

School inspection report

4 to 6 March 2025

Bedford Greenacre Independent School

Manton Lane

Bedford

Bedfordshire

MK41 7FZ

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. The leaders of the school foster an inclusive community built on mutual respect. Pupils of all backgrounds and cultures are welcomed and staff know pupils well. Pupils are confident and well prepared for the next steps in their education and for their future lives. Leaders in the early years create a broad curriculum. Children enjoy their learning and are well prepared for future challenges in their education.
2. Leaders and staff maintain a supportive academic environment through respectful relationships and a structured approach to learning. This approach is helped by the effective identification of the requirements of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and the success of measures to support them. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to prepare for a variety of qualifications to suit their needs and aspirations. Pupils make good progress through the school and achieve well in all subjects.
3. The school places particular emphasis on supporting and developing pupils' sense of self-esteem. The positive nature of the relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves contributes to an atmosphere in which pupils can develop their confidence and an understanding of their own positive traits and areas for development.
4. There has been a recent change in premises and leaders have assessed the associated risks effectively. They have established suitable procedures to monitor health and safety matters, although not all of these have become fully embedded in practice.
5. Leaders promote pupils' respect for others and their cultural understanding, helping to prepare them for life in a modern, diverse society. Pupils behave well in lessons and outside the classroom. A range of opportunities enable pupils to develop skills of leadership and learning and to take responsibility for others. Senior pupils are positive about their preparation for making future career choices. However, the careers programme for pupils in the younger years does not always provide pupils with all the information they need.
6. Leaders promote a shared understanding of safeguarding responsibilities amongst adults in the school. Pupils are comfortable to raise any concerns they might have. If concerns are raised, leaders take prompt and appropriate action.

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:

- ensure that careers guidance enables pupils of all ages to feel prepared for their future lives
- ensure that systems for monitoring health and safety procedures are implemented consistently.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

7. Leaders create an environment that fosters pupils' self-confidence as they prepare for their future lives, in keeping with the core values of the school. Leaders know pupils well and ensure that they are supported appropriately.
8. Leaders in the early years have the required knowledge and skills to monitor staff and ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the children. They develop a broad and balanced curriculum so that children develop their skills and understanding across all areas of learning. Leaders regularly review provision and use assessments to identify areas of the curriculum that need further focus and improvement.
9. Governors maintain close oversight of leaders' actions through dedicated committees and regular reports to the governing body. They visit the school and meet with staff and pupils when assuring themselves that leaders fulfil their responsibilities and promote pupils' wellbeing.
10. Leaders draw up suitable policies and procedures for all aspects of school life, in line with legal and statutory requirements. Policies are understood by staff and pupils. Governors and leaders review policies regularly and check that they are implemented effectively and consistently. Following the school's move to a new site, some documents are in need of updating to ensure that practice matches the stated wording.
11. Leaders have a clear understanding of the need to identify and manage potential risks in all aspects of school life. They make effective use of the school development plan to identify risks, and the means by which they may be mitigated.
12. Leaders have taken appropriate steps to ensure the suitability of the accommodation and facilities on the school's new premises. A suitable programme of reviewing health and safety needs and requirements is in place, enhanced by advice from external consultants. Some recently updated systems are not yet fully embedded in practice. Leaders have suitable arrangements in place to review and monitor procedures and to adapt these in response to changing circumstances.
13. An appropriate complaints policy is in place. Leaders address concerns in line with the stated procedures. They record concerns in detail and take appropriate action when required and within the stated timescales.
14. The school's website provides helpful information for prospective and current parents, covering academic, pastoral and organisational aspects of the school. Parents receive regular information on their children's progress throughout the year in addition to meetings with teachers. The school provides the local authorities with the necessary information relating to any pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, including any funding implications.
15. Leaders meet their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, including through a suitable accessibility plan. This has been adapted appropriately in light of the school's relocation to new premises and is implemented effectively.

