

Meadow View Learning Centre

Inspection dates

18–20 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and pastoral leader form a highly effective and ambitious team. Together, they have resolved previous areas for improvement and strengthened the quality of teaching and learning.
- The proprietor and governors support the school exceptionally well. Together with senior leaders they make sure that stringent safeguarding procedures are adhered to and all the independent school standards are met.
- Pupils benefit from a highly stimulating personalised curriculum. This secures their interests and ensures their good progress in English, mathematics and science. However, pupils' depth of understanding in history and geography is somewhat limited.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Effective support is available to ensure that pupils meet, and exceed, their individual targets. Occasionally, work is not matched to pupils' different skills and abilities.
- Teachers and teaching assistants form strong bonds with pupils, with whom they have excellent relationships.
- Senior leaders' work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and appreciation of British values is very effective.
- Pupils benefit from an extensive range of outdoor activities such as white-water rafting, rock-climbing and orienteering. Few opportunities are available for pupils to engage in vocational learning activities.
- Pupils have access to excellent pastoral and therapeutic support, which helps them to manage their emotions and previous traumatic experiences.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They work hard to overcome barriers to learning, attend school regularly and are determined to succeed. The school's work to cater for pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school's own surveys indicate that parents, carers and representatives from local authorities are positive about pupils' behaviour, safety and progress.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by closely matching work in English, mathematics and science to pupils' different skills and abilities.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing and expanding the curriculum to include a greater range of vocational learning opportunities
 - enabling pupils to study history and geography at greater depth.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher is highly organised and well respected by staff and pupils alike. Since he took up post in September 2018, he has implemented many changes, all of which have helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Some aspects of provision, including pupils' personal development and welfare, are exemplary. The good work and high ambitions of leaders and the proprietor are helping to ensure that many aspects of the school are well on their way to becoming outstanding.
- Staff are proud of the school's caring ethos, highly effective therapeutic services and vigilant safeguarding culture. The proprietor and senior leaders work very effectively with staff to ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Senior leaders are aware that there is more work to be done to extend the curriculum, to deepen pupils' understanding of history and geography. Leaders' plans to broaden vocational training have been accepted by the proprietor. However, the current curriculum provides limited opportunities for pupils to develop work-based skills.
- The headteacher regularly checks teachers' practice. This includes scrutinising teachers' planning and assessing the quality of work in pupils' books. The headteacher talks to pupils about their learning, capturing their views and constantly exploring ways to improve teachers' effectiveness. Feedback given to teachers is clear and focused, helping them to constantly improve. All staff are set challenging improvement targets, which are linked to raising pupils' achievement and catering for pupils' social and emotional needs.
- Meadow View staff form a very cohesive group. They benefit from tailored professional development and regularly learn from good practice in other Witherslack schools and further afield. Specialist staff, including leaders for mathematics, English and special educational needs, are up to date with current developments in their respective areas.
- All staff completed the inspection questionnaire. All are highly complimentary about the school. They strongly agree that leadership is strong, indicate that behaviour is exceptionally well-managed and know exactly what the school is aiming to achieve. Those new to teaching are appreciative of mentoring support which they describe as 'invaluable'. Typically, teachers comment that 'I am extremely proud to work at Meadow View', and, 'The management look after their staff, and take staff opinion into account as much as feasibly possible.'
- Leaders' promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and appreciation of British values is good. Pupils have a strong awareness of the major world faiths, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. They have visited various places of worship, including the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, and have a strong empathy with those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils raise money for various good causes and recently generated funds through cake sales for children in need of support.
- Pupils regularly participate in walking expeditions in England and Wales and visit museums and aquariums. They also explore various cultural traditions, such as the Chinese dragon dance, and the symbolism of various objects, such as North American Indian dream catchers. Pupils enjoy music, singing, art and modern foreign languages. They recently participated in 'cultural week' and experienced the food, language and

music of different European countries.

- Parents and carers, social workers and other representatives from local authorities are of the view that pupils make good progress in their learning and personal development at Meadow View. The school's own records indicate that all stakeholders are of the view that the school is responsive to pupils' needs and communicates well.
- Support from the Witherslack Group is wide-ranging. For example, safeguarding specialists ensure that all staff are familiar with current developments linked to children's welfare. In addition, the school works closely with the Witherslack school improvement team. Recently, a school improvement partner worked with the headteacher to establish the effectiveness of teaching and prioritise areas for development.

