

Inspection of Meadowdale Academy

Hazelmere Avenue, Bedlington, Northumberland NE22 6HA

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring school where everyone is made to feel welcome. Respectful relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils enjoy coming to school. Leaders expect all pupils to achieve success. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As pupils progress through the school, they are well prepared for future learning.

The school provides lots of opportunities for pupils to learn to be respectful and responsible citizens. For example, pupils enjoy caring for Steve, the school's tortoise. They are proud of their roles as mini police and well-being champions.

Pupils behave well because staff are fair in their expectations for behaviour. Pupils learn how to restore relationships after falling out. On the rare occasion that bullying occurs, staff deal with issues effectively. Pupils with particular needs are supported effectively to manage strong emotions. Pupils trust staff to help them with their worries. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils enjoy educational visits, such as visits to a local farm to help them learn about the life cycles of animals. There are opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests through clubs, such as art, choir and drama. Some pupils enjoy participating in sport through the Newcastle United Foundation.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. From Nursery to Year 6, leaders have ensured that pupils' knowledge builds over time. This means that pupils, including children in the early years, are well prepared for future learning. For example, the curriculum for computing ensures that pupils know how to write basic computer programmes and to problem-solve.

Leaders provide teachers with effective support and training. Teachers have strong subject knowledge in most subjects. Teachers explain tasks clearly to pupils. In mathematics, teachers model the language and methods that pupils need to learn to be successful. For example, in the early years, children learn songs and rhymes such as 'Five Currant Buns in a Baker's Shop'. This helps children to develop a sense of number. As a result, children are well prepared for mathematics in Year 1. Teachers ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise and revisit prior learning. They check that pupils remember what they have learned. However, some pupils struggle to remember the vocabulary that they need to be able to reason and justify their answers in mathematics.

Leaders prioritise reading in school. This year, leaders introduced a new programme for teaching phonics. Staff with expert knowledge of the programme ensure that all pupils learn the sounds they need to become fluent readers. This helps pupils to read accurately so that they can focus on understanding what they read. Staff make

regular checks to ensure that pupils achieve well in their reading. Pupils with gaps in their phonic knowledge receive specific support to help them catch up. The books that pupils read accurately match the sounds they need to practise. Pupils enjoy reading from a wide range of books that capture their interest. Pupils choose favourite books that are displayed in their classrooms. This encourages their friends to read.

Children learn to write in the early years. Staff support children extremely well to correctly form letters. Children use their knowledge of phonics to spell. Children's writing in Reception is preparing them well for future learning. However, some pupils in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 do not write with a clear and cursive handwriting script. This means that these pupils struggle to write what they want to say.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. Staff use a range of resources to meet the needs of individual pupils. Leaders work with professionals, such as speech and language therapists, to get the right support for pupils. Most parents and carers agree that the support for their children with SEND is helping them to achieve alongside their peers.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development ensures that pupils know how to keep mentally and physically healthy. Mental health champions support pupils to look after their own well-being. The 'what would David do' club helps pupils to develop responsibility for the local area. Pupils go litter picking. They participate in activities to reduce waste in school. Pupils learn about British values such as democracy by becoming members of the 'Meadowdale parliament'. This is helping to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

The new headteacher works extremely well with leaders from the trust to ensure that the areas for improvement are addressed systematically. Leaders recently improved the systems for communicating with parents following responses from a parent survey. Leaders support staff workload and well-being. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the safety and well-being of pupils are prioritised. A continuous rolling programme of safeguarding training gives staff the knowledge to recognise risks to pupils. Staff have positive relationships with pupils. They identify and report concerns promptly. Leaders work well with external agencies to get the right help for pupils and their families.

Leaders' record-keeping is thorough. They ensure that appropriate checks are made for all adults who work in the school. Pupils learn how to stay safe in the local community and when online. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new mathematics curriculum specifies the vocabulary that pupils need to learn. Some pupils do not remember this subject-specific vocabulary. This means that they struggle to reason and justify their answers. Leaders need to continue to support teachers to ensure that pupils learn the necessary vocabulary and to check that pupils are acquiring and securing this new knowledge well.
- There are inconsistencies in the handwriting of some pupils. This means that pupils struggle to write using cursive handwriting clearly and fluently. Leaders should ensure that handwriting is taught consistently well across the school.

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	138078
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10268172
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Amanda Moon
Headteacher	Lindsay Coates
Website	www.meadowdaleacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Meadowdale Academy has historically been a middle school, teaching pupils from Year 5 to Year 8. From September 2020, the school converted to a primary school, admitting pupils from Nursery to Year 6.
- Meadowdale Academy converted to become an academy school in June 2022. When its predecessor school, Meadowdale Middle School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the North East Learning Trust.
- The headteacher took up her post in January 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has nursery provision for two- and three-year-old children.
- The school operates wraparound care for pupils who attend the school.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also met with the executive headteacher and quality assurance director for the trust.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair and vice-chair of the local academy. The chair of the trust joined the meeting virtually. The lead inspector also met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, computing, languages (French) and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject managers and leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult. The lead inspector also looked at curriculum documentation for some other subjects, such as history and geography.
- To evaluate safeguarding, the lead inspector scrutinised the single central record, records for recording safeguarding incidents, policies and systems. The lead inspector spoke to two designated safeguarding leads. Inspectors also spoke to teachers, support staff and pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtimes. The lead inspector met with leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour, wider development and support for pupils with SEND.
- To gain the views of parents, an inspector spoke to parents and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gemma Jeynes	Ofsted Inspector
Melanie Maitland	Ofsted 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