

Inspection of Meadow Park School

Haswell Drive, Stockbridge Village, Knowsley, Merseyside L28 1RX

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 March 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Many of the pupils at this school have been permanently excluded or are at risk of being permanently excluded from mainstream school. Meadow Park School offers them a second chance. Staff at the school quickly form close relationships with pupils. This helps pupils to feel safe and relaxed. Pupils have a trusted adult to whom they can talk if they have any concerns.

Pupils benefit from clear and precise expectations around behaviour. Most pupils behave well in lessons and try their best. Now and then, when pupils do not meet these expectations, staff calmly support them using the 'three Rs' system of 'refocus, regulate and reflect'. This allows pupils to return to class quickly and to continue with their learning.

Pupils enjoy a breadth of activities to develop their skills and interests. For example, key stage 4 pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. There are table tennis and cookery clubs for pupils to enjoy. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Recently, pupils worked with a local football club to make a video to promote the dangers of knife crime.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve socially and academically. Most pupils rise to these expectations and achieve well.

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

Some pupils attend Meadow Park for short periods of time, whereas other pupils remain for the long term. An ambitious curriculum has, therefore, been carefully designed to meet pupils' needs in either case. The school has selected the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which it needs to be taught. Staff design learning activities that help pupils to consolidate their knowledge.

When pupils arrive at the school, teachers use assessment strategies effectively to identify any gaps in learning. They continue to check on how well pupils have understood the curriculum. Pupils talked clearly about their recent learning. From their starting points, they achieve well.

The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly and receive the right support. Teachers make adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum which support these pupils to learn successfully.

The phonics programme, for pupils who are in the early stages of reading, is delivered consistently. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 who struggle with reading are given individual support to help close the gaps in their phonics knowledge. This helps them to read with increasing fluency and accuracy. However, the school is not confident in how best to support pupils in key stages 3 and 4 who find reading difficult. Consequently, some older pupils do not read as fluently as they could.

In most lessons, pupils can learn free from disruption. Staff are patient with pupils. They provide effective guidance that helps pupils to learn to manage their emotions. Typically, during their time at this school, pupils' behaviour improves.

The school successfully identifies some of the barriers that pupils have to attending school regularly. For instance, it has set up Meadow Park Alternative, an online provision for pupils who do not attend because of social, emotional and mental health needs. For some pupils, this has been the stopgap that they have needed to re-engage and they now attend school in person. However, despite the school's efforts to improve attendance, a high proportion of pupils do not attend school regularly enough. They miss out on the well-designed curriculum and the pastoral support. Consequently, they do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils benefit from the opportunity to learn about the world of work. Older pupils undertake weekly work experience. Pupils understand the importance of keeping physically and mentally healthy. Younger pupils talked about the importance of dental hygiene. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in their communities.

At times, the school is not aware of whether the actions that it takes, for example to improve attendance, are having the desired impact. This is because the school's monitoring processes are not as robust as they could be. Those responsible for governance have not recognised this swiftly enough. They have not held the school to account sufficiently well.

Since last year, the school has stabilised the staff body. Staff report that they are happier working at the school than they were previously. This is because the school supports them well to manage pupils' behaviour and to make workload manageable. For example, meetings after school are kept to a maximum of one per week.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 who have difficulties with reading do not get the support that they need to overcome gaps in their reading knowledge. This means that they lack fluency in reading and struggle to access some areas of the curriculum. The school should ensure that it puts in place an effective programme of support to help these pupils with their reading.
- Those responsible for governance have not held the school suitably to account. As a result, the school does not take a strategic approach to ensure that identified weaknesses are addressed in a timely way. Those responsible for governance

should ensure that the school is suitably supported and challenged to take a more strategic approach to successfully achieving its improvement priorities.

- Many pupils' attendance is still stubbornly low. These pupils do not benefit from the many opportunities offered by the school, including the curriculum. As a result, they are not learning academically or socially as well as they could. The school should ensure that effective systems are put in place to improve pupils' attendance.

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	104418
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10294190
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair of governing body	Bill Weightman
Headteacher	Jackie Cleary
Website	www.meadowparkknowsley.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since January 2023.
- After the last inspection, the decision was taken to disband the management committee and to replace it with a governing body.
- Most pupils have been permanently excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream schools. The school admits pupils throughout the year. Some pupils at this school are dual registered with their mainstream school, while others are on single-registration placements. Almost 10% of pupils have an education, health and care plan and 17% are under assessment for one.
- 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.
- The school makes use of one registered and one unregistered alternative provision for a small number of pupils. The school has its own online alternative provision, called Meadow Park Alternative, for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and English, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to some pupils in key stages 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, governors and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation and development plan.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Dawn Platt

Ofsted Inspector

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