

School inspection report

5 to 7 December 2023

Akeley Wood Junior School

Wicken Park

Wicken

Milton Keynes

Buckinghamshire

MK14 6DA

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors carry out their responsibilities effectively, in collaboration with school leaders. Governors carefully monitor the school's policies and procedures and maintain suitable oversight of how leaders are fulfilling their responsibilities. The governors are actively involved in the daily life of the school and know it well. They use this knowledge to provide effective support and challenge for leaders. Leaders do not evaluate the quality of teaching rigorously and effectively enough. As a result, some new initiatives are not introduced as promptly and thoroughly as they intend and are slower to have a positive impact on pupils.
2. Leaders have developed a curriculum that is exciting and varied. It is intentionally planned to ensure breadth of content, progression of skills and links between subject areas. The breadth of opportunity for all pupils, with many areas being taught by specialist teachers, ensures pupils enjoy their experiences and develop a love of learning. Teaching builds effectively on previous learning and ensures pupils make good progress. However, some teaching in mathematics and English does not challenge and support pupils well enough. Where this is the case pupils do not achieve as well as they could do.
3. Leaders have created an environment that links wellbeing, safeguarding and respect for others. This helps pupils understand their own emotions and identify people who make them feel safe, through their 'circles of trust'. By giving wellbeing priority, leaders enable pupils to develop empathy. Pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of the need to be tolerant of and celebrate individual differences. Pupils work hard and behave well. However, low-level behavioural incidents occur from time to time. Staff do not always follow the school's behaviour policy consistently when dealing with such incidents.
4. Staff's reinforcement of the school's values of resilience, kindness and respect helps pupils to develop a supportive attitude towards each other within the school community. However, mechanisms for pupils to broaden their experiences in contributing to the local and wider community are underdeveloped. This limits their opportunities to develop social responsibility.
5. Teachers have implemented a strong personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, which is delivered effectively by caring staff. Leaders ensure that it builds on pupils' prior learning as they progress through the school and prepares them well for adult life. Pupils are confident and show resilience when faced with challenges. Leaders have developed a range of leadership opportunities for pupils in Year 6 and they enjoy their positions of responsibility.
6. Leaders actively promote the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. They ensure that appropriate checks are undertaken in a timely fashion. Governors' effective oversight, including external support, ensures that the school complies with all relevant health and safety and fire regulations.
7. The school's arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are effective. Staff have created a culture where pupils understand that they will be listened to and supported. Governors maintain strong oversight of safeguarding procedures through their systematic monitoring.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance, are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- evaluate the quality of teaching and learning systematically and robustly, to ensure initiatives are embedded promptly and thoroughly throughout the school in order that they have maximum impact on pupils' learning
- ensure that teaching in English and mathematics routinely provides suitable support and challenge so that all pupils achieve as well as possible
- ensure that the behaviour policy is followed consistently by all staff so that the small amount of low-level disruptive behaviour is reduced further
- provide a wider range of options for pupils to contribute to the lives of others in the community beyond school in order to increase opportunities for them to develop social responsibility.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders focus well on promoting the school's aim to inspire pupils to be adventurous, collaborative, and ready for the future. They actively promote pupils' wellbeing. Leaders at all levels prioritise a holistic approach to education that considers all aspects of pupils' lives. Leaders provide a wealth of opportunities within an exciting curriculum and through extra-curricular activities. Pupils readily demonstrate the school's core values in different areas of their school life.
9. Governors monitor the school's policies and procedures effectively to ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They offer appropriate challenge and support to leaders, ensuring The Independent School Standards (the Standards) are met and maintained consistently. Leaders have established links with external agencies to promote the wellbeing of pupils.
10. Leaders evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses regularly and make subsequent plans for school improvement accordingly. Initiatives to develop pupils' learning and achievement arise from this, such as the implementation of a new writing scheme. However, leaders do not monitor the quality of teaching robustly and systematically enough. As a result, not all staff adopt new initiatives quickly and in full. Where this is the case, the positive impact leaders intend for pupils is lessened and slower to take effect.
11. Leaders in the early years work together with staff to ensure that children settle in quickly and enjoy coming to school because they feel safe and happy. Pupils' confidence in school continues, helping them to engage well with their learning and display positive attitudes as they grow older. Pupils are consistently supported by staff who care about them and their futures.
12. Leaders have developed a systematic procedure for assessing and mitigating risks. Their assessment and management of risk, including educational visits, is effective, ensuring that pupils' safety and wellbeing are catered for across all aspects of the school day. This includes provision for those with medical, neuro-diverse or behavioural needs. Leaders have a suitable accessibility plan in place that they monitor regularly. They ensure that the school promotes principles of equality and respect effectively.
13. Leaders provide existing and prospective parents with the information they require to understand how the school is managed and pupils are kept safe. Leaders at all levels ensure that the school meets its requirements under the Equality Act and does not discriminate against pupils unlawfully. Leaders ensure that the school promotes principles of equality and respectful and fair treatment including through the curriculum.
14. Staff maintain a close working relationship with parents. In the early years, parents are informed about the achievement of their children, and other matters, through an online learning journal. These partnerships, involving high visibility of staff including leaders, are appreciated by parents and are an important aspect of pupils' learning. The close relationships enable teachers to address parental concerns quickly. Any complaints that arise are dealt with in line with the school's policy, which is implemented effectively so that issues are quickly resolved.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

15. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

16. Leaders have established a diverse and exciting curriculum that enables pupils to achieve a broad set of skills. There is age-appropriate curriculum planning, for the range of abilities, which supports the development of pupils' linguistic, literacy and numeracy skills. Specialist teaching in a range of subjects such as cookery, music and art enables pupils to grow in self-confidence, displaying focus and genuine enjoyment.
17. The curriculum is supplemented by a range of different experiences such as themed days, external competitions, sports fixtures and a plethora of educational visits, including residential trips. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively. They enjoy listening to each other and sharing their ideas.
18. Staff provide additional targeted support, in groups and individually, for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This enables them to access the curriculum and progress well. Effective support provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), such as breaking learning down into small steps, ensures they make good progress.
19. The curriculum is delivered well overall. Typically, teaching is carefully planned and thought out so pupils learn well. Teachers adapt what and how they teach aspects of the curriculum so that it suits the interests and abilities of individual learners. However, at times, in mathematics and English, some pupils are given work to do that is too easy and does not challenge them enough. When this is the case, pupils make slower progress than they are capable of.
20. Teachers use a variety of methods and activities to manage behaviour and cater for pupils' individual needs so that they are engaged and interested in their work. However, strategies and sanctions to manage low-level disruption are not always consistently applied.
21. Leaders have established a robust system for tracking pupils' progress. This, combined with governors' regular analysis of data, ensures that leaders monitor each pupil's progress effectively. Teachers use assessment information well when planning lessons to ensure that the content and approach meets pupils' needs. This leads to good outcomes for pupils, who attain well and finish each school year ready to move on to the next confidently.
22. Leaders have recently introduced many initiatives to further improve pupils' outcomes. Some, such as the introduction of mobile devices for children in Reception to Year 2, have had a positive impact on pupils' engagement with their learning. Pupils have responded enthusiastically to the implementation of a new creative writing scheme, describing the enjoyment and sense of achievement they gain through creative writing sessions.
23. Teachers provide pupils with regular feedback on their work. Teachers give pupils helpful prompts on how to extend their learning, which help them to make better progress. Leaders have been effective in encouraging pupils to view getting things wrong as a learning tool and not to give up until they have accomplished a goal or task. Teachers encourage pupils to be their 'brilliant best', which helps them to develop self-motivation.
24. In the early years, teachers provide children with opportunities to explore and practise concepts for themselves through well-resourced and stimulating activities. Teachers regularly check how well children are doing and adapt their planning to ensure all children make good progress. Teachers give

letter formation appropriate attention and make sure that children learn to form letters correctly when they start to write. They teach children about the sounds letters make clearly and systematically. This underpins the secure development of children's reading and writing skills. The use of the outside and woodland environment promotes children's physical development well. For example, children know how to balance when walking along tree trunks and why it is important to land properly when jumping.

