

Inspection of a good school: The Meads Primary School

Sawtry Close, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 2UE

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 June 2024

Outcome

The Meads Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy being part of this close-knit community school. The whole school lives by its core values of respect, responsibility, resilience, kindness and joy. Being part of the school helps pupils to learn about living in modern-day Britain. Pupils are well prepared for their futures and their transition to secondary school.

Pupils learn a curriculum that is ambitious for all. Pupils benefit from particular areas of strength, such as reading and music. They respond well to focus areas for improvement. For example, this year has seen a vast improvement in the quality of handwriting pupils produce.

Pupils are well mannered and behave with respect and thoughtfulness. Children in Reception learn the school's rules and routines as soon as they start school. Throughout the school, teachers plan exciting things that the pupils are keen to learn. Learning is purposeful and pupils develop positive attitudes to learning.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to widen their interests. Pupils talk excitedly about the '88 things to do before I leave The Meads' passport. This encourages every pupil to participate in things they may not have tried otherwise and broaden their talents.

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

The school has designed a broad and balanced curriculum. What pupils should learn, and the order in which they should learn it, have been carefully considered. This means learning builds on what pupils can remember so that they gain more knowledge over time. Children in the early years learn a curriculum that ensures they are well prepared for key stage 1. Teachers focus on developing pupils' spoken language across the curriculum. As a result, pupils can express themselves fluently in a range of contexts. However, some teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are not as high as they should be. Pupils do not always get the opportunities to develop their writing skills fully. Similarly,

some disadvantaged pupils do not always achieve as highly as their peers in writing and mathematics. Consequently, some pupils do not make the progress needed to enable them to reach the highest standards they could in these areas.

Reading has a high priority across the school. There is a consistent approach with daily phonics lessons. Staff are well trained to teach phonics so that pupils who are at an early stage of reading become confident readers. This starts as soon as children start in Reception. Staff are quick to identify any pupils that need extra help or practice. They put in support to help pupils to catch up. The school has invested heavily in new books to ensure pupils have a wide range of texts to suit their interests. Pupils love the incentives that encourage them to read, including the opportunity to win a book from the vending machine. Pupils enjoy reading and thoroughly enjoy their teachers reading to them.

Until recently, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) did not always have their needs identified quickly enough. When they were identified, some pupils have become too reliant on adult support. The school is addressing this by working closely with the local authority SEND specialist and providing training for staff. The school has recently appointed a new leader responsible for pupils with SEND. Now, staff break down education, health and care plans' longer-term targets into smaller, achievable, short-term targets. Staff are developing their expertise to ensure that pupils with SEND are now receiving the support they need.

The school has made improving attendance a high priority. Leaders analyse attendance data and work closely with parents to overcome barriers to pupils attending regularly. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved over the last couple of years. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

Behaviour is a real strength of the school. Pupils, including the youngest, are polite and courteous. They behave sensibly during lessons and listen carefully to their teachers and classmates. Pupils have a positive attitude to learning and work well together.

The school's personal development offer is rich and broad. Pupils learn how to be safe online and in their community. They are respectful to others and celebrate differences. The school arranges many trips to support the learning in school. Pupils love learning the school's vision poem, 'Imagine a School...', where they give examples and talk enthusiastically about how proud they are of their school.

Governors know the school's strengths and areas for development. They offer challenge as well as support to help bring improvements and ensure that they carry out their statutory duties effectively, including safeguarding. The school leadership team considers staff workload and well-being. The team protects staff from bullying and harassment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Until recently, the school did not always support pupils with SEND effectively. As a result, some pupils with SEND did not get the right support because their needs were not identified quickly enough, or pupils are too reliant on adult support. The school should continue to develop staff's skills at identifying pupils with SEND and develop their knowledge and understanding about how to make adaptations to ensure pupils with SEND develop their independence.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are not yet consistently strong in writing and mathematics. This means these pupils do not always achieve as highly as others in these subjects. The school must continue to develop the quality of teaching to enable all pupils to achieve well across the curriculum, including those in receipt of pupil premium.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are not always as high as they could be. Consequently, the quality of some pupils' writing at the end of key stage 2 does not show the progress they are capable of. The school should ensure that teachers have high expectations for the quality of all pupils' writing. The school should also ensure that teachers provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum over time.

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 September 2014.

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

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| Unique reference number | 109558 |
| Local authority | Luton |
| Inspection number | 10323595 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 522 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Joshua Ogunji |
| Headteacher | Richard Jenkins |
| Website | www.meads.luton.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 10 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school does not have a nursery.
- Pupil mobility is high. This means that pupils join and leave the school at different points of the school year for a variety of reasons.
- The school does not use any alternative providers of education.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and

music. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector spoke with leaders and pupils about several other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; spoke to staff about the training they receive; spoke to those responsible for safeguarding about systems to keep children safe; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector considered 28 responses to Ofsted's survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also considered 44 responses from Ofsted's pupil survey and 48 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Julie Winwood, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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