

Inspection of Meadowhead Junior School

Anglesey Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 4QG

Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Children all agree that 'Meadowhead is a happy and safe place to be'. Staff and pupils are proud of their school, and they get on very well together. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to their school.

Staff have high expectations of their pupils. They believe that all pupils should have 'high aspirations' so that they can have the best futures.

Pupils and staff get on well together. Pupils generally behave well. We saw mostly good behaviour around the school, both in lessons and in the playground. When behaviour falls below expectations, teachers take it seriously and deal with it appropriately.

Pupils say that bullying can sometimes happen. Pupils know that they can talk to staff and that they always deal with their problems. Staff quickly help pupils put things right.

Right from the start, pupils settle well into life at Meadowhead. Pupils are well cared for, and staff are helpful and approachable. Pupils quickly feel like 'part of the family'. The headteacher takes time to get to know every child and family. Staff are around every morning so that parents can speak to them and sort out any problems quickly.

Learning is fun and active. The pupils enjoy visits and residentials that the school organises. They also like the opportunities they have for learning outside. Pupils especially enjoy their forest school work and growing and eating their own vegetables. These activities make every day different. Leaders listen carefully to pupils' views on how to make the school a better place to be.

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

School leaders, staff and governors are clear that they want pupils to have the best possible education at Meadowhead. Everyone is clear about what they want their curriculum to achieve. They want pupils to be challenged, to know more and to love learning. Teachers plan and teach most subjects well, including reading, writing, mathematics and art. The content of some subjects is not as well-chosen and sequenced. This is particularly so in geography, history and science. The plans in these subjects do not support teachers to build pupils' knowledge sequentially. As a result, pupils do not learn these subjects well enough.

The teaching of reading is important to the school. Teachers help pupils to understand what they read. This allows most pupils to successfully access the wider curriculum. Teachers share their love of stories, poems and other books. Their pupils talk enthusiastically about the stories they have listened to. Teachers choose books

that excite pupils and support their learning of the wider curriculum. Leaders know that they need to further help those pupils who find reading difficult. Staff are unclear about the progress that these pupils should make in learning to decode words. Staff lack the knowledge to teach early reading skills.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Staff deal quickly with any inappropriate behaviour and tackle bullying quickly and effectively. Pupils take on roles such as being a play leader or a bullying ambassador. This makes playtimes happy. Attendance has not been as high as it should be, but the school is working hard to improve this.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. They cover the same range of subjects as everybody else. Staff understand the difficulties faced by children with SEND. They access training and work well with parents and outside agencies.

The school aims to help pupils become resilient, responsible and healthy citizens. Pupils are encouraged to develop new talents and to live healthy lives. Much of this comes through out-of-school activities and a range of outdoor opportunities. Pupils raise money for charities and, through weekly assemblies, they learn about caring for each other and the world around them.

Since the last inspection, the headteacher and her team have worked tirelessly to improve the school. The headteacher has clear plans to improve the curriculum further. Her plans suit this purpose well. Staff feel valued, and they appreciate the ongoing investment in their training. They know that senior leaders work hard to ensure that they have an appropriate work-life balance. In return, staff are dedicated and hard working.

Governors know the school well and are not afraid to ask the headteacher difficult questions to improve the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff really care about the pupils. Staff are aware that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. They act quickly should they have any concerns. Leaders work very closely with the community and wider services to give the right support to any families who need extra help. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They learn how to keep themselves safe near roads and how to be safe when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have taken effective steps to implement a well-thought-out curriculum. Teachers think carefully about how they plan learning across most subject areas.

This is especially the case in reading and writing. However, leaders are aware that the curriculum in history, geography and science is not as well developed, and teachers do not sequence learning as effectively as they might. Leaders need to place a strong emphasis on improving the curriculum offer in these subjects as a matter of urgency.

- Subject leaders have already begun to set about improving their subject areas. Senior leaders need to continue to develop subject leaders in their roles. It is important that subject leaders have access to ongoing, appropriate training to develop their subject expertise.
- Leaders have focused effectively on improving reading across the school. Leaders have ensured effective sequencing of learning for most pupils in reading. However, they should focus on improving further the curriculum and training staff to enable the struggling readers to catch up.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	119121
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10087841
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair/Chair of trust/Chair of governing body	Frances Molloy
Headteacher	Allison Chadwick
Website	www.meadowheadjuniors.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school. A high proportion of pupils are disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils with SEND is much higher than the national average.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During this inspection, we met with the headteacher and the senior leaders.
- We held meetings with teachers, support staff and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of governors. He also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- We visited lessons in different year groups across the school. We spoke to pupils and viewed examples of their work. We spoke to pupils about behaviour and expectations in the school and observed behaviour around the school and in lessons.

- We considered the 17 responses and 9 free-text responses to Parent View. We also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school.
- We examined records in relation to safeguarding.
- As part of this inspection, we considered carefully how reading is taught at Meadowhead Junior. We also considered how the curriculum is planned in mathematics, art and history. During these activities, we met with subject leaders and visited samples of lessons. We spoke to the teachers about the lessons they had taught and to the pupils about their learning. We also examined examples of pupils' books and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

James Blackwell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Joan Williamson	Ofsted Inspector

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