Governance

- The proprietor, who is the director of the Witherslack Group, has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. Clear lines of accountability and communication are in place for the headteacher and senior leaders to report to the governing body and various committees.
- Leaders keep the proprietor informed on issues such as pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance, and teaching and learning. In addition, the headteacher provides comprehensive reports to various boards, highlighting good practice and suggestions to further enhance and strengthen provision.
- Governors ensure that the school is financially buoyant and are eager to support school improvements. For example, the finance committee recently accepted the headteacher's proposal to extend the school to include an on-site dining room with facilities for vocational training. Pending planning permission, work to extend the school is set to begin.
- Governors are trained well and have a deep understanding of both education and social care matters. They keep abreast of developments in education and take advantage of safeguarding and other training offered through various schools, learning centres and the Witherslack Group's training team.
- The chair of the governing board, also the director of operations for the Witherslack Group, presides over four learning centres. She knows the school well and is responsible for managing the headteacher's performance. The highly effective governance structure at Meadow View ensures that senior leaders are held closely to account in relation to their various responsibilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The school has a comprehensive and current safeguarding policy on its website.
- All staff embark on a thorough induction programme as soon as they start at the school. Staff sign a declaration to indicate that they have read the latest government guidelines on keeping children safe in education and the school's safeguarding and related policies.
- Pupils at the school are particularly vulnerable. All staff have had the 'Prevent' duty and

'county lines' training, which are part of the government's strategy to reduce radicalisation, extremism and child exploitation. The school's designated safeguarding leaders, all of whom are highly trained and at the forefront of developments relating to children's safety and welfare, are highly effective in their roles.

- All appropriate checks are made on staff to establish their suitability to work with children. Risk assessments are regularly carried out to ensure that school premises are safe and secure. In addition, school trips and educational visits are risk-assessed, helping to ensure pupils' safety.
- Staff are aware of risks associated with individual pupils. They work well with senior leaders to minimise such risks. All know exactly what to do if a pupil reports a concern. They are highly skilled at spotting signs of neglect and abuse.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Highly effective teaching helps to ensure pupils' good progress in English, mathematics, science and other subjects. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and work together with skilled teaching assistants to meet pupils' individual learning needs.
- Teachers usually use assessment information on pupils' prior learning to plan activities and create tailored learning programmes. In addition, teachers' planning takes account of pupils' targets, as detailed in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. However, workbooks indicate that learning objectives and activities for pupils of different abilities are sometimes the same. On such occasions, some pupils do not attain to the very best of their ability.
- Mathematics teaching is strong. This is evident in pupils' books, which include activities such as planning holidays, budgeting for events and shopping sensibly for essential food items and domestic products. Pupils enjoy mathematics because they appreciate its usefulness and relevance. This was evident in a class where pupils produced drawings of their classroom, before measuring it. Pupils were acutely aware of the importance of accurate measurements, which they agreed were essential when working out areas, such as the size of a living room floor before laying carpets.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) teaching is strong. Typically, pupils learn how to manipulate various software programs and operate hardware such as keyboards, joysticks and printers. Pupils have a good understanding of computer viruses and know how to avoid infections.
- Teachers make sure that pupils acquire the essential practical skills they will need for adult life and independent living. This is evident in food technology, where pupils cook various foods and bake cakes for charity events. In design technology, pupils use hand tools and spirit levels to make shelving. Pupils know how to wire plugs and use wire-strippers and screwdrivers safely. Those who spoke with the inspector were eager to demonstrate the correct positioning of the blue and brown wires as well as the yellow and green striped wire in a plug.
- Small-group interventions are highly effective, especially in reading. Pupils, previously reluctant readers, develop their confidence and reading skills quickly and are eager to demonstrate their skills. Teachers ensure that pupils read with good intonation and encourage them to use their phonics skills to sound out and read unfamiliar words. As a

result, pupils read with good expression.

- Teachers focus on improving pupils' writing skills and developing their appreciation of different writing styles. This is evident in topical discussions on issues such as knife crime. Workbooks contain persuasive letters to local councillors, which include rhetorical questions, balanced arguments and sensible suggestions. For example, pupils argue that more youth facilities should be available in order to reduce violent crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Opportunities for pupils to explore topics such as history and geography in depth are limited. For example, workbooks contain interesting facts on the role of war horses in World War One and include word-searches for words such as 'trench', 'Germany', 'helmet' and 'troops'. In addition, books include work on prefixes, plurals, apostrophes and inverted commas linked to historical events such as the Gunpowder Plot. However, pupils' studies rarely scratch below the surface.
- All pupils who completed the inspection survey said that teachers help them to do their best in every lesson. They also indicated that work is usually challenging, and teachers make sure everyone understands what they are learning in most lessons.
- Teachers adhere to the school's feedback and assessment policy by checking pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling. Workbooks show that pupils review teachers' comments and amend their work accordingly. Pupils who spoke with the inspector said that feedback and support from teachers helps to improve their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Meeting pupils' individual educational and personal development needs is at the heart of the work of all staff in the school. All staff, including the headteacher, work tirelessly to understand pupils and support them so they fully engage in learning and realise their potential.
- Therapeutic support is available to all pupils, including occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. Pupils also have access to a mental health practitioner and a clinical psychologist. The school has compelling evidence that the 'talking therapy' available helps pupils come to terms with previous traumatic experiences.
- Therapists provide pupils with different coping strategies, which pupils use when learning becomes difficult and when they face challenging circumstances which are beyond their control. This was very evident during the inspection as pupils occasionally removed themselves from classes for short periods. A member of staff was always on hand at such times and pupils always came back into class. As a result, no learning was lost.
- In Meadow View, every pupil is a leader in the making. Pupils have a good appreciation of British values, including the rule of law, fair play and democracy. They relish opportunities to put democratic principles into practice, which they regularly do on the school council. For example, pupils were keen to give their views on the design and style of the new school uniform. They discuss appropriate rewards for good behaviour and plan end of term trips and excursions.

