

# Meadows School

**Address:** Egerton House, Wardle Road, Wardle, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL12 9EN

**Unique reference number (URN):** 136257

## Inspection report: 15 September 2026

|                    |                                                                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Exceptional        |                                                                                   |
| Strong standard    |                                                                                   |
| Expected standard  |  |
| Needs attention    |                                                                                   |
| Urgent improvement |                                                                                   |

### **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

### **How we evaluate safeguarding**

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.
- **Insufficient evidence:** Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

## Expected standard

### Achievement

### Expected standard

Many pupils join the school having experienced significant disruption to their education, low attendance and, in some cases, lengthy periods without a school placement. Leaders establish pupils' starting points carefully and use assessment information to identify gaps in learning, plan support and monitor progress over time. As a result, leaders and staff understand pupils' learning needs and can measure the progress that pupils make from their individual starting points.

Pupils achieve appropriately from their individual starting points. Over time, they re-engage with learning, develop greater confidence as learners and acquire the knowledge and skills needed for future education. Leaders track pupils' progress closely and adjust support where required. Consequently, pupils make progress that reflects their individual circumstances, needs and prior experiences of education.

Leaders ensure that pupils work towards qualifications that match their abilities and aspirations. Recent outcomes show that pupils achieve a range of qualifications, including in English and mathematics. Leaders work closely with pupils, families and commissioning authorities to plan next steps. As a result, pupils move on to further education, training and employment pathways that align with their interests and ambitions.

### Attendance and behaviour

### Expected standard

Many pupils arrive at the school with a history of poor attendance and significant barriers to engaging in education. Leaders understand these barriers well and maintain regular contact with families, carers, children's homes and external professionals. They identify concerns promptly and implement tailored support, including home visits and frequent communication. As a result, some pupils make substantial improvements in attendance from exceptionally low starting points. Despite this work, overall attendance remains low and rates of persistent absence remain high. Current strategies have not yet secured regular attendance for all pupils. In addition, agreed approaches do not consistently help pupils catch up and keep up with learning following absence. Consequently, absence continues to limit some pupils' access to learning and wider opportunities.

Leaders have established a relational and trauma-informed approach to behaviour that reflects pupils' individual needs and experiences. Staff understand pupils well and apply expectations consistently. They use de-escalation strategies effectively and help pupils recognise and manage their emotions, when difficulties arise. As a result, incidents rarely escalate and pupils return to learning successfully. Pupils typically behave appropriately in lessons and during social times. Bullying is not tolerated. Positive relationships and consistent routines help pupils feel secure and understand what is expected of them. Consequently, pupils learn in a calm environment, where they can focus on learning, develop self-regulation and participate positively in school life.

## Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a curriculum that reflects pupils' complex educational journeys and varied starting points. They assess pupils carefully when they join the school and use this information to shape curriculum pathways, interventions and learning goals. As a result, pupils access learning that addresses prior gaps while maintaining ambition for future achievement.

Curriculum plans identify the knowledge and skills that pupils should develop over time, including within mixed-age classes. Leaders use assessment information to identify barriers to learning and adapt provision accordingly. This helps pupils reconnect with education and access a curriculum that balances academic study with preparation for adult life.

Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and adapt learning effectively to meet pupils' needs. Positive working relationships encourage pupils to participate in learning, while additional adults provide targeted support where required. Staff use assessment information to identify misconceptions and adjust future learning. Consequently, pupils engage increasingly with learning and make appropriate progress from their starting points.

Leaders monitor pupils' progress through the curriculum. However, the planned curriculum is not yet delivered consistently well enough to ensure that pupils develop and retain the intended knowledge and skills across all areas of learning. As a result, in some subjects, some pupils do not build their knowledge and understanding as securely over time as leaders intend.

## Inclusion

Expected standard 

Many pupils join the school having experienced barriers that affect their social, emotional and mental health, alongside disruption to their education. Leaders gather detailed information from assessments, education, health and care plans, families and professionals to identify pupils' needs accurately. They use this information to identify barriers to learning and plan appropriate provision. As a result, staff understand pupils' individual circumstances and tailor their approaches accordingly.

Staff establish trusting relationships with pupils while maintaining high expectations for participation, learning and attendance. They understand the experiences that have shaped many pupils' attitudes towards education and adapt their practice accordingly. As a result, pupils engage more positively with learning and develop greater confidence in their ability to succeed.

Leaders ensure that staff have access to relevant information about pupils' needs, risks and support arrangements. Staff use this knowledge well to adapt learning, communication and wider support. This promotes consistency across the school and helps pupils experience stability and predictability throughout the school day. Consequently, pupils increasingly participate in learning and school life.

Leaders work closely with families, carers, children's homes and external professionals to coordinate provision and address barriers that affect pupils' education and wellbeing. They review arrangements regularly and respond, when circumstances change. As a result,

professionals work together effectively to meet pupils' needs. Pupils feel understood, valued and included and develop a stronger sense of belonging within the school community.

## **Leadership and governance**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders understand the school's context well and maintain a clear focus on improving pupils' experiences and outcomes. Clear systems and processes support the school's day-to-day operation and provide staff with a shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff speak positively about leaders' communication, support and direction and value their focus on improving pupils' experiences and outcomes.

Leaders place pupils' welfare, education and preparation for adulthood at the centre of their decision-making. They use information about attendance, achievement and pupils' wider development to evaluate the school's work and identify appropriate priorities for improvement. Professional development helps staff develop the knowledge and skills needed to support pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Leaders also work closely with families, carers and external agencies to coordinate support and respond to pupils' changing needs.

