

Rowanfield Junior School

Alstone Lane, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL51 8HY

Inspection dates 8–9 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This is a school where all pupils, whatever their background, age or ability, flourish and learn very well.
- Pupils make excellent progress in all subjects, and in their social development. Their standards continue to rise year on year.
- The school very carefully assesses pupils' skills and abilities when pupils join the school. This means that pupils get exactly the right help so they can make rapid progress from their different starting points.
- Teaching is consistently at least good, and is often outstanding. Teachers' questions make pupils think hard. Pupils are clear on how to succeed. Occasionally, planned activities do not fully stretch pupils and they are not moved on quickly enough to the next activity once they have finished their work.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in the school. They are proud of their school, and their very positive attitudes to learning are a significant factor in their excellent progress.
- The school works very effectively to support all groups of pupils, including those with behavioural and emotional problems, and pupils eligible for the pupil premium. As a result, these pupils achieve very well.
- The outstanding leadership of the co-headteachers means there is a relentless drive to improve all aspects of the work of the school for the benefit of its pupils.
- Staff are committed to continuously improving their practice.
- The school's curriculum provides pupils with interesting lessons and experiences which are well matched to their interests and abilities. Pupils enjoy learning because their lessons are fun.
- Governors are very well informed and effectively support and challenge school leaders to improve the school still further.
- The local authority uses the school as a model of best practice when supporting other schools to improve their teaching, learning or leadership.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, five of which were jointly observed with school leaders. All classes and full-time teachers were seen. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, school leaders and governors. The lead inspector also spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority and with the Chief Executive Officer of the school's academy trust.
- Inspectors spoke to a small number of parents at the start of each day of the inspection, and at a parents' coffee morning. There were not enough responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to show any results, but inspectors looked at the results of the school's own recent survey of parents' views. They also considered 35 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at documents including the school's own self-evaluation, its plans for improvement, school information on the progress of pupils and at nationally published results. They also looked at records of pupils' behaviour and attendance and at how the school keeps pupils safe.

Inspection team

Mike Phipps, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Shahnaz Maqsood	Additional Inspector
Catherine Beeks	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly larger than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much higher than average. The pupil premium is the additional funding provided by the government for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their home language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is much higher than average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Rowanfield Junior School converted to become an academy on 1 August 2011. When its predecessor school, also called Rowanfield Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding.
- Since January 2010 the school has been led by two co-headteachers who also share the leadership of Springbank Primary Academy, a local school in the same multi-academy trust.
- In September 2013 the governing bodies of Rowanfield Junior School and Springbank Primary Academy merged to form one federated governing body with responsibility for both schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that no time is lost in lessons and pupils fulfil their potential by:
 - planning more challenging tasks for those pupils who finish an activity quickly
 - moving pupils on to the next task as soon as they are ready so that they are fully stretched to do their best

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- School leaders have put in place a battery of tests and assessments for pupils as soon as they join the school in Year 3. This gives leaders a very accurate view of pupils' starting points, many of which are significantly below average. Pupils get effective help so they make rapid progress from their starting points. By Year 6, pupils have caught up very well and their standards are at national average levels. Standards are rising year on year.
- Progress is excellent in a wide range of subjects. All teachers make rigorous and regular checks on how well pupils are doing.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are encouraged to read regularly at home and at school. By Year 6, pupils can talk with enthusiasm about their favourite books and authors.
- Pupils' writing skills are developed very well. This is because pupils have the chance to write at length in different subjects and for different purposes.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are very well supported. The school's 'BEST' (Behavioural and Emotional Support Team) works very well with individual pupils and their families. As a result, these pupils make similar progress to that of other pupils, and their standards are above those of similar pupils nationally.
- Funds from the pupil premium have been spent on a dedicated 'PPIT' (Pupil Intervention Team), which includes two part-time teachers, and on setting up a dedicated 'Pit Stop' learning room. This provision is very effective; pupils eligible for the pupil premium make progress in line with that of all other pupils. In 2013, supported pupils were less than a term behind other pupils in mathematics and less than half a term behind in English. This is much smaller than the gap nationally.
- Pupils make excellent progress in developing their skills in mathematics. They enjoy applying their skills and solving problems in different subjects and lessons.
- Pupils' personal and social skills develop very well. There are many chances for pupils to work together in pairs and groups so they learn to work as part of a team. They make excellent progress in their speaking and listening skills as they move through the school.
- More-able pupils make similar excellent progress to that of other pupils. They are identified in teachers' lesson planning so tasks can be set at the right level. Although the number of pupils joining the school in Year 3 who had reached the higher levels of attainment in Key Stage 1 are very low, a much greater proportion than this reaches higher levels of attainment by Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The impact of teaching over time on pupils' achievement is outstanding. Teaching is hardly ever less than good, and is often outstanding. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Pupils are very keen to answer questions and to offer opinions.
- Teachers know their pupils very well and plan activities which are closely matched to the different needs and abilities of pupils. This was seen in many lessons, for example in an English lesson in which the teacher had planned a range of reading activities for different groups of Year 6 pupils at just the right level of difficulty.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ask questions that make pupils think hard. For example, in a mathematics lesson, Year 3 pupils made very good progress in understanding different methods of addition because the questions posed by adults helped them to think of strategies and answers for themselves.
- The school has consistent and effective systems to make sure that pupils know how to do well. The school's vision of 'Dream, Drive, Duty and Dazzle' is used to show pupils what levels they should be aiming to achieve. Teachers consistently use visual displays in classrooms to make

sure that pupils are always clear on what they are learning, and why.