25. Leaders have devised an effective extra-curricular programme that provides opportunities for pupils to learn new skills. A wide range of activities are offered which boost pupils' confidence to interact socially with others, such as through the karaoke club. Pupils and parents value highly both the opportunities provided and their suitability for all ages and aptitudes. The clubs and breaktimes provide an important space for pupils to have fun and relax away from the pressures of schoolwork. Pupils from Year 3 onwards have fixtures against other schools as well as competing in competitions at regional and national levels providing them with opportunities to develop their teamwork skills and excel in sports.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 26. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

27. The governors have implemented their strong 'charter for wellbeing', which includes both physical and mental aspects. Leaders successfully promote this through providing a rich and varied physical education (PE) programme, combined with an effective PSHE curriculum that includes relationships education. As a result, pupils develop a strong understanding of how to stay healthy, mentally and physically. For example, pupils know that sleeping and eating well help them to keep healthy. They understand the importance of connecting with others to remain mentally strong. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to be physically active, including in a safe, woodland environment which stimulates their senses and challenges them to be creative. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to take risks and test themselves physically, which helps to strengthen their emotional resilience.
28. Leaders have established a strong religious education programme that develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of different faiths and cultures effectively. This contributes well to pupils' demonstrable tolerance of and respect for others and their beliefs. When talking about their studies of contrasting religions, pupils recognise that whilst there are differences there are also similarities, such as the requirement for kindness, respect and tolerance. Pupils can see how these are similar to their own school values. Teachers use opportunities to enhance pupils' experience by drawing on the richness of the diversity within the school community.
29. Leaders promote wellbeing through providing staff with time to support the development of pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Such as through providing ample form-time to ensure daily 'well-being' check-ins are completed. Pupils enjoy the rewards systems and collect points for their houses and themselves as individuals. They are proud when their name appears on the celebration 'rocket' in the entrance hall. Staff ensure that traditional values of respect and courtesy are modelled successfully and rewarded appropriately. For example, pupils of all ages hold doors open, offer polite morning greetings and say 'thank you' when they are given something.
30. Leaders have implemented daily wellbeing check-ins, ensuring pupils are supported to reduce anxiety and to work through any issues. Pupils, including children in the early years, benefit from such care. They display well-developed emotional coping systems and have strong friendship groups.
31. Pupils know the difference between bullying and other negative behaviour. Leaders take a very strong stance against bullying and ensure that pupils feel able to report any concerns that arise. As a result, bullying is almost unheard of and any potential incidents are 'nipped in the bud' before they have a chance to take hold. Pupils behave well and school is a calm and orderly place. Behaviour not in line with school expectations is dealt with fairly by their teachers. Although pupils were not always clear as to what sanctions they should expect.
32. The premises are kept in a well-maintained condition. A robust maintenance schedule, covering areas such as water testing, fire prevention and firefighting equipment, using specialist contractors, ensures health and safety checks are undertaken thoroughly and in a timely fashion. First aid is administered, recorded and reported competently by well-trained staff. Pupils are kept safe and secure. They are suitably supervised and clear protocols for their safety are well established and understood.

33. Leaders ensure those with delegated responsibility for admissions and attendance have both the time and the appropriate support systems to deliver all the required legal responsibilities fully. The school is thorough in its oversight of pupils' attendance and reasons for lack of attendance. Where attendance falls below a set level, robust processes are used to support those families.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

34. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

35. Leaders promote a curriculum that enables pupils to make connections between different aspects of the world in which they live. This understanding is developed through subjects, theme days such as 'global be well day' and a carefully devised programme of assemblies. Lessons in French and Spanish enable pupils to learn about both the language and the culture of these countries. As a result of being part of a global family of schools, strong partnerships exist with schools in Chile and Barcelona. Pupils' understanding of different cultures is enriched with a plethora of opportunities to share experiences, for example, live-streaming a tour of the school to pupils across the world.
36. Teachers in the early years have established rules and routines that help children learn important values. They are taught to co-operate and work together as a team when tidying up. They spend time discussing likes and dislikes and learning about differences and similarities. As a result, they learn that all people are special and unique. Children share willingly and are kind. Leaders ensure that even at a young age children learn about democracy, for example, voting about whether or not they should be allowed to bring in toys from home.
37. The strong PSHE curriculum helps pupils develop economic and social awareness, preparing them well for their future lives. For example, lunchtime is used to help pupils learn about correct etiquette within a social situation. Pupils are taught about money at a level appropriate to their age, and in Year 6 develop a basic understanding of taxation. Leaders organise a varied set of experiences to strengthen pupils' understanding of social issues. For example, a 'rough sleeping night' for the oldest pupils, where they are given a limited meal and sleep in the sports hall, provides them with a better understanding of homelessness. Opportunities for pupils to translate their understanding of social responsibility into action through pupil-initiated events are limited. Developing this would enable pupils to engage proactively to make a positive change to the lives of others in the community beyond the school.
38. The school promotes respect for all and an appropriate understanding of British institutions effectively. For example, pupils celebrated the coronation of King Charles III with several cross-curricular events such as creating portraits of the King in the style of Andy Warhol's pop art. Staff encourage debate, which helps pupils develop collaborative working skills and improves their moral understanding of right and wrong. For example, in a discussion during the inspection, pupils philosophically explored the fact that there are rules of war and what this means to those involved.
39. Leaders have devised a wide range of opportunities for pupils in Year 6 to develop their leadership skills through holding positions of responsibility, such as prefects and lunch monitors.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

40. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

41. Leaders and governors have created a vigilant safeguarding culture throughout the school. Leaders implement a robust system of safeguarding checks, including an external annual safeguarding audit. The staff with specific responsibility for safeguarding meet weekly. They include members of the early years team, ensuring that the very youngest children's welfare is considered. Records are well kept and there are clear and well-understood systems for reporting safeguarding concerns. The safeguarding of pupils is given a high priority.
42. Staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Leaders, managers and staff all undergo thorough training, which is regularly updated, to keep abreast of developments in legislation and practice. Staff appreciate the quizzes that they regularly undertake to support their development of knowledge and skills in a range of areas such as child-on-child abuse. The school has links with agencies from the variety of counties where pupils reside. The school promptly seeks inter-agency support when necessary and maintains appropriate, detailed records.
43. Leaders ensure that pupils and staff are well protected from the possible dangers of the internet. When using individual devices, pupils are clear on the rules to keep themselves safe such as never sharing passwords. The school operates a multi-layered approach to internet safety that is monitored effectively by staff. Well-considered policies and actions help keep pupils safe whilst supporting their learning.
44. Leaders are meticulous in their recordkeeping about staff recruitment and maintain robust systems to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. A suitable central record of appointments is kept. This is regularly monitored, kept up to date and continually improved.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

45. **All the relevant Standards are met.**

The quality of the early years foundation stage in the registered early years provision

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

46. The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
47. The curriculum is planned well, following children's needs and interests. It is carefully implemented to meet the unique needs of each child and enable good progress. Parents' contributions about their child are valued. The curriculum is regularly monitored and evaluated to fully understand the impact on children's learning.
48. Good-quality care practices and practitioners' secure knowledge of the curriculum ensure that each child's needs are met. The support for children with emerging additional needs is particularly strong. Such needs are thoroughly monitored and information is shared with parents to provide a consistent approach. Regular meetings with parents enable these children to make good progress.
49. All children make good progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points as they move through the Nursery. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education by caring practitioners who know each child's needs well.
50. Relationships formed between children and their key person are strong and positive. Children are kind and helpful towards one another. They display personal and emotional security, consistently demonstrating that they feel safe, secure and happy.
51. Leaders evaluate practice within the setting based on their strong understanding of the early years learning requirements and knowledge of each child. This enables them to plan a secure way forward so that all children make good progress.

Quality of education

52. The quality of education is good.
53. The educational programmes and learning intentions are designed by leaders and practitioners based on their understanding of the early years curriculum and the needs and interests of each child. Valuable knowledge about each child is gained from observations and assessments undertaken at nursery and at home when children join the nursery. The curriculum is designed to build strong foundations on which children can grow and thrive. This is achieved as practitioners work together to identify each child's needs and interests. Staff provide a wide variety of activities to suit different children's preferred ways of learning. Children with SEND are well provided for by staff who understand their needs. Practitioners plan effectively and ensure that children are given tasks to do that challenge them sufficiently.
54. Practitioners understand well the areas of learning that they teach and how young children learn. Older children benefit from effective teaching, for example, as they learn how to use a stylus on a tablet and discuss this new knowledge with friends. Younger children demonstrate their developing skill when counting. Children enjoy story time as they listen well to familiar tales read enthusiastically and answer questions competently.