The proprietor and those responsible for governance know the school well. They maintain regular oversight of attendance, achievement, destinations and school improvement priorities. Governors provide support and challenge and seek assurance about the impact of leaders' actions. They scrutinise information carefully, including the effectiveness of strategies designed to improve attendance and engagement.

Parents, carers and external professionals describe leaders as approachable, responsive and willing to work collaboratively. Together, leaders, the proprietor and governors ensure that the independent school standards are met. Their shared focus on pupils' welfare, education and future aspirations supports continued improvement and positive outcomes for pupils.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Expected standard** 

Leaders place considerable importance on preparing pupils for adulthood. They provide a programme of personal development that reflects pupils' needs, interests and future aspirations. Staff work closely with therapeutic colleagues, families, carers and other professionals to ensure that support and wider opportunities reflect pupils' individual circumstances. Therapeutic approaches help pupils develop greater self-awareness and provide staff with strategies to support pupils' wider development.

Leaders ensure that pupils access opportunities that extend learning beyond the formal curriculum and help them develop independence, resilience and social skills. They adapt these opportunities carefully to reflect pupils' needs, enabling pupils to experience success and broaden their understanding of the world around them.

Preparation for adulthood is woven throughout the curriculum. Careers education and guidance reflect pupils' interests, aspirations and next steps. Pupils access guidance, visits and experiences that help them understand the opportunities available to them. Leaders work closely with families, carers and other professionals to support transitions into further

education, training and employment. Recent destinations reflect leaders' ambition for pupils to move successfully into appropriate post-16 pathways. Leaders also maintain oversight of pupils' destinations and provide additional support where needed. Pupils benefit from individualised careers guidance that helps them understand the qualifications, skills and experiences required to achieve their ambitions.

The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum helps pupils learn about relationships, health, safety, diversity and life in modern Britain. Leaders adapt delivery to reflect pupils' ages, stages and needs. Pupils also benefit from opportunities to engage with visiting professionals and explore issues that are relevant to their lives and future choices. Input from external agencies broadens pupils' understanding of health, safety, relationships and their responsibilities as citizens in modern Britain. Together, these experiences help pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and personal skills needed for adult life beyond school.

## **What it's like to be a pupil at this school**

At Meadows School, staff know pupils well and understand their individual needs. Many pupils join the school following disruption to their education. Staff help pupils rebuild confidence in themselves, their learning and their future. Positive relationships between staff and pupils help pupils feel valued and supported. Pupils describe staff as approachable and appreciate the support that they receive when they experience difficulties.

Pupils feel safe in school and know who they can speak to if they have any worries. They value the support that staff provide and recognise the positive changes they have made since joining the school. Pupils talk confidently about improvements in their attendance, behaviour and engagement with learning. Staff help pupils regulate their behaviour successfully and support them to return to learning when difficulties arise. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly.

Pupils learn in a calm and supportive environment. They typically behave appropriately in lessons and during social times. Positive relationships between staff and pupils help create a culture in which pupils feel understood, included and respected. The school's therapeutic approach reflects pupils' individual needs while maintaining appropriate expectations for learning and participation.

Pupils access a curriculum that reflects their starting points and supports their preparation for adulthood. They enjoy a range of experiences beyond the classroom, including rock climbing, horticulture, circus skills and community activities. These opportunities help pupils develop confidence, independence and resilience. Pupils speak positively about these experiences and the opportunities they provide to try new activities and work alongside others.

Pupils receive guidance that helps them consider future education, training and employment opportunities. Leaders support pupils to identify ambitious next steps and prepare them for adulthood. Consequently, pupils leave the school better prepared for their future and with greater confidence in their ability to succeed.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should continue to strengthen the delivery of the planned curriculum, including PSHE, so that pupils consistently develop and retain the key knowledge and skills intended and build their understanding securely over time.
  - Leaders should continue to strengthen strategies to improve attendance, particularly for pupils who are persistently absent, and ensure that agreed approaches help pupils catch up and keep up with learning following absence so that they remain well placed to access the curriculum.
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## About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

This inspection took place from 15 to 17 September 2026.

Inspectors spoke with the headteachers, senior leaders and representatives from the proprietor body, including the chair of governors during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

All pupils who attend the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most have an education, health and care plan. Their primary need is social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils are referred to the school by a number of local authorities.

The school currently has 10 pupils on roll, with a capacity of 26 pupils.

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

The name of the proprietor is Meadows Care Ltd. The chair of the proprietor body is Jane Toner.

The fees currently charged are £62.400.

The school's email address is: [school@meadowscare.co.uk](mailto:school@meadowscare.co.uk)

Headteachers : James McDonald and Ian Simpson

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# Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

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## 1. Quality of education provided

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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## 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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## 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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## 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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## 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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## 6. Provision of information

Standards met

All standards have been met.

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## 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Standards met

All standards have been met.

All standards have been met.

**Lead inspector:**

Rebecca Sharples, His Majesty's Inspector

**Team inspector:**

Julie Yarwood, Ofsted Inspector

# Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 15 September 2026

**Total pupils**

10

**School capacity**

26

**Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan**

9

**Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support**

1

**Exceptional** 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

**Strong standard** 

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

**Expected standard** 

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

**Needs attention** 

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

**Urgent improvement** 

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

**Insufficient evidence** 

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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