- A strong culture of safety is evident in the school. Pupils are confident in approaching any adult at any time and securing an immediate response to their concerns. The school's own surveys, and the inspection survey, indicate that all pupils feel safe at school. Pupils are taught about different potential dangers. For example, they know how to stay safe when using the internet. Pupils who spoke with the inspector demonstrated a precise understanding of 'safe surfing', explaining that personal details should never be shared with strangers, and that 'random links' should always be ignored.
- Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and engage in regular exercise. They learn about nutrition and healthy relationships through the personal, social, health and citizenship aspects of the curriculum, as well as the dangers associated with smoking, drinking alcohol and taking illegal drugs. Pupils engage in a wide range of sports, including football, basketball, sailing, golf, badminton and ice-skating, which help to maintain their fitness.
- Pupils have regular access to independent careers advice. As such, external consultants talk to all pupils about careers choices and education opportunities. Thereafter, pupils attend individual surgeries. This enables consultants to create a personal profile and record of pupils' interests. Consultants make the school aware of education and employment fairs and recruitment events. In addition, the school offers weekly careers classes, which develop pupils' understanding of the requirements for different jobs and the social skills needed to be successful in the world of work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection. Staff and pupils are justifiably proud of their excellent work to maintain outstanding behaviour. School records show that there have been no restraints or physical interventions of any kind since December 2018. This is a dramatic improvement which coincides with the school's new approach to managing behaviour and the new headteacher's appointment.
- All pupils know the rules, which they adhere to diligently. Pupils who spoke with the inspector were highly positive about all aspects of the school. They are determined to maintain the school's unblemished behaviour record. Pupils have great insight into their own behaviour and are fully aware of the consequences of their actions.
- Pupils are of the view that behaviour is excellent most of the time. They acknowledge that there are minor disagreements. However, they indicate that disputes are soon reconciled as 'we all get on well together and want to do our best.'
- Staff listen to pupils. This has undoubtedly had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, as they are an integral part of decision-making in relation to rewards and were instrumental in the development of the school's good behaviour points system.
- Teachers and teaching assistants consistently adhere to the school's points system and assess pupils' progress towards their behaviour and learning targets at the end of each lesson. All pupils have a personal tutor who provides a listening ear and advocates pupils' views. However, pupils express their own views and have a powerful voice, which they use during 'that was the week that was' sessions, where pupils reflect on the week's activities and give their views about the school.
- Pupils' exemplary behaviour has had a positive impact on their achievement as it is rare

for learning time to be lost due to disruptions in class. All pupils agree that lessons are calm and purposeful. This was evident during the inspection as pupils readily engaged in learning and moved around the school sensibly.

- The school's pastoral manager is highly trained and experienced in positive behaviour support. He makes sure that there is a consistent approach taken to managing behaviour and ensures that all staff are aware of new developments and approaches in relation to maintaining outstanding behaviour. All staff who completed the inspection questionnaire indicated that behaviour is very strong and consistently well managed.
- Pupils know what bullying is and are adamant that it never happens at school. Similarly, they have a good understanding of homophobic and racist language, both of which they say are exceptionally rare.
- Attendance is good and for some outstanding. As soon as pupils start at the school, their attendance improves dramatically. Pupils rarely miss a day at school because they enjoy learning and value the strong bonds they have with staff and their peers.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most pupils start their learning at Meadow View with significant gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding, having spent long periods out of education. This is shown in the assessment information held by the school. On entry, most pupils' reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills are below those expected for their age.
- Inspection evidence, including the school's own data and work in pupils' books, indicates that once pupils have settled into school, they begin to make progress. Over time, pupils acquire strong skills and develop their knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects.
- Currently, pupils do not take national statutory attainment tests. A small number of Year 6 pupils have either left or are leaving the school. Other pupils are between 12 and 14 years old. Previous Year 11 pupils attained highly in English, mathematics, science and media studies at GCSE level and progressed on to further education and training. However, leaders are keen to recognise pupils' achievement. Most aspects of pupils' learning are accredited through the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) 'unit awards'.
- All pupils gain unit awards for their good work in areas including using basic woodwork tools, bicycle maintenance and repair, art and design, digital photography, astronomy, swimming, design technology, and cooking and preparation. Pupils also gain awards for car maintenance, servicing, brake changing and understanding fuel and electrical systems.
- Pupils' progress in reading is good. Evidence of this is in reading records, which show that pupils read widely and often. Those who need additional support to improve their reading fluency benefit from daily interventions. Inspection evidence indicates that additional support is highly effective. Pupils who volunteered to read for the inspector did so with confidence and good intonation.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. Pupils routinely review and discuss the themes in books by famous contemporary authors for young people. They also produce well-informed articles on subjects such as

