

Inspection of Meadowhead School Academy Trust

Dyche Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S8 8BR

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Meadowhead School Academy is an inclusive and welcoming school, with a popular sixth form. Pupils are happy and safe. They care about each other and treat each other with respect. They respect the differences between people. Pupils said that there is always an adult they can talk to if they are worried about anything. Pupils reported that, if bullying occurs, staff deal with it quickly. There is a growing sense of ambition among pupils and staff at the school.

Pupils behave very positively. They are lively, confident, interested and kind. This is because everyone wants them to be successful.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development, and this supports the work of the school to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils find this highly motivating. The personal development curriculum actively supports pupils' welfare and well-being. They enjoy opportunities to develop their leadership through volunteering for the student parliament. Pupils have a voice at this school.

Sixth-form students are positive role models for younger pupils. Students who attend the sixth form are taking up places at university in increasing numbers. There is a well-planned programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance on offer.

The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school. Many said that the school has improved since the previous inspection.

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

Leaders and governors have brought about considerable improvement since the previous inspection. They have improved most aspects of the school's work. Pupils benefit from a broad and ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of all learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

In most subjects, leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge they want pupils to gain and the order in which they should learn this content. This helps pupils achieve well across key stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form. However, leaders know that there is some more work to do to ensure that this level of curriculum detail is consistent across every subject. At times, teachers are less consistently clear about what essential knowledge pupils must know and this stops pupils from deepening their knowledge over time.

The curriculum is ambitious. Subject leaders and teachers have received high-quality training to enhance their plans in the very large majority of subjects. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Most teachers use this knowledge to question pupils and check levels of understanding. Teachers use a range of methods to check the depth of pupils' learning.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified accurately. All teachers are involved in reviewing the learning profiles of pupils with SEND. This assists them in providing more effective support for pupils with SEND in the classroom. The special educational needs coordinator works closely with teachers and teaching assistants to make sure that these pupils access the curriculum. This allows pupils with SEND to learn alongside their peers and achieve well.

Teaching in the sixth form is highly effective. Teachers use a variety of approaches to encourage students to think deeply, to make connections and to support their views and ideas. Sixth-form students are wonderful ambassadors for the school. They willingly support younger pupils and have led the school's 'never okay' strategy that promotes safer relationships awareness.

Younger pupils value the school's reading programme. Staff encourage them to read widely. Pupils said that they enjoy the challenge of the reading programme and that time is made available to read together with other pupils in lessons.

Leaders' work to promote personal development is a strength of the school. Teachers help to nurture rounded, open-minded and conscientious young people. Pupils value respect and diversity. Teachers plan personal, social and health education well. These lessons help pupils to understand themes such as healthy relationships and to identify possible risks to their well-being, including harmful sexual behaviours. Leaders ensure that they look after pupils with protected characteristics well and that these pupils feel safe in school. A group for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils is helping to raise greater awareness about diversity.

The school provides effective careers guidance that meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. Pupils find this useful and discuss their future plans knowledgeably. Students in the sixth form benefit from expert support that helps them to make decisions about their next steps.

Staff feel valued and supported by leaders and governors. They enjoy working at the school and morale is high. Staff know that leaders consider their workload and well-being when deciding to make changes at the school.

Governors are proud of the school. They recognise the considerable improvements that have been brought about by leaders. They are committed to providing a safe environment in which pupils' education and experiences give them a broad range of options for their future. Governors are effective in holding leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A positive culture of safeguarding is very well established throughout the school. Safeguarding leaders are knowledgeable and effective. Leaders act quickly to seek advice from external agencies when a pupil or family needs extra help. Staff are well trained and know how to spot the signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm.

There are rigorous checks on all new staff. They fully understand the school's safeguarding expectations before they join the school.

Pupils are well trained on how to keep themselves safe. They are aware of the main concerns in the local area and know whom to go to when they need help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a very small number of subjects, the curriculum is less well planned and sequenced than it is most other subject areas. Leaders have not thought carefully enough about the core knowledge that they want pupils to learn in these subjects. This limits the extent to which pupils know more and remember more. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum plans in these subjects are of the same high standard as those for other subjects in the curriculum. This will enable pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding consistently across the curriculum.

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.

If you are the school and you are 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	138545
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10229101
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,920
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynda Taylor
Headteacher	Kam Grewal-Joy
Website	www.meadowhead.sheffield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 and 8 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than average.
- The school includes on-site provision for sixth-form students.
- School leaders use 14 alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school is a standalone academy.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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, other senior leaders, subject leaders and a range of staff. The lead inspector spoke with six representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body and two vice-chairs.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils and students about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' and students' work.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of year groups. Inspectors also observed and spoke with pupils at social times.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, school leaders' own evaluation of the school, external quality assurance reviews, and attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors reviewed the 210 responses that were submitted this academic year by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered 211 free-text responses submitted during the inspection. Inspectors considered the 130 responses to Ofsted's staff survey, and the 117 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors checked on the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the recruitment checks made on staff. Inspectors met with leaders, staff, pupils and governors to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures in school. An inspector checked the arrangements for those pupils who attend alternative provision.

Inspection team

Tudor Griffiths, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Matthew West	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Jenner	Her Majesty's Inspector
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