

Inspection of Wilstead Primary School

Cotton End Road, Wilstead, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK45 3BX

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Wilstead Primary is a warm, welcoming school. Pupils feel safe here because they trust the adults who look after them. Values, such as trust and kindness, underpin all aspects of school life. Pupils show these in their conduct and their conversations.

Adults are ambitious for all pupils. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Visitors teach pupils about possible careers they might follow. All pupils are encouraged to work hard and aim high.

Pupils behave well. Adults have established clear expectations and familiar routines. From the moment children join the Reception class, they learn to look after the resources they use and play with. There is a strong culture of respect throughout the school.

Opportunities for learning outside the classroom are plentiful. Pupils love to visit the school's forest area, where they build dens, hunt for bugs and immerse themselves in nature. Older pupils enjoy their leadership roles. Student leaders help with parent tours and open evenings. Learning supporters listen to younger pupils read and playground buddies support positive play outside. A pupil parliament involves 'MPs' from Year 2 to Year 6 making decisions. These make their school an even better place to learn.

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

The school has reviewed and refined its curriculum since the previous inspection. This new curriculum is ambitious and carefully planned. It sets out the key knowledge pupils will learn in each subject, and each year group. The curriculum breaks learning down into small, manageable steps. These build pupils' knowledge over time. The curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Teachers present learning clearly. They reinforce key vocabulary, so that pupils develop the language they need in each subject. In Year 2 art lessons, for example, pupils are encouraged to use 'shades' and 'tones' when describing the paintings they have created for a seascape collage.

Teachers check pupils' understanding in a variety of ways. They question pupils regularly, adapting their teaching if they spot misconceptions. Pupils enjoy showing off what they know in 'one-page spreads' at the end of a topic. These, and other checks, enable teachers to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. They adjust their plans if needed. Teachers help pupils to remember what they have learned by revisiting it often. In mathematics, for example, pupils have a 'flashback' session at the start of each lesson.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. In lessons, they listen well and work hard. Most pupils achieve well, particularly in reading and mathematics. Current pupils'

achievements in writing are improving. This is as a result of effective actions taken by the school, following the most recent published outcomes.

Classrooms are inclusive. The needs of pupils with SEND are identified quickly. Effective plans are devised to help them succeed. Teachers enable pupils with SEND to learn the same curriculum as their peers, sometimes with adjustments and adaptations. These might involve extra adults, or special resources.

In the early years, children thrive in a stimulating environment. They quickly become independent and curious learners. Adults encourage them to explore all areas of the classroom and outdoor area. Children follow their interests and develop new ones.

The school promotes a love of reading from the moment children start in the Reception class. Pupils enjoy finding out about new authors or genres, following their teachers' recommendations. Through daily phonics lessons, pupils learn the sounds they need to become independent readers. They learn letter shapes and practise these, so that they can become competent writers. Adults are skilled at spotting those pupils who are not keeping up. They ensure these pupils get additional help. However, in some of these sessions, adults do not use the language and routines of the phonics programme as precisely as they should. This slows pupils' progress.

Pupils' well-being and their personal development are priorities. The school dog, Nelson, offers a listening ear to pupils with worries. Sessions on teamwork and cooperation help to develop pupils' character. A range of clubs enables them to develop new skills. Trips and themed days enrich their learning. In personal, social, health and economic education lessons, pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and positive relationships. Through religious education they explore the world's major religions. Pupils celebrate difference. They know that everyone should be treated with respect.

The governing body has strengthened its processes for understanding the school's curriculum and holding leaders to account. Governors visit the school regularly. They provide the right amount of support and challenge to leaders. The school is committed to providing staff with opportunities to develop professionally. Staff appreciate these. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

In some early reading and phonics sessions adults do not use the language and routines of the phonics programme as precisely as they could do. This slows pupils'

progress. The school should continue to develop the skills of all staff, to ensure that the teaching of phonics is consistent across the school and leads to rapid progress.

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	109492
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10268051
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Louise Day
Headteacher	Caron Brown
Website	www.wilsteadschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use the services of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, including senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with

some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. An inspector also looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects. The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation and policies, including the school development plan and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's parent and staff questionnaires. They also spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ania Vaughan

Ofsted Inspector

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