body image and the role of advertisers in addressing stereotypical portrayals of women on television and in magazines.

- Pupils have increasing opportunities to develop their work-based learning skills. For example, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of mechanics and the internal combustion engine while working in a local garage. In addition, pupils have sampled horse riding and small animal care. However, limited opportunities are available on the school site, and elsewhere, for vocational learning. Leaders are aware of this and have made it a school priority to increase work-based learning opportunities.
- Pupils have good ICT skills and make good progress in this subject. This is evident in pupils' personal folders, which contain carefully researched and presented pieces of work on subjects such as the potential dangers of drones, operated by members of the public near airports, and the threat of online grooming, radicalisation and extremism. Pupils regularly use different software packages to create 'sticker bombs' (covers for folders, books and laptops) and are skilled at manipulating desktop publishing programmes.
- Most pupils at Meadow View have an EHC plan. The school's own records show that pupils routinely meet their personal targets. They develop strong speaking, listening, reading and calculation skills. In addition, pupils make good progress in a wide range of other subjects, including science, art, sports, physical education and orienteering.
- The non-academic aspects of pupils' progress are assessed through what the school calls 'PERMA' (positive, emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, achievement) files, which chart the progress of each pupil throughout their time at the school. Files indicate that most pupils make outstanding progress to improve their behaviour, confidence and engagement in learning.
- Previous pupils have left the school with strong basic skills and positive attitudes to learning. All have gone on to either education, employment or training. Current pupils are developing strong skills and good knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. As a result, they are prepared to be successful in the next stage of their learning after leaving school.

School details

Unique reference number	138868
DfE registration number	888/6045
Inspection number	10092582

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

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	The Witherslack Group
Chair	Julie Taylor
Headteacher	Darius Robinson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£79,475
Telephone number	01254 833579
Website	witherslackgroup.co.uk/meadow-view
Email address	darius.robinson@witherslackgroup.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–22 September 2016

Information about this school

- Meadow View Learning Centre is a co-educational specialist school, providing support for a small number of pupils, most of whom have an EHC plan. All are in the care of local authorities. The school opened in 2012 and is situated in a rural area near Chorley. It provides education for pupils between the ages of eight and 18 years. At the time of the inspection, all pupils were aged between 11 and 14 years.
- The school is owned by the Witherslack Group, which provides specialist education and care for young people with social, emotional and mental health needs. The group runs a large number of schools and care provisions across the country.

- Most pupils have a range of complex learning difficulties and various barriers to their learning. Pupils are placed at the school, often having missed long periods of education. Each is provided with a personalised curriculum.
- Meadow View Learning Centre is described as a 'co-educational, specialist 52-week fully integrated, therapeutic, education and care provision ... committed to providing a safe, positive, nurturing, learning and home environment, where high aspirations lead to achievement and positive futures.'
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several staff appointments, including two teachers. In addition, the senior leadership team has been reorganised and includes a new headteacher, who took up post in September 2018.
- The school works with one external provider, 4 Techmoto Ltd, which is based in Longbridge, Lancashire.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a range of subjects, including English, ICT and mathematics. Pupils' work and assessment folders were scrutinised during observations and separately. The inspector listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, pastoral manager and staff responsible for therapeutic support and safeguarding. The inspector met with staff and pupils and held informal discussions with pupils throughout the course of the inspection. The inspector met with the chair of the board of governors.
- The inspector took account of 10 staff and four pupil responses to questionnaires completed during the inspection and held a telephone conversation with the school's independent careers adviser. There were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, to be considered. No text messages were submitted during the inspection.
- The inspector examined a range of documentary evidence. This included pupils' EHC plans, checks on the quality of teaching and teachers' performance, and safeguarding documentation, including risk assessments. In addition, the inspector scrutinised the school's development plans and reviews of its own performance.
- The inspector checked various records of pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour and the school's records and checks on the suitability of staff to work with children.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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