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

16. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

17. Leaders have drawn up a curriculum that provides a suitable breadth of study for pupils of all ages. Pupils' positive relationships with staff and their peers enable them to feel comfortable and safe within the classroom. This helps to create an environment in which pupils are confident to contribute their ideas and to ask questions. Pupils of all ages make good progress.
18. Teachers in the senior school develop pupils' knowledge by explaining the links between practical activities and prior learning so that pupils understand how they are connected and appreciate the purpose of their learning. Teachers present subject material in interesting ways, reflecting their broad subject knowledge and ensuring that pupils are confident when undertaking the tasks set in lessons. Teachers manage time well in lessons and support pupils' learning. They make effective use of discussion to develop specific teaching points so that pupils' understanding is enhanced, such as when analysing critics' views of *Hamlet*.
19. Teachers in the junior school maintain supportive and positive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils are self-motivated and engaged in their learning. Teachers support pupils' needs, showing a clear awareness of what is best for each individual and planning lessons accordingly. Teachers have secure knowledge of their subjects, and teaching methods encourage intellectual effort and respectful debate. Useful verbal and written feedback support pupils' progress.
20. In the Reception class, children benefit from a well-considered, broad curriculum that prepares them well for their future learning. Staff make effective decisions about what skills need to be taught through adult-led learning experiences. They provide opportunities for children to practise these skills independently so that they make good progress. Staff identify children's needs and interests and use these to plan activities that are well matched to children's ages and stage of development. Children make good progress and apply their knowledge to new contexts such as when using their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to decode blended sounds.
21. Leaders have put in place systems for monitoring the progress and attainment of pupils throughout the school. Teachers undertake regular assessments and share these with parents and pupils at regular intervals. They use assessments to set and review pupils' targets throughout the year. Teachers support pupils' learning through verbal feedback, peer marking and the formal marking of written work. These strategies enable pupils to understand how to improve their work and make progress.
22. Procedures are in place to ensure the needs of pupils who have SEND are identified, understood and met so that they can make good progress. Leaders liaise closely with teachers to plan a variety of strategies to support pupils who have a diverse range of learning needs. These include the use of learning assistants in lessons and individual programmes that help pupils to consolidate and extend their learning.
23. Leaders ensure that policies, plans and schemes of work take into account the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). These pupils have access to a structured programme of language learning. Teachers recognise the different levels of need and adapt their planning accordingly to enable pupils who speak EAL to make good progress in their language skills and across the curriculum.

24. There is a programme of extra-curricular activities for pupils throughout the school, including the sixth form. These additional opportunities extend and consolidate pupils' learning and build their interest and enthusiasm in activities ranging from a singing group to cookery clubs and outdoor pursuits trips.

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

25. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

26. Leaders promote values that focus on shared responsibilities and the creation of a caring environment. High levels of mutual respect between pupils and staff contribute to pupils' emotional wellbeing and confidence. Pupils receive individual support from their teachers. Leaders seek and respond to pupils' views.
27. Adults in the early years form warm and supportive relationships with children, helping them to understand their own feelings and regulate their behaviour. Children have daily opportunities to be physically active, indoors and outdoors, for example when exploring different dance moves to 'wake their bodies up'. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop the muscle strength and dexterity they need to hold a pencil comfortably and enjoy writing. Children know how to make friends and understand how to manage their emotions and expectations. They learn to be helpful and self-reliant, confident to ask for help but ready to try and do things for themselves.
28. Leaders provide a comprehensive programme of weekly personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Lessons include content that is wide-ranging and relevant to pupils' needs. Pupils learn about what can keep them healthy mentally and physically. Teachers help pupils to develop their self-awareness and sense of self-esteem in lessons which include opportunities for discussion and reflection.
29. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum includes topics such as conflict and the differences between positive and toxic relationships. This helps pupils to understand the features of healthy relationships and to consider how to deal with potential problems in their lives. Leaders seek pupils' views on their lessons and review plans in response to their suggestions, such as the teaching of some content in single-gender groups.
30. The school provides a full programme of physical education (PE), both within and beyond the curriculum. The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to develop their fitness and sporting skills in well-planned lessons taught by specialist teachers. Pupils participate in team sports, attend national sporting festivals and play fixtures against other schools, gaining success in regional competitions. Pupils in the sixth form make regular use of the facilities of a nearby sports centre for further opportunities for physical exercise. A range of co-curricular sports activities offers pupils the chance to improve and develop their physical and mental health.
31. Leaders provide clear expectations of pupils' behaviour and about the system of sanctions. Pupils respond positively to the guidance provided and behave well towards each other. Open communication between pupils and teachers creates an understanding of the need for mutual respect, so that serious behavioural incidents are rare.
32. Leaders have clear strategies in place for responding to allegations of bullying. Pupils learn through PSHE lessons and assemblies how to deal with any problems and know where to turn for help. When situations do occur, the school's pastoral staff act effectively. Pupils support each other and prevent bullying in their roles as anti-bullying ambassadors.
33. Governors and leaders establish suitable procedures to ensure that the school environment is secure. They review trends and prioritise the safety of pupils and staff on both sites, whilst actively

promoting their physical and emotional wellbeing. The leadership team ensures that health and safety procedures are followed, and that comprehensive records of checks are maintained.

