

Inspection of Greenleas School

Derwent Road, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 2AB

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Greenleas School. They feel happy, safe and cared for. Staff know pupils and families well. All members of the school community feel part of the 'Greenleas family'.

Pupils develop positive relationships with one another and adults. They behave well and respond to adults' high expectations of behaviour. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that teachers will resolve any disagreements quickly. This leads to a calm environment in which pupils can learn.

Pupils have a good understanding of the school's values. They know the 'Greenleas Promise' and this helps pupils to show kindness and respect for others. Pupils enjoy the activities offered on 'enrichment Fridays' and the clubs that allow them to pursue their interests. Pupils welcome opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as being a house captain.

Pupils are keen to learn. However, pupils are not taught all the important knowledge they need to ensure that they achieve as well as they should across the full range of subjects.

While pupils read often and most pupils enjoy reading, the reading curriculum does not help all pupils to remember and use their phonics knowledge well enough. This means that some weaker readers continue to struggle to read fluently.

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

Leaders want the best for pupils. Pupils experience a broad curriculum. However, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is designed well enough to help pupils learn and remember important knowledge in all subjects.

Curriculum plans across all subjects vary in quality. The better plans set out the knowledge that pupils need to remember in a logical order. These plans help teachers decide what to teach and build on pupils' previous learning. However, leaders have not ensured that all staff have had sufficient guidance in planning and teaching the full range of subjects across the curriculum. Therefore, in many subjects, including in the early years, leaders have not thought carefully enough about what pupils need to know step by step to achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy the books that teachers read to them in class. However, there are weaknesses in leaders' overall approach to the teaching of reading. There is not a single, coherent approach for teaching phonics to the youngest pupils. This limits teachers' effectiveness in teaching pupils how to read. The books that pupils read are not always well matched to the sounds that they know so that pupils can practise what they have been taught. This means that pupils do not learn to read fluently quickly enough.

Pupils who fall behind in their reading receive a great deal of extra help. However, the support they receive is not precise enough to help those who struggle catch up quickly.

Teachers check regularly on what pupils know and can do in each subject. Curriculum leaders make varied use of this information and there are inconsistent checks made on the decisions teachers make when implementing curriculum plans. Consequently, some subject leaders do not know if their curriculum design and plans are helping pupils remember the most important knowledge.

Staff know the individual needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND access the full curriculum. They develop greater independence and confidence in learning. Where teachers have clearly identified the knowledge that they want pupils to learn, pupils with SEND receive effective support and achieve well.

Pupils behave well. Adults in the early years set clear expectations from the start. Children learn to work with others because adults show them how to do this successfully. These positive attitudes develop further as pupils get older. Pupils who find it hard to manage their own behaviour get the help they need to improve.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. Pupils' achievements in and out of school are celebrated. Pupils understand values such as tolerance and the importance of respecting difference. Pupils are confident and care for one another. Leaders ensure that staff provide effective support for pupils' well-being.

Leaders and governors consider staff well-being and workload. Staff feel valued. Leaders have provided training to support the teaching of physical education and music. However, they have not prioritised training for other subjects. As a result, there is too much variability in how well curriculum leaders construct, implement and evaluate the quality of what all pupils learn.

Governors check on leaders' work. Governors have recently re-established links to curriculum areas. Governors ensure that they have the skills and expertise needed for their role.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are trained to be vigilant for the possible signs of abuse and neglect. Staff know how and when to pass on concerns. Leaders act quickly to follow up on concerns appropriately. They ensure that pupils get the help that they need, sharing information with external agencies when necessary.

Leaders make thorough checks on the suitability of adults to work in the school. Governors ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures follow the most recent published guidance.

Pupils feel safe. They learn how to stay safe, including when working online. For example, pupils know the importance of not sharing personal details and passwords.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not follow a single approach for teaching phonics to teach young pupils to read. There is too much variability in how effectively phonics is taught. Some teachers choose activities that do not help pupils at the early stages of reading to develop and use their knowledge well. Pupils are not routinely given reading books that include words they have the knowledge and understanding to decode. This hinders pupils' progress in reading, especially for the lowest attaining readers. Leaders should adopt a single phonics programme and ensure that it is followed and implemented consistently and well. Leaders should ensure that the books that early readers are given to read are well-matched to their phonics knowledge.
- Not all curriculum leaders have sufficient knowledge and expertise in their subjects. Curriculum plans are in the early stages of development. Therefore, in some subjects, curriculum plans are not designed well enough to help teachers teach all subjects effectively. Pupils are not building on their learning and deepening knowledge in all subjects as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all curriculum leaders have the training, support and knowledge they need to design a high-quality curriculum, evaluate accurately how well their plans are implemented and their impact on pupils' learning.
- Teachers have not had recent guidance or training to help them deliver some aspects of the curriculum. They do not consistently choose activities and lessons that build successfully on what pupils have previously learned. Leaders should provide teachers with training and guidance to identify the important knowledge that pupils need to learn.

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	109591
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10199340
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	743
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Powell
Headteacher	Rebecca Clarke
Website	www.greenleas.net
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 January 2007

Information about this school

- Greenleas School is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The school is a lower school. Pupils leave at the end of Year 4 and complete the primary phase of their education in middle school.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded in size considerably. The school is now more than double the size it was at the time of the previous inspection. A separate site opened at Kestrel Way, Leighton Buzzard LU7 4WZ in 2013. The two sites are registered as one school. The headteacher works over both sites, and there is a deputy headteacher at each site.
- At each site there is pre-school and nursery provision. Each site has two classes in Reception and Years 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- Most staff were not working at the school when it was inspected in 2007. The headteacher took up the post in 2015, having previously been acting headteacher. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has been in post since September 2020.
- There are breakfast clubs and after-school clubs that are run and managed by the school.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils attending the Kestrel Way site is about twice that at Derwent Road.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND who do not have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND who have an EHCP is broadly average.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the SENCo and early years leaders. The lead inspector held a meeting with members of the governing body and a meeting with a local authority representative.
- To evaluate the quality of education, inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art, physical education and science. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke with pupils and staff, and listened to pupils reading. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, reviewed and discussed with leaders the curriculum plans in a range of other subjects and in the early years.
- To check the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including school policies, procedures and records. The lead inspector met with the headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding leader, and other safeguarding leaders to discuss their work and review examples of the actions taken to keep pupils safe. Inspectors spoke to pupils and checked staff members' understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school policies and documents, including records of governors' meetings and information about pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- To gather pupils' views, inspectors spoke to groups of pupils at both sites. Inspectors also considered 128 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke to teachers and a group of teaching assistants. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors considered the 128 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, including 79 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Paul Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Pauline MacMillan

Ofsted Inspector

Emma Breckenridge

Ofsted Inspector

Debbie Rogan

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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