55. Staff use assessment well. They constantly review the implementation of the curriculum and monitor children's next steps. Staff ensure that what is taught and how it is taught is appropriate and demands enough of children. Practitioners share regular feedback with parents about their child's achievement and progress. Parents are very involved in their child's learning, sending 'wow' moments from home which contribute to practitioners' assessment of progress. Children are very happy to talk about what they have learnt and done at home.
56. The provision of extra learning opportunities enhances all areas of learning. Younger children enjoy reading books as they tell the story in their own words using simple vocabulary. As they get older their proficiency in language increases and they make good progress. Younger children are given opportunities to widen their experience and increase their listening skills during specialist music lessons. Children aged three and over also benefit from specialist teaching in drama, PE, computing and cooking. As they play in the outdoor woodland area children's physical development, independence and ability to take appropriate risks is strengthened. Parents acknowledge that these specialist lessons provide a rich experience for children, whilst practitioners recognise their positive impact on attainment and progress. Each child is prepared for future learning ensuring they are ready to transition to school with confidence.

Behaviour and attitudes

57. Behaviour and attitudes are good.
58. Constructive relationships are encouraged by practitioners who praise children's successes and model positive behaviour and attitudes. Practitioners spark curiosity, enthusiasm, and independent thought in the children. Children are encouraged to be fully engaged and focused by practitioners who support them well. For example, as children made a 'stick man' out of malleable materials, they confidently counted when making the stick man's eyes due to the encouragement they received from adults. Children play independently and explore with energy and enthusiasm. They improve their ball skills when catching and throwing with a friend, being willing to 'have a go' and taking risks to succeed.
59. Practitioners provide opportunities for children to use their imagination and encourage them to keep on trying. They concentrate as they learn new skills, such as discovering patterns to colour and using 'control' and 'select' options on the tablet with increasing confidence. Resources provided enable children to develop independent play such as when they talk to teddies, spending time putting them down to sleep and caring for them. Children express their feelings by dancing as they wave coloured ribbons using their whole body. Effective provision to improve physical skills enables them to jump and make good attempts to hop. Older children are inspired as they open an imaginary book and creep around the room acting out the story of Little Red Riding Hood.
60. Practitioners enable children to think creatively and critically as they provide resources and develop opportunities that spontaneously arise. For example, two-year-olds pretend natural objects are ice creams and share them with visitors. As older children make Christingles, they are encouraged to have their own ideas and to solve problems. During the inspection, when children discovered ice on the dinosaur table, they were very excited. In response to effective adult questioning, they stated that it was 'melting' and 'turning to water'. However, opportunities in the outdoor environment for greater problem-solving and creative and critical thinking are limited.

61. Both practitioners and parents recognise the importance of routines and the need for prompt arrival. This strong partnership between parents and practitioners encourages children's attendance and fosters excellent habits for future learning.

Personal development

62. The personal development of children is good.
63. Practitioners are very caring of all children. They know children's unique needs and interests and spend valuable time together. Children develop well emotionally and feel safe and secure due to the effectiveness of care practices, especially for younger children at sleep time. As older children are encouraged to talk about their feelings, they understand their emotions better. The high-quality care provided promotes children's emotional security and development of their character. This is recognised and appreciated by parents.
64. Children build positive relationships and manage their own feelings well. For example, when they saw a snowman on the interactive white board, younger children showed their happiness by beckoning their friends to come and see. The curriculum and care practices promote confidence and independence. If a child is not meeting their next steps, their key people provide effective support to meet their specific needs.
65. The encouragement provided by practitioners enables children to take appropriate risks to succeed. For example, during the inspection, children playing catch with an adult initially found it challenging to catch the ball. However, their resilience and the support of the key person then enabled them to catch it several times with success.
66. Children respond positively to well-established and consistent routines at lunch or sleep-time which strengthen their attachment to their key person. Those who need extra reassurance are cared for well, enabling them to feel safe.
67. Children are taught about the importance of brushing their teeth. They learn about healthy eating and enjoy nutritious food at mealtimes. Their medical and dietary needs are well provided for by practitioners. The kitchen staff are very supportive and ensure food safety.
68. Children also keep healthy by enjoying exercise when running or riding wheeled toys in the fresh air. Outdoor play, including learning in the woodland area, provides opportunities to increase independence and confidence.
69. When outside, children gain understanding of the need to be careful, supported well by practitioners as they manage risk. Children negotiate space carefully in play vehicles and manage the bends with skill when driving on the play road.
70. Hygiene habits, such as washing hands, are reinforced after outdoor play, before meals and at other times. Practitioners provide opportunities, as well as support and encouragement at mealtimes, to enable children to increase in independence. Two- and three-year-olds demonstrate this independence as they confidently use small knives and forks. Older children are encouraged to further develop independence by managing their own personal needs as they clear their plates and cutlery away.