34. The admission and attendance registers are maintained appropriately. Leaders work closely with external agencies to support any pupils with attendance concerns. The school informs the local authorities of any pupils arriving or leaving at non-standard transition times.
35. Suitable facilities and procedures for the provision of first aid are in place. Checks of the contents of first aid kits have not been carried out consistently. These checks were completed during the inspection.
36. Leaders put in place comprehensive arrangements for fire safety which are understood by pupils and staff. Actions requiring attention identified in the most recent fire risk assessment had not all been completed prior to the inspection. These actions were undertaken during the visit.
37. Pupils are supervised throughout the day by a suitable number of staff.

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

38. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

39. Leaders promote mutual respect and an understanding of the diverse cultures in modern society through a range of curriculum areas and assemblies. In the senior school, the religious studies curriculum is delivered through the PSHE programme, assemblies and special events, alongside the relevant contributions of other subjects. Pupils learn about issues such as racism and prejudice and the importance of upholding human rights. Pupils demonstrate maturity in their interactions with each other in lessons and outside the classroom.
40. Pupils in the junior school understand the role that rules play in making sure that they can work and play together and how this mirrors the rule of law in British society. They learn about the importance of human rights through studying the origins of the United Nations and the Charter for the Rights of the Child. Leaders identify informative external resources to support the PSHE programme so that senior school pupils develop a secure knowledge of and respect for the law. These include opportunities for pupils to learn about local community issues through visits from the police.
41. Children in Reception develop positive friendships with their peers, working and playing co-operatively with others. They learn about the range of cultures and faiths that make up their school and the wider world, developing an understanding of their similarities and differences. Children engage with their local community through visits to nearby farms. Staff help them to become aware of the needs of others through fundraising activities.
42. The curriculum provides pupils with an understanding of democracy and the workings of the society in which they are living. This is developed further through school events such as mock elections.
43. Leaders emphasise the importance of a tolerant community and make clear the unacceptability of discriminatory behaviour or speech. Relationships between pupils and staff and amongst pupils themselves are based on mutual respect and acceptance and valuing of their differences. Leaders encourage and enable pupils to tell each other about their own cultures and traditions, including through a day dedicated to the sharing of these experiences.
44. Staff help pupils to take responsibility for their actions and show respect for their environment and those around them. Pupils engage with the local community through volunteering efforts as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) and musical performances at residential care homes. Pupils take the lead in raising money for local and national charities. Older pupils support younger ones through their varied leadership and mentoring roles, such as on school councils or working with individuals in lessons. Pupils in the junior school take on roles of responsibility as representatives on the school council and as anti-bullying ambassadors.
45. Careers guidance is integrated into the PSHE programme for all year groups and supplemented by career evenings, assemblies and individual interviews with senior staff. This helps pupils feel prepared to take their place in society. Leavers go on to a range of destinations, including university, apprenticeships and the world of employment. The programme for pupils in younger years is less thorough, and as a result some pupils are less confident about planning their futures.

46. Pupils of all ages gain a secure understanding of how to manage money through lessons focused on financial education. Junior school pupils learn where money comes from and move on to topics such as budgeting, borrowing and saving. Senior school pupils discuss topics such as value for money and ethical financial decisions. Pupils who are preparing to leave school learn how to take responsibility for their own personal finances with reference to student loans and part-time work.