- Teachers' marking is excellent. It is detailed and frequent, and gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils get the chance to assess their own work and that of classmates. Teachers often pose further questions or set additional problems in their marking, and pupils are regularly given time to respond to this marking, creating a valuable dialogue in pupils' books about their learning.
- Occasionally, pupils are not challenged to do their very best because they are not moved on quickly enough to the next activity once they have finished their work. This means time is lost, and some pupils' progress slows as a result.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They want to do well in school, and know why it is important to work hard and behave well. They told inspectors they are proud of their school.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning are a significant factor in their excellent progress. Pupils cooperate and work together well, and support each other's learning well by, for example, critically evaluating the work of their classmates.
- Pupils are respectful towards one another and to their teachers. Racist incidents are almost unknown. Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded carefully by staff. School figures show that the frequency of these incidents has fallen to very low levels as pupils respond well to systems to ensure their excellent behaviour. Pupils enjoyed explaining to inspectors the rewards they get for working hard and behaving well.
- Pupils told inspectors they enjoy school because teachers make lessons fun. When asked to give a mark out of ten for how much she enjoyed school, one girl replied 'a gazillion'.
- The school works very effectively to support all groups of pupils, including those with behavioural and emotional problems. The school works very well with parents of pupils with behaviour difficulties. One said this was the first school which had really helped and supported her, whilst another said the school had helped her to develop her parenting skills so she could improve the behaviour of her child.
- Older pupils respond well to chances to take on school responsibilities, such as house captains, sports leaders, playground friends or membership of the school council.
- Attendance continues to improve each year and is now at broadly national average levels. This continuous improvement is due to school leaders' effective work with families whose children in the past did not attend regularly enough.
- The school runs its own free breakfast club. This is a welcome resource for parents and provides a healthy breakfast in a caring and welcoming atmosphere. More vulnerable pupils have their own breakfast club where they have the chance to develop their social skills and to build strong relationships with members of staff.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe in the school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, and have an excellent understanding of the risks posed, for example by using the internet or by being asked to try drugs. They are aware of different types of bullying, but say bullying is very rare in this school. School records confirm this. If bullying did happen, pupils are confident it would stop if they told an adult. Arrangements to keep pupils safe are thorough and meet all legal requirements.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The outstanding leadership of the co-headteachers means there is a clear idea, shared with all staff, of where the school is going, and a relentless drive to improve all aspects of the school. The self-evaluation process is systematic and accurate, so school leaders focus on improving the right things.
- The management of teachers' performance is comprehensive and effective. All leaders, including

middle leaders, regularly check the quality of teaching. Any underperformance is tackled robustly, and there are good opportunities for teachers and support staff to develop their skills. Teachers are encouraged to reflect continuously on their own performance and to identify how they can improve. As a result, all staff are committed to continuously improving the quality of teaching.

- The school effectively develops its own staff as leaders. Teachers are encouraged to take on additional leadership roles, both in Rowanfield Junior School and beyond. Teachers with responsibility for different areas of the school's work make a very positive contribution to the school's outstanding provision for its pupils.
- The school's innovative curriculum provides pupils with interesting lessons and experiences which are well matched to their interests and abilities. It is enhanced by a range of visits and visitors to support learning and raise standards.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils learn about other religions and cultures and were particularly affected by, for example, a pupil from Uganda talking to them about the effect of the arrival of a water pump in his village.
- The new sports funding is used to pay for a sports coach who works alongside class teachers to develop their skills, on broadening the range of sports available to pupils, and on increasing pupils' chances to represent their school in competitive sports. The school has good plans to evaluate the impact of this funding.
- The school's determination to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well, whatever their starting points, demonstrates its commitment to equal opportunities and to making sure that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The local authority uses this outstanding school as a model of best practice when supporting other schools to improve their teaching and learning. Senior and middle leaders work in other schools from time to time to offer first-hand support, guidance and training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are experienced and well informed. They are ambitious for the school to continue to improve. Governors effectively support and challenge school leaders. They have a clear idea of the school's strengths, and what still needs to be improved further. Some governors visit lessons as part of their responsibility for certain areas of the school's work. As a result, they are well informed about the quality of teaching, and they have a good understanding of how teachers' performance is managed, and how any under performance is tackled. Governors have a good understanding of what data on pupils' performance tell them about how well the school is doing. Finances are very well managed. Governors have a detailed knowledge of how extra funding, for example from the pupil premium, is spent, and what impact this has on pupils' achievement. They are well informed about their statutory duties, and many governors have undertaken further training to help them carry out their roles.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	115591
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	432034

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Lewis
Headteacher	Claire Savory, Shirley Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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