

Rothwell Junior School

Gladstone Street, Rothwell, Kettering, NN14 6ER

Inspection dates 6–7 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2	
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2	
Quality of teaching	Good	2	
Achievement of pupils	Good	2	

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils' attainment in writing is above average.
- Pupils of different abilities and backgrounds make good progress because they are taught well and are strongly motivated to succeed.
- Teachers provide interesting and challenging work that encourages pupils to think deeply, and they keep a close check on pupils' understanding during lessons.
- Pupils read and write well because they have plentiful opportunities to use and improve these skills in English lessons and other subjects.
- The school is improving because leaders and governors keep a close check on teaching and pupils' learning and welfare. They have created a climate where staff can improve their skills and pupils can learn in a safe and secure atmosphere.
- Pupils confirm, and their parents agree, that they feel safe. They behave well in and out of lessons and are polite and courteous.
- Positive relationships, among pupils and with the adults, are a strength of the school, and this helps pupils to achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make slower progress in mathematics than they do in reading and writing, because they have too few opportunities to use and improve their mathematical skills when they work in other subjects.
- A few pupils are persistently absent.
- Pupils' work in other subjects is not always as neat as it is in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, two of which were observed jointly with either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Inspectors heard pupils read, looked at the work in their books and attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, staff with leadership roles, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, two representatives of the multi-academy trust and an external consultant who supports schools in the trust.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including a summary of the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plan, policies aimed at keeping pupils safe, and information about governance and the management of teachers’ performance.
- The views of 29 parents and carers were analysed through their responses on the Parent View website. Inspectors also spoke with 12 parents during the inspection, and examined the school’s own survey of parents’ views.
- Inspectors took account of the 34 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Keith Williams, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Nicola Harwood	Additional Inspector
Dawn White	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average junior school.
- Rothwell Junior School converted to become an academy in September 2013. When its predecessor school, also called Rothwell Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The school is federated with Rothwell Victoria Infant School and is part of the Montsaye Community Learning Partnership, a multi-academy trust. Rothwell Junior School and Rothwell Victoria Infant School share a governing body and the headteacher is executive headteacher of both schools. The headteacher provides support for other schools in the trust.
- Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, less than a quarter of the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average. In this school, this relates to those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school operates a before-school club, which formed part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to make faster progress in mathematics by giving them more opportunity to use and improve their mathematical skills when they work in other subjects.
- Work more closely with the parents of pupils who are persistently absent to make sure their children come to school regularly.
- Make sure pupils present their work neatly in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides a strong drive for improvement and is supported well by other senior leaders, staff and governors. Together, they have created a positive atmosphere in which pupils can enjoy school, behave well and learn successfully. In this supportive environment, teachers review and improve their work systematically.
- Leaders, including those who lead subjects and year group teams, keep a close check on teaching, learning and pupils' behaviour. As a result, they have an accurate understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve. They work well with staff to tackle weaknesses through a thoughtful combination of support and training.
- The way that pupils' progress is assessed and tracked has improved, and staff are held accountable for ensuring that pupils make good progress. Leaders check carefully that all groups of pupils are learning well. Extra, timely support is then given to any pupil at risk of falling behind.
- Pupils of different backgrounds, abilities and needs are welcomed and included fully in school life. Any discrimination is not tolerated. Effective steps are taken to make sure that all pupils have equal opportunity. For example, the provision of out-of-school clubs is reviewed regularly to ensure that those who travel some distance from home are able to join in. The funding for pupils supported by the pupil premium is used well to provide additional support for pupils' learning and ensure that they make good progress and are able to take part fully in school activities.
- Leaders make good use of their links with school's federated partner and other schools in the multi-academy trust, to share their expertise. The trust oversees the school's work methodically, and staff of the schools work well together to devise new initiatives and to check on the effectiveness of those already under way. Good use is also made of an external consultant to monitor the school's progress and to advise on the headteacher's performance management.
- Pupils are given a wide range of interesting and exciting experiences through the school's well-planned and imaginative programmes of study, including detailed planning for pupils' learning in English, mathematics and science. Opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills when they work in other subjects are not planned widely enough.
- Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is promoted well. They learn important values, such as tolerance and respect for others, that prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- The primary sports and physical education funding has been used well to pay for a specialist coach, who has led lessons and, as a result, has helped to improve teachers' knowledge and confidence, and increased pupils' skills. Links with the schools in the multi-academy trust have also been used well to increase pupils' participation and success in competitive sport.
- The school works successfully with parents, and most of those who offered an opinion are pleased with what it provides for their children. Leaders monitor attendance carefully. Appropriate steps have been taken to encourage parents of the few pupils who are persistently absent to send their children to school more regularly. However, the attendance levels of some of these pupils have not improved enough.
- Leaders make sure that pupils are safe and the school's safeguarding arrangements meet all national requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors make a strong contribution to the school's improvement. They are well informed because they have a wide range of ways of checking on the school's effectiveness, including regular visits to see pupils working, meetings with leaders of important aspects of the school's work and careful examination of the information collected about pupils' achievement.

