively in order to improve pupils' achievement, attendance and wider personal development. The proprietor body ensures that all the independent school standards ('the standards') are met consistently well.

The proprietor body and governors have ensured that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.

Parents are highly positive about the school. Typically, they are 'amazed' by their children's improved attendance and academic performance after joining Meadow School. Parents explained that they are well informed about their children's learning. Parents often participate in the school's different fundraising events.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Some staff do not have the knowledge that they need to help pupils in the earlier stages of learning to read to become fluent and confident readers. Consequently, a small number of pupils do not catch up in reading as quickly as they should. The school should ensure that staff are well equipped to help those pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read to overcome the gaps in their reading knowledge.
- In a few subjects, staff do not have the subject knowledge or expertise that they need to deliver the curriculum consistently well. This means that staff are less sure about how to design and deliver learning in these subjects to build pupils' knowledge over time. The school should make sure that staff receive the training that they need to deliver the curriculum effectively.

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	136257
DfE registration number	354/6202
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10286425
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Meadows Care Limited
Chair	Jonathan Rigg
Headteacher	Paula Forth
Annual fees (day pupils)	£44,297
Telephone number	01706 630 022
Website	www.meadows-school.co.uk
Email address	school@meadowscare.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 to 28 March 2019

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection took place between 26 and 28 March 2019.
- Leaders make use of two registered alternative providers.
- Meadows School is located at Egerton House, Wardle Road, Rochdale OL12 9EN. Pupils' learning also takes place at the Agricultural and Rural Centre (ARC), a community interest centre in Stockport, and the Mahdlo Youth Zone, a youth centre in Oldham. Staff accompany pupils to these sites and deliver learning in different areas of the curriculum, including animal care, physical education and design and technology.
- The school caters for young people who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties and/or chronic trauma and developmental difficulties. Most pupils have an education, health and care plan.

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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher. They also held meetings with other staff, including those responsible for attendance and pupils' behaviour, welfare and personal development.
- The lead inspector met with the members of the governing body and a representative of the proprietor body. He held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector made a tour of the school. Inspectors also reviewed documentation to check the school's compliance with the standards.
- Inspectors visited the ARC and the Mahdlo Youth Zone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: English, physical education and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their learning in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector held telephone discussions with parents and reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Maria McGarry

Ofsted Inspector

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