

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Lower Meadow Primary School

Batemoor Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S8 8EE

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 February 2025

Outcome

Lower Meadow Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Jane Dawtry. This school is part of Astrea Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Rowena Hackwood, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Benjamin Brown.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is highly inclusive and welcomes all pupils. Adults build warm and kind relationships, creating a nurturing environment where pupils feel safe and valued.

The school has high expectations for pupils. It ensures that pupils, regardless of their background or starting points, follow an ambitious curriculum. They understand pupils' needs well. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need to achieve well. Pupils value the opportunities to take part in educational visits including residential. New pupils feel welcome and settle in quickly as the school gets to know them well.

Pastoral care is a priority. Pupils learn how to manage their emotions and build resilience. They know teachers are there to help with any worries. Pupils behave sensibly and follow the school's values and '5Ks'. They stay focused in lessons because teachers give clear guidance and keep learning engaging.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities to develop their understanding of the world. Pupils learn British sign language to communicate with hearing impaired peers. Pupils respect differences, understand equality and learn about different faiths and cultures. Pupils are proud to serve as school councillors, junior librarians and eco warriors where they develop a sense of responsibility.

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

The curriculum is carefully thought out to build pupils' knowledge over time. Tasks are chosen appropriately to help pupils to revisit and retain key knowledge. The school has considered how pupils learn best, including those supported by the unit for hearing impaired pupils. Pupils in Year 6 have had less time to benefit from the recent improvements made to the curriculum. This has resulted in some pupils not achieving as well as they could in statutory assessments.

Staff quickly identify and address pupils' needs including those with SEND. In lessons, pupils benefit from carefully thought-out adaptations. Tailored interventions are designed to ensure pupils have the support they need to achieve well. Specialist staff provide this support. The integrated resource provision for hearing impaired pupils provides a nurturing environment. This provision skilfully supports pupils, ensuring that they access the curriculum with peers as much as possible.

The school prioritises pupils' language and communication development right from their entry into Nursery. Vocabulary is taught deliberately to develop pupils' understanding. Pupil discussions are a key feature in every lesson. Teaching is clear and precise and is supported by visual and verbal modelling. This helps pupils, including those who join the school throughout the year, achieve well from lower-than-expected starting points.

Phonics and reading are consistently taught with clear routines, repetition and strong modelling. Pupils are encouraged to develop fluency from an early age. Books are carefully matched to pupils' reading ability. Those who need additional support receive targeted interventions to ensure they become confident, fluent readers. Precise checks on learning ensure pupils, including those with SEND, receive individualised support. Older pupils focus on developing comprehension knowledge whilst developing their vocabulary through well-considered texts.

The writing curriculum follows a text-led approach. Writing is taught through a clear process. For younger pupils, the school prioritises securing basic skills in writing. Letter formation is taught specifically with some pre-learning activities starting in Nursery. However, for some pupils in key stage 2, gaps in writing skills are not identified and addressed as effectively as in early years and key stage 1. This is because these children are moved on too quickly without sufficient focus on basic skills over time. As a result, some pupils in key stage 2 have not achieved as well as they could in writing.

Children make an excellent start in the early years. The structured, book-based curriculum immerses them in daily stories and rhymes. Mathematics is seamlessly embedded in everyday activities. A carefully designed environment encourages independent learning and problem-solving. Skilled adults expertly expand children's vocabulary. Children are curious, happy, and thrive together in their play.

There is a calm, consistent approach to behaviour management. Pupils follow securely embedded routines right from Nursery. In lessons, pupils are engaged, consistently demonstrating positive attitudes to learning. Outside, pupils socialise happily, organising

games with a range of equipment. Attendance, including persistent absence, has improved over time. However, some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Recently, the school has put systems in place to further improve pupils' attendance.

The school offers a wide range of experiences for pupils to develop their knowledge of the world around them. They ensure that pupils, including those with SEND, are fully included in school life. Pupils develop their understanding of the wider world through events like black history month, national storyteller week and internet safety day.

The school is ambitious for its pupils. There is a strong commitment from leaders at all levels to provide a high-quality education. Governors and trustees know the school's strengths and next steps. The trust provides effective collaboration and staff development opportunities. Staff feel listened to and well supported. They feel valued as part of the school's strong team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In key stage 2, some pupils' understanding of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting is not secure. This means, in some cases, pupils do not build their knowledge and skills progressively over time as well as they could. The school should identify and address any gaps in learning so pupils develop their writing skills and make sustained progress through the curriculum.
- Some pupils do not attend school often enough. This means that these pupils miss out on important learning and the rich opportunities that the school provides. The school should continue to enhance its current strategies, including working closely with parents, to improve pupils' attendance.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

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

Unique reference number	142937
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10346588
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	306
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Benjamin Brown
CEO of the trust	Rowena Hackwood
Headteacher	Jane Dawtry
Website	www.astrealowermeadow.org
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Astrea Academy Trust.
- The headteacher is new to the role since the previous inspection.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with hearing impairment for 8 pupils.
- There is a breakfast club run by the school on site.
- The school uses two alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education 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 met with the principal, vice principal and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector met with the director of primary education and the regional director from the trust. They met with a trustee and members of the local governing body.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They held discussions about the curriculum and spoke to staff. The inspector heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, at playtime and at lunchtime. The inspector spoke with pupils about their views of the school, their learning, behaviour and safety.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector held a discussion, by telephone, with a representative from a registered alternative provision provider used by the school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free text comments.
- The inspector met with staff to gather their views of the school. They also considered the responses from the Ofsted survey for staff.

Inspection team

Nicola Beaumont, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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