

Inspection of The Rushmere Park Academy

East Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 1EW

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2022

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone is friendly at this small school. One pupil represented many, saying, 'We are nice to everybody'. From Nursery, children learn to share and take turns kindly.

'Playground buddies' look out for younger pupils. Pupils say that they feel safe. They trust the adults to help them. Pupils understand what bullying is. They say it happens, but adults always sort it out.

There is lots to do at playtime. Pupils enjoy all the opportunities to play with toys and equipment together. Games are regularly organised by adults, and everyone can join in.

Pupils behave well in lessons so everyone can learn. They say that teachers make the lessons interesting. Pupils enjoy books and reading in all year groups. Younger children enthusiastically join in with stories and songs. Library club is popular, and many pupils read at lunchtimes.

Older pupils learn to take responsibility as sports leaders and in the new 'eco council'. Pupils care about each other and the environment. They enjoy time at the school pond and growing vegetables. Pupils raise money for charities, including for refugees from Ukraine. Pupils are excited to learn more about the world through trips, for example to The Space Centre.

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

Leaders are ambitious about what pupils should be learning. The curriculum for all pupils, including the youngest children, is carefully planned. In most subjects, it sets out exactly what children need to learn. In a few subjects, leaders have not yet identified the most important learning and organised it clearly.

Teachers use the curriculum plans to create activities that engage and enthuse pupils in their learning. For example, counting songs, games and practice in the early years prepare children well to move on with number and calculations as they get older.

Teachers explain new ideas clearly. They check understanding frequently before moving on. Pupils have lots of opportunities to reflect on their learning and think about ways they could improve. Teachers help pupils to practise skills again if needed, including in practical activities in subjects like art and physical education (PE).

Phonics is taught from early years by well-trained staff. Regular checks on learning ensure that the work is at the right level. Reading books match what pupils are learning. Pupils quickly learn their sounds and how to put them together to read.

From the very start of their education, a wide selection of books and stories are at the heart of the curriculum that pupils access. The youngest children enjoy enticing book areas, indoors and outside. They have many opportunities to develop their love of stories throughout the day, such as role play and mini theatres. Older pupils access reading lessons and lots of opportunities to practise their reading independently. They read widely and enthusiastically. They are introduced to more challenging books and famous authors by their teachers in story time.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen to each other and discuss ideas. Pupils are confident to explain their thinking. They move around the school sensibly and show consideration for others.

Well-trained staff are vigilant from the early years foundation stage to spot any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They seek advice from specialists, where required. They make sure that all staff are confident and use appropriate strategies so that pupils get the help they need. Despite these strengths, a small minority of parents felt that school systems for communication and supporting learners with SEND could be better.

Pupils learn how to be responsible citizens. Leaders provide pupils with a wide range of experiences so that they understand the world around them. Pupils study a range of different role models from diverse backgrounds. The recent careers day introduced pupils to a range of inspiring jobs. Visits from the local MP and Mayor help pupils to understand democracy in action.

There are many opportunities for pupils to develop talents. Clubs such as choir and Disney football encourage everyone to get involved. Many pupils learn a range of musical instruments. Older pupils can take part in sporting events and clubs that help them to develop teamwork, confidence and resilience.

Trustees in the multi-academy trust know the school well. They support the school to improve. Staff appreciate the well-planned training they receive. They feel supported by leaders and understand their vision for the school. One member of staff commented that it is 'a joy to be able to make a difference to the lives of children'. Staff from the early years through to Year 4 develop strong, positive relationships with most parents.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Pupils are confident that adults will keep them safe. All staff record their concerns. These are taken seriously by leaders. When leaders identify pupils and families who need additional support, they act quickly. They work effectively with external agencies to put help in place. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including healthy relationships and online safety, as part of a well-planned curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not yet identified the most important learning and organised it clearly. Leaders do not know how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. Leaders should ensure that plans set out the knowledge and skills to be learned. They also need to establish monitoring in these subjects so that they know how well pupils are faring.
- A few parents lack confidence in school systems for communication and supporting learners with SEND. Leaders should work with those parents who have concerns so that they can have confidence and understanding about the effectiveness and rationale behind leaders' actions to support their children.

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	146685
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10226851
Type of school	First with Nursery
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Sheridan
Principal	Marea Rawlings
Website	trpa.thesharedlearningtrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average school.
- The school opened in February 2019 as part of the Shared Learning Trust.
- The predecessor school, St George's Lower School, was judged to be good in May 2014.

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 had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluations of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and PE. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils about learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector looked closely at safeguarding procedures and processes. She talked to trustees, leaders, other staff and a range of pupils about safeguarding in the school.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspectors met with pupils from different year groups to talk about their experiences of the school.
- The inspector considered the 44 responses made by parents and carers to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 35 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 16 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Lynne Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Emma Breckenridge

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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