

Inspection of a good school: Meadow High School

Royal Lane, Uxbridge UB8 3QU

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 November 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Meadow High School are well supported to develop as individuals and citizens who will make a positive contribution to society. They benefit from a wide variety of activities, events and opportunities that enhance their experience of school. For example, pupils recently visited Whipsnade Zoo; an outing planned by the older students. Educational visits make full use of public transport as part of equipping pupils with the life skills they need to live independently. Pupils feel happy and are kept safe at the school. They feel confident to raise any worries they have with staff and are confident staff will resolve these concerns swiftly.

Pupils are proud to take on additional responsibilities, such as roles on the student council where they help to make decisions about school life. Similarly, pupils can become sports leaders and help to deliver physical education (PE) lessons. Pupils also contribute positively to the local community. For example, they have taken part in litter picking as part of their voluntary work for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and have helped to run a Scout group.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, and these ambitions are often realised. Pupils learn a broad curriculum. However, in some subjects, including reading, there is insufficient clarity about what pupils need to learn and remember. This limits some pupils' depth of knowledge and understanding.

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

Pupils learn a curriculum that matches the breadth of what is expected nationally. Careful consideration is given to how education, health and care plan (EHC plan) targets help shape the curriculum and the activities pupils undertake. Assessment is typically used well to check pupils' progress towards their individual targets. Checks on pupils' subject-

specific understanding are also made. This allows staff to identify and address any gaps in pupils' learning.

In some subjects, careful thought has been given to what pupils will learn and when. This helps pupils to consolidate their understanding before progressing to more complex ideas. For example, in mathematics, pupils secure their multiplication facts before tackling more complex problems. Similarly, in personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils revisit important ideas, including healthy and respectful relationships and staying safe when online. This supports older pupils to understand issues such as forced marriage and what constitutes safe and appropriate touch.

However, in some subjects, the most important concepts that pupils need to know and remember have not been sufficiently identified. This means staff do not routinely focus on or check pupils' understanding of important subject content. As a result, pupils do not develop as secure knowledge in these areas of the curriculum.

Pupils' language development is prioritised. Staff are well trained in different communication systems. This ensures pupils build their vocabulary and sentence structure cumulatively. All pupils learn signing as another form of communication. Reading is promoted throughout the school. For example, pupils read at the start of each day and visit the school's welcoming library each week to select books they want to read. Pupils learn phonics. However, the curriculum for this has not been carefully designed. Some staff have not received the training they need to teach phonics well. The books pupils read are not consistently matched to the sounds pupils know. Leaders recognise the need for a coherent phonics curriculum and have plans in place to address this. However, these plans have not been implemented. The current approach to phonics limits some pupils' ability to read with confidence, accuracy and fluency.

Staff manage behaviour well. This is because appropriate strategies are in place to support pupils to regulate their behaviour and remain focused on their learning. Attendance is not high enough. Leaders have rightly identified that improvements in this area are needed. Suspensions are used appropriately. However, while systems are in place to manage attendance and suspensions, leaders, including those responsible for governance, have not maintained close enough oversight. They do not have a sufficient understanding of any emerging patterns and trends that would help to refine their work in this area.

Leaders prioritise preparing pupils for their lives beyond school. For example, students complete work experience, including supported internships, and access vocational opportunities. Life skills lessons are designed to prepare pupils to develop independence, including learning first aid. The curriculum helps pupils to recognise and respect diversity. For example, pupils have recently learned about the importance of Diwali.

Staff are typically positive about their experiences. They feel well supported by leaders to develop professionally and to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is not a coherent curriculum or sufficient training in place for the teaching of phonics. As a result, some pupils do not receive the support they need to read with increasing accuracy, fluency and confidence. The school should ensure a systematic synthetic phonics programme is put in place. Appropriate training should be provided to ensure the programme is implemented consistently. The school must also ensure that pupils practise reading using books that are well matched to the sounds they have learned.
- In some subjects, the knowledge pupils need to learn has not been clearly identified. In these instances, important subject content is not covered in sufficient depth, and pupils' understanding is less secure. The school needs to identify the most important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember in each subject so that pupils are well supported to learn and remember more across the curriculum.
- There is insufficient oversight of key aspects of the school's work, including pupils' attendance and the use of suspensions. As a result, patterns and trends that would help to refine work in these areas are not routinely identified or addressed swiftly. The school should ensure that closer oversight focuses on understanding the latest advice and guidance and checking the impact of the school's work.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2013.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	102462
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10289846
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	254
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Burton
Headteacher	Jenny Rigby
Website	www.meadowhighschool.org
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Meadow High school is a specialist provision for pupils with specific and moderate learning difficulties. The school caters for pupils with speech, language and communication needs and those with autism spectrum disorder.
- All pupils in the school have an EHC plan.
- The school uses three alternative providers. One of these is registered, two are unregistered.
- The school runs an internship provision in conjunction with the local authority. This internship is based at The Marriott Hotel, Bath Road, Heathrow Airport, Hayes UB3 5AN.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- 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 of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and members of staff. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority and met with a range of governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: language and communication (including reading), mathematics, PSHE and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation and priorities for improvement.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff as gathered through discussions and Ofsted's surveys were considered.

Inspection team

Sophie Healey-Welch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Penny Barratt

Ofsted Inspector

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