

Inspection of Greys Education Centre

Manor Drive, Kempston, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 7AB

Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

At Greys Education Centre, pupils say they feel listened to and their attitude to learning is often positive. Adults support pupils appropriately and pupils' behaviour does improve. Adults expect pupils to try their best in all they do.

Pupils respect staff and develop trusting relationships. Pupils say that they feel safe. They talk about how they are 'recognised as individuals' and treated with respect by adults. Bullying is rare. Pupils are that confident staff can help sort any issues out.

Pupils attend well. Many pupils have previously been excluded and some pupils have behaviours that can get them into trouble with those in authority. Pupils are encouraged to build their resilience through taking part in adventurous activities.

In the hospital provision, pupils receive increased hours with qualified teachers. Leaders provide support to other schools to try and stop pupils becoming excluded in the first place. When the pupils go back to regular school placements, leaders ensure that they are supported for a short time.

Pupils who stay longer at the school have a different experience. The curriculum chosen by leaders for these pupils is not broad. It is not ambitious or adapted well enough to meet these pupils' needs.

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

Leaders want pupils to be well prepared for the next stage of their education. Reading, writing and mathematics are the focus for all pupils, with a few other subjects. Leaders initially designed this curriculum for short-stay pupils who would quickly return to mainstream school places. The school day is shorter, with less time for learning on one day a week. These arrangements are not effective for pupils who stay at the school in the longer term, for example in the Hive class. Furthermore, subject leaders do not have a clear overview of the subject they lead throughout the whole school.

Teachers help pupils develop a love of reading in the primary classes. They choose books that interest pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to read regularly to improve their skills. The school uses a phonics programme. However, adults in the secondary building have not been trained to help pupils who still need to learn to read.

Leaders have chosen a curriculum in Years 10 and 11 that is well planned. Older pupils can take a range of courses, from GCSEs through to construction qualifications. Leaders make sure that most pupils get education, employment or training places when they leave school. Careers information, advice and guidance are informative and inspiring. Employers visit the school regularly.

Staff have developed a range of experiences to build up pupils' confidence. For example, pupils can go mountain biking or take up boxing within the school day. Younger pupils learn to swim.

When pupils start at the school, some have a limited ability to cope. Leaders modify pupils' timetables initially to help pupils build their resilience. Pupils quickly move on to full timetables.

Leaders allow pupils to smoke on the school site at breaktimes. Parents and carers have repeatedly shared their serious concerns about this. The local authority that sends pupils to the school was not aware of the leaders' decision about this. Other local authority advisers have previously requested that this practice stops. A number of pupils were seen smoking and they confirmed that it was a common occurrence.

The school has been through a period of expansion and the range of work has increased. Staff absence has been high. Experienced staff have left and other staff have had to take on new roles. Staff say they enjoy working at Greys. Much of their training is in-house. Some staff could not remember any specialist training they had received.

The local advisory board and trust board recognise the challenges facing all leaders. They did not act quickly enough to support leaders when staffing became an issue. Other issues have not been addressed. This has led to too many roles and responsibilities falling on too few people.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and have a clear understanding of the local issues facing these vulnerable children. Leaders work well with other agencies, such as social services. Leaders are tenacious in trying to get the support that pupils need.

Child protection records are generally well kept but staff's recording of concerns could be more rigorous. All the proper employment checks are in place for the adults working across the range of provisions.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils who are at Greys for the long term have a narrow curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that they provide a well-designed, broad and ambitious curriculum for all pupils.
- Leaders have chosen to allow pupils to smoke on the school site at breaktimes. There is a statutory expectation that schools are no-smoking sites. Leaders must comply with the statutory expectations. Leaders must implement more effective

support for those pupils who smoke to ensure pupils' successful reintegration into day-to-day educational life.

- The capacity for leadership needs to be further improved. The trust must ensure that it provides timely support for its schools. The trust should respond appropriately to fluctuations in staffing to consistently deliver a high quality of education for all pupils.
- Subject leaders do not have a clear overview of their subjects across all key stages. The trust must ensure that more staff are appropriately trained in leadership positions to support the complex needs of all the pupils.

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 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	139320
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10088731
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rob Bell
Headteacher	Terence Ashmore (executive headteacher)
Website	www.greys.beds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bedford Inclusive Learning and Training Multi-Academy Trust. The trust was established in 2017. There are three schools that form this trust. The trust has a board of directors and a local advisory board.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of pupils with long-term placements. Many of these pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school operates on three sites: one for the primary school, one for the secondary school and a hospital provision that includes a hospital classroom.
- The Hive resource base was opened on the site of the primary school in September 2019.

Information about this inspection

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

- We met with the executive headteacher, heads of schools, headteacher and other senior leaders. We also met with some curriculum leaders, some class teachers

and some teaching assistants. We spoke with some pupils from the classes visited and with pupils on the playground and around the schools.

- We spoke with a representative from the local authority and with one member of the local advisory board.
- We carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, design and technology, and physical, social, health and economic education. This involved visiting classes, looking at pupils' work and speaking with subject leaders and teachers. We also spoke with pupils about their learning.
- We scrutinised pupils' records. We reviewed files, staff recruitment information and training relating to safeguarding. We looked at a range of other school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan.
- We took account of the three responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to family members bringing pupils into school. I also took account of two emails sent by parents to Ofsted. These were included in the inspection evidence.

Inspection team

Fyfe Johnston, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Wilson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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