

Inspection of Wilden CofE VA Primary School

High Street, Wilden, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK44 2PB

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They consider it a family. Pupils take responsibility for helping and supporting each other. A wide range of well-considered opportunities supports pupils and children in early years to flourish. Trips and visitors help to broaden pupils' horizons and think about future careers. For example, pupils have visited universities, worked with engineers designing rockets and enjoyed a trip to London.

Staff have high expectations of what they want pupils to know. Pupils are eager to talk about what they have learned. They make connections between learning in different subjects. Pupils achieve well in national tests and assessments. Pupils benefit from purposeful and meticulously planned outdoor learning activities. Here they develop curiosity, cooperation and take risks.

Pupils know and understand the school's high expectations of behaviour. They are polite and respectful towards others, including staff. Learning is not disrupted. Pupils know that they can get help from trusted adults if needed. Pupils learn how to keep safe and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Staff know pupils exceptionally well. They precisely plan opportunities to develop pupils' individual talents and interests, such as 'STEM club'.

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

The school has revised its curriculum. Pupils study a wide range of subjects. In each subject, the school sets out the knowledge that pupils should learn. Leaders have carefully designed opportunities for pupils to make connections in what they learn through broad topics. This means pupils revisit important knowledge so they remember it more easily.

The school has a highly effective early years curriculum. Staff deliver this skilfully, building on children's interests. They ensure activities support children to make very strong progress in all areas of learning. Staff know exactly what children already know. As a result, children are very well prepared for learning in Year 1.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They use 'do now' activities to quickly identify and address pupils' misunderstandings. Pupils recall and use what they have learned well. They use subject-specific vocabulary accurately. For example, Year 4 pupils use words such as 'segregation' and 'persecution' when discussing their work in history. Nevertheless, some teachers do not have consistently high expectations of the standard of pupils' written work. This means that the quality of pupils' work is variable and does not always reflect the depth of their understanding.

The school prioritises reading. This starts in Nursery, where children are immersed in high-quality opportunities to develop their communication and language knowledge. The school's phonics programme is well established. Teachers have the expertise needed to teach reading well. They provide effective support for pupils when

required. If pupils fall behind, staff help them catch up quickly. Pupils enjoy reading and achieve well. They read and recall high-quality texts confidently. Children in the early years use familiar stories exceptionally well through play.

Staff identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Staff precisely track pupils' progress towards their individual targets. Most teachers adapt learning to help pupils with SEND to build successfully on what they can already do.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners. Staff encourage them to be independent, starting in early years. Here, children confidently manage their own needs. The school supports pupils to develop very positive behaviour through its mission of 'Be Ready, Be Respectful, Be Safe'. However, pupils do not always show pride in their work. It is sometimes poorly presented.

The way the school promotes pupils' personal development is exceptional. There is a well-considered personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Excellent teaching in personal, social and emotional development in the early years builds a solid foundation for children, which they continue to build on as they get older. Pupils learn about differences and connect this to world news. They learn why it is important to respect others and their beliefs and how communities differ from their own. Staff are committed to developing responsible and caring pupils. There is a culture of being 'a small school with a big heart.' Pupils are extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governors know the school's strengths and what could be even better. Leaders support staff well. The school makes changes that improve the quality of education provided while not adding to staff's workload. All leaders share the same ambition for pupils. However, some subject leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is taught as intended. This leads to some variation in how well pupils learn.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all subject leaders have used their checks on learning to ensure the curriculum is implemented as intended. Therefore, there is variability in how well teachers support pupils to learn in some subjects. The school should ensure that subject leaders use their checks on pupils' learning to ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively, and as intended, in all subjects.

- Teachers' expectations of the standard of pupils' work are not consistently high. This includes expectations for pupils to take pride in their work. As a result, in a small number of subjects, pupils' written work is not of a high quality and does not reflect their understanding. The school should ensure that teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' work in all subjects, so that work is of a high quality across the full range of 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

Unique reference number	109627
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10336961
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lorraine Knight
Headteacher	Leigh Pointon, Executive headteacher
Website	www.wilden.beds.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 July 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is in a partnership with another local school. The executive headteacher leads across both schools. There is an acting head of school in post. Subject leadership is shared across both schools.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.
- There is provision for two-year-olds in the school's early years setting.
- The school has a Christian religious character and is part of the Diocese of St Albans. The school received a statutory inspection of its denominational education and worship, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, in November 2019. The next section 48 inspection will be within five school years.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative providers of education.

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 from the governing body and a local authority representative.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. 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. The lead inspector listened to several 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. These included the school development plan and minutes of governor meetings.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils by speaking to them throughout the inspection. There were no responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke to a group of staff, to gather their views of the school and considered 10 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- The inspectors considered 23 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Emma Breckenridge, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Helen Jones Ofsted Inspector

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