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

47. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

48. Leaders promote a clear understanding throughout the school that safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Those in safeguarding leadership roles work together effectively, sharing their expertise across the school.
49. Safeguarding leaders are suitably trained. They make use of external courses to broaden their understanding of safeguarding risks and practice. In turn, they provide comprehensive training for staff, governors and volunteers, including through both online courses and in-person sessions in staff meetings.
50. Staff are confident in their knowledge of thresholds and processes to follow, including when responding to disclosures. Safeguarding concerns about pupils are reported, recorded and managed appropriately.
51. Leaders maintain detailed records and work effectively with local authorities and other organisations. The procedure for sharing any concerns about adults in school is understood by staff and leaders. A suitable log is maintained which details such occurrences and the actions taken.
52. Governors maintain close oversight of safeguarding procedures through regular formal and informal communication with leaders and reports to the governing body. Governors undertake an annual review of safeguarding policy and procedures.
53. Recruitment checks are carried out accurately for all adults involved with the school and the register of these checks is kept appropriately on a single central record (SCR) of appointments.
54. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe, including when using the internet, as a result of frequent guidance from leaders and teachers. There are effective systems within the school for monitoring and filtering the use of online resources. These are regularly checked, and appropriate action is taken when attempted breaches occur.
55. Pupils are confident that there are trusted adults in school with whom they can share their concerns. Leaders encourage pupils to speak openly with pastoral staff and make provision for pupils to report concerns anonymously if required.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

56. 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

57. The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
58. Leaders pride themselves on providing children with high-quality care. Staff understand that for children to be ready to learn, they first need to feel safe and secure. Staff ensure that the setting is a welcoming space for all children, and their families. Children are greeted with warm smiles. Children consistently show high levels of wellbeing. Staff meet their care needs with courtesy and dignity. Staff explain gently to babies what they will be doing before they change nappies. They enable babies to eat at their own pace and ensure mealtimes are social, happy occasions.
59. Leaders have high aspirations for all children. They are clear about the broad set of skills they want children to leave the setting with. For example, they want children to be independent, to be able to express their needs and opinions, and to know about the world in which they live. Leaders ensure staff understand these broad aims for the curriculum. However, there is not enough consideration given to the specific skills and knowledge children need to gain, and in what order, to reach these overall targets for learning.
60. Across the setting, children behave very well. Staff are good role models. From the moment that children arrive to start their day, staff speak to them politely and listen to them closely. Staff lead by example. They consistently model good manners and helpful behaviour. Children are encouraged, and helped, to be equally polite and considerate.

Quality of education

61. The quality of education is good.
62. Staff accurately identify children who may need extra support to reach their full potential. Leaders have a detailed understanding of the support that is available for these children and their families from outside agencies. Leaders show their best endeavours in getting children the help they may need. They put in place a programme of targeted support to help children achieve well and ensure that they enjoy attending. Where children have a range of complex needs, these are met well, and staff successfully help children join in and feel part of life in the setting.
63. Leaders aim to take a highly personalised approach to each child's learning. Staff ensure that activities and resources reflect the different areas of learning and children's current interests. However, the intent for the curriculum is not defined precisely enough to ensure that activities are consistently well matched to children's current stage of development. Children are on occasion asked to do things that are too hard, which results in a lack of engagement and loss of interest. For instance, younger children are expected to thread bobbins onto string, but do not yet have the fine motor skills required to do this.
64. Staff deliver a well-taught programme of learning for older children that prepares them well for later, more formal literacy learning. Children who need extra support with their language development take part in activities that focus on their speaking and listening skills. Children grow in

confidence during these times. They practise saying new words, which adds to their developing vocabulary.

Behaviour and attitudes

65. Behaviour and attitudes are good.
66. With the consistent and clear guidance that staff provide, children learn well to manage their emotions and consider the needs of others. Staff ensure routines are well embedded. This helps children understand what is expected of them. Children learn that by co-operating swiftly with requests from staff they will have more time to take part in the activities available.
67. Children are inquisitive about the world around them and keen to explore the activities on offer. They have ample opportunities to make choices about what to do and to follow their interests. Staff notice what children enjoy doing and, when they join in with children's play, they do so in ways that encourage them to persevere. Staff show babies how to pour and scoop sand and use their interactions to help maintain their interest as they practise this new skill. Staff join older children as they take on different roles of doctors and patients. They skilfully enhance this play experience for children in ways that encourage them to ask questions and find out more about the people who help them. Children are developing into curious learners.
68. Staff teach children the skills they need to be able to focus and listen, ensuring that they can learn well from planned activities. For example, from a young age children take part in activities that teach them the skills they need to sit, listen and join in. By the time children are in pre-school they are able to sustain that focus for prolonged periods, therefore benefiting from the range of well-delivered experiences on offer.

