

# Inspection of St Leonards, Heath and Reach, VA Lower School

Thrift Road, Heath and Reach, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 0AX

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Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education act 2005 12 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 graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. 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 graded inspection

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a warm and friendly school. Pupils are well cared for in a nurturing environment. They know the school values, for example courage and compassion, which underpin what they do every day at school. Pupils enjoy learning about each of the school values and what they mean. Pupils celebrate demonstrating these values in assembly. This ensures a positive environment for all, where pupils behave well.

Pupils enjoy their learning and are confident to share what they are doing. They know the importance of working hard and contributing to discussions. Pupils enjoy learning as much as they can about a topic. As a result, pupils learn well.

Pupils pride themselves on how inclusive the school is. They go out of their way to take care of friends and welcome new pupils to the school. Pupils can sit on the 'rainbow bench' if they need a friend or want to join a game. Other pupils will support and involve them. 'Playground friends' lead and organise games for any pupils that want to play them. This helps develop pupils' leadership skills.

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

The school has an ambitious curriculum that matches pupils' needs and interests. In most subjects, pupils revisit important knowledge regularly, starting in early years, which helps them remember it. Teachers have detailed subject knowledge and use engaging ways to help pupils remember their learning. Pupils use songs and actions to help them remember key knowledge, such as the names and location of the continents. Teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding.

In a few subjects, these strengths are not as evident. In these subjects, teachers do not revisit important knowledge routinely. As a result, pupils struggle to recall and build on what they have learned previously. Leaders are developing new curriculum plans in these subjects. These changes are not fully complete and not yet helping pupils remember important knowledge.

Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well. Staff make adaptations to activities and the curriculum to help pupils with SEND learn key knowledge. Staff receive regular and varied training that develops their expertise to expertly teach pupils with SEND. The school seeks appropriate advice and guidance from external professionals. All of this ensures that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum alongside their peers successfully.

The school emphasises the importance of being able to read well. This starts in the early years. Children begin to learn phonics from when they start in Reception. Pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds they are learning. This helps them to practise and learn the sounds. Pupils read every day. They enjoy reading for pleasure, story time with the teacher or reading in a variety subjects. The school encourages parents to read with their children at home. Those pupils who fall

behind with reading receive additional support. As a result, they make good progress and catch up.

From the very start in early years, the school ensures that pupils know the high expectations staff have of behaviour. Pupils enjoy gaining rewards for meeting expectations. Most pupils attend well. The school works hard to build relationships with families and pupils to overcome any barriers to good attendance.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. A well-planned personal, social and health education curriculum supports this. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including online. They learn about healthy relationships, as well as how to stay physically and mentally healthy. Pupils know that there is always someone to help them if needed. They know how they can get this by asking for talk time or writing to Leonard, a teddy bear in the library. Leonard replies to their letters, giving them advice.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They work in a supportive environment where they can ask anyone for help, guidance or advice. The school considers staff workload and well-being carefully. Governors have an effective oversight of the school. They know the priorities of the school and ensure they work with leaders to achieve them.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a few foundation subjects, the curriculum is new and still developing. The curriculum in these subjects is not always taught consistently well. Therefore, pupils sometimes do not remember important subject knowledge or use this to build effectively on previous learning. The school should ensure that the curriculum is taught as intended, and effectively, in all subjects.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109618
<b>Local authority</b>	Central Bedfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294923
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	118
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Lauren Suffling
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Bowley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stleonards.beds.sch.uk">www.stleonards.beds.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 and 11 November 2011

## Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school has a Christian religious character. It is part of the Anglican Diocese of St Albans. The most recent statutory inspection of its religious character, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place in January 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due next academic year.

## 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 educational provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, a local authority representative and a representative from the Diocese of St Albans.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- 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 gathered the views of pupils by speaking to them during lessons, in the dining hall and at breaktimes. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of staff, to gather their views of the school. Inspectors also considered the 13 responses submitted to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspectors considered 56 responses, including free-text responses, to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector spoke to parents at the school gate at the end of the school day.

### **Inspection team**

Katie Devenport, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Georgina Nutton

Ofsted Inspector

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