- Governors use this information well to hold leaders to account and make sure that pupils achieve well. They receive detailed information about the performance of teachers. Governors make sure that teachers' appraisals are carried out fairly and robustly, and that teachers receive pay awards only if they have successfully met their targets.
- Leaders of the trust and the governing body have a detailed overview of spending, including the additional funding they receive for the pupil premium and sport. They make sure that the school secures the best value for money.
- Governors and the trust ensure that systems to keep pupils safe are effective and are reviewed regularly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Lessons are orderly because staff have high expectations of how pupils should behave and pupils are keen to meet those expectations. The few pupils who present challenging behaviour are managed well by staff.
- Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. They are well organised and are invariably ready and willing to work at the start of lessons. Very little time is lost when pupils change activities or move to another classroom for literacy or mathematics. Pupils present their work neatly in English and mathematics lessons, and there are many examples of well presented and organised work in other subjects, but this is not always the case.
- Pupils are polite and considerate to adults and each other. They work well in pairs and in groups, listen respectfully to each other's ideas and step in thoughtfully should a classmate need help or equipment.
- Pupils behave well outside lessons. They move around the school sensibly and hold doors open, or make way for others to pass, without a moment's hesitation. Break-times are lively and enjoyable.
- Pupils are punctual and attendance levels are broadly average, although a few pupils do not attend regularly enough. Exclusions are rare and are used appropriately as a last resort when other avenues have been exhausted.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff training in matters relating to pupils' safety is regular and up to date. Almost all of those parents who offered an opinion agreed that their children are safe in school.
- Pupils know how to stay safe in a variety of situations. They are particularly knowledgeable about how to stay safe when using the internet. Pupils who attend the breakfast club are given a safe and calm start to the day and they, too, say that they feel safe in school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying. They say that bullying is rare and they are confident that staff deal with any incidents swiftly and effectively. Leaders keep careful records of such incidents and other unacceptable behaviour. They take good steps, including time spent in assemblies, to ensure that incidents of bullying or misbehaviour do not recur.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they make sure that pupils of all abilities are given work at the right level of difficulty. The most-able pupils are challenged to think deeply, those who find learning difficult are able to consolidate and extend their understanding and, as a result, all abilities make good progress.
- Teachers question astutely during lessons to probe pupils' understanding and identify any misconceptions. They tackle misunderstanding quickly and sensitively, and usually ensure that all groups are ready to

move on to their new learning. Teachers skilfully encourage pupils to evaluate their own learning during the lesson, and this contributes strongly to their good progress.

- Teachers give pupils good-quality marking and verbal feedback. These are focused sharply on ensuring that pupils know how well they have done and are clear about what they can improve. Pupils respond maturely to teachers' suggestions, and there are many examples in their books of this approach leading to better knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The teaching of reading and writing is good. A new approach to teaching reading, which is now being shared with other schools in the trust, has ensured that pupils make faster progress this year. Writing standards are above average because spelling and grammar are taught systematically. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to write in different styles and for different purposes in English lessons and in other subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics has not been as high a priority as reading and writing in the recent past. Basic mathematical skills are taught well and most, but not all, pupils are competent and confident. Opportunities for them to use and practise these skills are not as widespread as those for literacy skills. This means that pupils' progress, although good, is not as fast as it is in reading and writing. This is particularly the case among some disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that those who need the most help get it. This is modified from lesson to lesson so that, for example, depending on the nature of the work, in some lessons it is those who find learning difficult who get extra help while, in others, it may be the most able. This works well and, as a result, all abilities achieve well.
- Good support is given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Staff know the pupils well. They are able to give timely extra help when needed, or step back to enable pupils to find out for themselves. As a result, these pupils make good progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- From their different starting points, most pupils in each year group achieve well. Last year, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was broadly average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. This year, there is a larger proportion on track to reach the higher levels in each subject than was the case last year.
- The school has made good use of the additional pupil premium funding to provide extra support for eligible pupils. Last year, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were almost three terms behind other pupils in the school in reading, about a term behind in writing and around two terms behind in mathematics. When compared with other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were almost three terms behind in reading, less than a term behind in writing and two terms behind in mathematics. This year, these gaps are closing, although they are closing more slowly in mathematics than in other subjects.
- Pupils of all abilities, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress, although they make faster progress in reading and writing than they do in mathematics. This is because reading and writing have been the school's main priorities, and pupils have more opportunities to use and improve these skills than they do in mathematics.
- The school has focused successfully on accelerating the progress of the most-able pupils in each year group, particularly those who joined the school with above average levels. In each class, they are given work that stretches them and encourages them to think more deeply or imaginatively. They respond well and, consequently, the most-able pupils achieve well.
- The school provides well for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Overseen carefully by the special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers keep a close check on pupils' learning, whether they are working with the rest of the class or under the direction of teaching assistants. Consequently, these pupils achieve well, whatever their starting points.

- The few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress and soon gain confidence in using the language. Carefully tailored work and support ensure that these pupils achieve as well as others.

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	140073
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	450324

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	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Jelley
Headteacher	Lee Hurling
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01536 710349
Fax number	01526 713299
Email address	head@rothwell-jun.northants.sch.uk

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