Personal development

69. The personal development of children is good.
70. Staff help children to develop a secure sense of who they are. Staff recognise how important it is for children to gain a positive view of the diverse world in which they live. Staff weave different cultures into daily experiences. For example, they sing songs in different languages for babies, while pre-school activities enhance children's understanding of the world in which they live. Children enjoy a programme of local community outings, and family members are invited in to share their customs. This helps children learn about the similarities and differences between themselves and others.
71. Throughout the setting, the trusting bonds developed between staff and children are evident. Babies confidently begin to move around the room, exploring with the knowledge that familiar staff are always nearby. As they master new skills, such as rolling and crawling, staff show genuine delight in their achievements. Staff and babies exchange lots of smiles and giggles. The secure attachments developed with staff continue through the setting.
72. Leaders consider carefully what children need to manage change. Leaders offer home visits to get to know children before they start attending. When the time comes for children to move through the setting to a different room, they have opportunities to visit the new room and spend time with the different staff. This helps children to settle swiftly into their new environment.

Leadership and management

73. Leadership and management are good.
74. Leaders support staff effectively to provide high-quality care and education. However, staffing restraints have had an impact on the amount of time that leaders have to monitor staff practice, leading to some inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching. Sometimes there is a mismatch between what leaders think is happening in the rooms and the reality of staff practice. For example, although there is an expectation that staff will use routine times to teach children the skills they need to do things for themselves, this practice is not consistent.
75. Parent partnerships are a strength of the setting. These partnerships are successful because staff recognise that parents are children's first educators. Staff are especially successful at communicating with parents to find out about children's routines and interests, so they can provide the consistency of care that babies and children need.
76. Leaders support the wellbeing of staff effectively. Staff know that leaders are readily available to offer advice and words of encouragement. Leaders ensure that staff workloads are manageable. They allocate time for training within the working day and ensure assessment arrangements are not overly burdensome. This helps establish a settled staff team, which in turn ensures consistency in the care that the children receive.

Safeguarding

77. Safeguarding is effective.
78. Leaders ensure that staff have the knowledge and confidence they need to recognise and respond to any concerns that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. Staff attend regular training to keep their understanding of safeguarding up to date. They understand how to share any concerns promptly, including how to escalate any concerns to outside agencies if necessary.
79. Leaders follow robust recruitment procedures to ensure that those they employ to work with children are suitable to do so. They carry out required checks and put in place a suitable induction programme, with a strong focus on making certain that staff new to the nursery understand their role in keeping children safe.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- define more precisely what children need to learn, and when, so staff are better placed to teach the specific skills and knowledge children need
- allocate enough time for effective oversight, so that arrangements to support staff can focus more clearly on helping them develop their teaching skills and enhance the delivery of the curriculum further.

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

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

School details

School	Bedford Greenacre Independent School
Department for Education number	822/6004
Registered early years number	2597789
Registered charity number	1194080
Address	Manton Lane Bedford Bedfordshire MK41 7FZ
Phone number	01234 352031
Email address	hello@bedfordgreenacre.co.uk
Website	www.bedfordgreenacre.co.uk
Proprietor	Bedford Greenacre Independent School Ltd
Chair	Mr Steve Williamson
Headteacher	Mr Ian Daniel
Age range	6 weeks to 18 years
Number of pupils	737
Number of children in the early years registered setting	118
Date of previous inspection	25 to 28 January 2022

Information about the school

81. Bedford Greenacre Independent School is a co-educational day school with pupils aged from 6 weeks to 18 years. The main school moved to its current site in Manton Lane, Bedford, in January 2025. This consists of a junior school for pupils aged 4 to 11, senior school for those aged 11 to 16, and a sixth form. The nursery, for children aged 6 months to 4 years, remains on a separate premises nearby. The school is a registered charity overseen by a governing body, with the proprietor designated as Bedford Greenacre Independent School Ltd.
82. There are 7 children in the early years on the main school site in a single Reception class. The separate site caters for 118 children in six Nursery classes.
83. The school has identified 183 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 13 of whom have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
84. The school has identified English as an additional language for 33 pupils.
85. The school states its aims are to create a sense of caring, belonging and pride. It seeks to encourage its pupils to reach their potential, both academically and personally, so that they can move into adulthood with confidence.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

4 to 6 March 2025

86. A team of eight inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

87. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- 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.

88. 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**.

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For more information, please visit isi.net