71. Children learn important values to prepare them for the future. They vote for stories, learning that the majority vote wins. They learn to use kind and gentle hands and to share with one another. As children learn about Hanukkah and Diwali, they start to gain an understanding of diversity. Children help those in need when they collect toys for the Salvation Army. Whilst a visitor from the Salvation Army comes to read stories, there are no other links with the local community nor opportunities to meet people with other important roles in society.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management are good.

73. Policies, practice and values are shared by leaders and managers committed to an ambitious vision for future development. The development plan outlines areas for improvement to continue to ensure that inclusive care and education is provided for all children. The plan's current focus is on further developing children's communication skills, which the school has found have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Comprehensive tracking and monitoring of the plans ensures that they are implemented well and positively impact outcomes for the children.

74. Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities for professional development. Practitioners have strong professional knowledge, which helps them to make improvements in children's learning so that they achieve well. For example, a key person recently attended training about positive behaviour and shared the ideas gained with other practitioners. This helped to increase children's motivation.

75. The management is fully committed to the wellbeing of the practitioners. Through supervision and peer observations, staff are well cared for so that they feel valued and supported.

76. Managers work closely with practitioners to ensure each child, including those who have SEND, is supported well and receives good care and education. When needed, early monitoring is put in place enabling practitioners to understand children's needs and provide extra support. Regular information is sent out to parents, whose own contributions are valued. The partnership between managers, practitioners and parents is strong, especially when there are concerns about a child. This partnership ensures that a consistent approach to the implementation of support is taken by everyone, helping children to make good progress.

77. Governors recognise the value of the provision. They discern and evaluate the success of the registered provision through the work of a specialist governor for the early years. The early years has a dedicated section in governors' reports and is always included on their strategy days.

Safeguarding

78. Safeguarding is effective.

79. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is given the utmost priority in the Nursery, ensuring children are kept safe. There is a strong culture of shared responsibility by practitioners who fully understand how to protect children and ensure each child is safe and well cared for. Requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare are met. They are monitored regularly by leaders and managers who are committed to ensuring the safety of every child.

80. Leaders provide an extremely high level of care and safety for each child ensuring they are secure and happy. Parents recognise that their children are kept safe, especially at pick-up time. Staffing levels are suitable. All staff are extremely caring and vigilant and have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training. They fulfil their statutory duties rigorously, for example, making reasonable adjustments to ensure equality of opportunity for all, and in relation to the Prevent strategy, safeguarding and safer recruitment.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- provide further resources for outdoor learning that will enable children to solve problems and use their creative and critical thinking skills with greater independence
- provide opportunities for children to learn about people who have special roles in society by creating links with the local community.

The extent to which the school meets the requirements of the early years foundation stage

81. The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.

School details

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|---|--|
| School | Akeley Wood Junior School |
| Department for Education number | 941/6045 |
| Registered early years number | EY542265 |
| Address | Akeley Wood Junior School Wicken Park Wicken Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK19 6DA |
| Phone number | 01908 571231 |
| Email address | juniorschool@akeleywoodschoo.co.uk |
| Website | www.akeleywoodschoo.co.uk |
| Proprietor | Cognita Schools Ltd |
| Chair | Mrs Nicola Lambros |
| Head | Mrs Vanessa Conlan |
| Age range | 1 to 11 |
| Number of pupils | 226 |
| Number of children in the early years registered setting | 66 |
| Date of previous inspection | 5 June 2019 |

Information about the school

82. Akeley Wood Junior School is an independent co-educational day school in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. It is owned and governed by the Cognita group of schools. There is a senior school that is inspected separately. The current executive head, who oversees both schools, was appointed in September 2023.
83. There are 66 children in the early years, which comprises a registered Nursery for children up to the age of three and a Reception class.
84. The school has identified 37 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are no pupils in the school with an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
85. English is an additional language for five pupils.
86. The school states its aims are to inspire a community of global citizens who feel empowered to be active and socially aware, and to develop character by encouraging pupils to be adventurous, collaborative and future ready. The aims build on the core values of resilience, charity, kindness, and respect.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

5 to 7 November 2023

87. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

88. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

89. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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For more information, please visit isi.net