

# Rushton Primary School

Station Road, Rushton, Kettering, NN14 1RL

**Inspection dates** 24–25 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher leads the academy well. Over the past two years she has improved teaching and achievement and developed a strong team of staff who work effectively together. All leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the academy's strengths and areas for further development.
- Teaching is good in every year group, with all staff demonstrating secure subject knowledge. The headteacher's monitoring of teaching, learning and achievement is effective.
- Children in the early years make a good start to life in the academy. A range of stimulating, well-taught activities ensures that they make good progress in all areas of learning.
- The great majority of pupils make good progress and achieve well, particularly in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive good support from teachers and achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy being in the academy and their behaviour is good. They are keen to learn and work hard at all times.
- The school uses very effective procedures to ensure that all pupils are safe. Pupils know the academy is secure and appreciate the efforts staff make to ensure they stay safe.
- Attendance is consistently above average.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils develop a secure understanding of key British values and institutions, such as democracy and the rule of law. This helps to prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- The governing body, well led by the chair, has improved the ways it holds leaders to account. Governors support and challenge the academy effectively to help it improve further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The feedback some teachers give to pupils about their work is not always clear or focused well enough in mathematics to ensure they make really rapid progress in all lessons. Activities do not always build sufficiently on pupils' previous learning.
- Pupils do not always act on the advice they get from teachers to make further improvements in their writing. Achievement in writing, including that of the most-able pupils, whilst good in most year groups, is not as consistently strong as it is in reading.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning across all year groups and scrutinised pupils' workbooks.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- The headteacher was absent at the time of the inspection due to illness.
- Discussions took place with the acting headteacher, members of the governing body, staff, pupils and representatives of the multi academy trust.
- This is the first inspection since the school converted to become an academy.
- A variety of documents were examined, including those relating to safeguarding and the academy's improvement plans.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by 14 members of staff.
- The inspector took account of the 53 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and also spoke with parents.

## Inspection team

Jeremy Bird, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Rushton Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Rushton converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good. It is now part of the Montsaye Community Learning Partnership, which is a multi academy trust.
- The headteacher was appointed on 1 September 2013.
- Children in the early years are taught in one full-time Reception class alongside Year 1. Other pupils are taught in three classes, two of which include pupils from more than one year group.
- A very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment and accelerate progress by ensuring that:
  - in mathematics, teachers plan activities that build on pupils previous learning and consistently offer them clear guidance, in line with the school's own policy, that tell pupils precisely what they should do to improve their work
  - in writing, all pupils, including the most able, act consistently and promptly on the advice they receive from teachers, with teachers being rigorous in checking that they do this.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. She is well supported by her staff team and the governing body. They have successfully created a culture in which pupils behave well and are keen to learn, and where teachers regularly reflect on their teaching and seek further improvement. Both have led to increases in pupils' achievement, especially in the last academic year.
- Systems for managing the performance of staff and addressing weaknesses in teaching have improved over the past two years. They are now effective and embedded in the work of the academy. Staff have good opportunities, via the trust's network of schools and elsewhere, to undergo training to improve their skills.
- Academy leaders make sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to do well. Any pupils who fall behind are quickly identified and receive additional support to help them to catch up. The academy is very inclusive, and values all pupils equally. Parents talk about this as being a strength of the academy.
- Subject leaders are effective. They lead their areas of responsibility well. Together with senior staff, they have developed the curriculum in their subjects so that activities are almost always imaginative and challenging. For example, a senior teacher is now providing leadership in mathematics and this is bringing about improvements in key aspects of teaching and in achievement.
- The curriculum is both broad and balanced. Leaders ensure that the topics covered by the academy are well planned and engaging and require pupils to be reflective. Support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, in Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils enjoy reading stories about the lives of other peoples from around the world and considering how they themselves might have reacted to the challenges people in these societies have had to face.
- Supported by officers from the multi academy trust, the academy is developing a new approach to assessment in the light of the recent changes to the statutory requirements of the national curriculum.
- The academy has used the pupil premium funding effectively to ensure the small number of disadvantaged pupils is making good progress in all subjects. Academy leaders and teachers have an accurate understanding of how well this group of pupils is performing. The leader with responsibility for reporting to governors about the performance of this group regularly reviews how well this extra support is helping the pupils, and changes it if necessary.
- Pupils say that they are treated fairly. Discrimination of any kind does not occur in the academy because pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. Pupils appreciate and respect those who come from different backgrounds and with different beliefs. Pupils enjoy learning about cultural features and differences, including cooking and art. This means that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and have a good understanding of British values and institutions, such as parliament and the rule of law.
- The academy has used its primary school sport funding successfully. It is ensuring that its aims of increasing pupils' participation in competitive sports and improving teachers' skills in physical education are being met. Pupils have represented the academy in a range of sports, including athletics and cricket. Sports coaches have been employed to work with teachers who now teach better physical education lessons.
- The academy has developed excellent systems to ensure pupils are kept safe. Leaders, including the governor responsible for safeguarding, ensure that careful checks are carried out on all adults who work with the pupils, and that staff and governors are regularly trained in safeguarding and child protection. Teachers systematically identify possible risks associated with different activities, for example educational visits, and use this information to keep pupils safe. The academy works very effectively with the trust to safeguard pupils.

■ The multi academy trust provides effective support to the school. The school adviser and local headteachers working within the trust work effectively with the headteacher, governors and other leaders. Visits to the school have focused on ensuring that leaders gain an accurate view of teachers' and pupils' performance and then provide good support and challenge to help the academy improve.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Since converting to become an academy, governance has improved significantly and is now effective. Governors know how well the academy is performing as they regularly make purposeful visits of their own, for example to check out financial procedures and to see how well the curriculum is helping pupils to make better progress.
- The Chair of the Governing Body has ensured that new members have appropriate skills and that they put them to good use. For example, a governor who has a specific expertise in safeguarding matters oversees the academy's work in keeping pupils safe. This assures governors that safeguarding processes are working effectively.
- Governors' good understanding of how well teachers are performing is based on their regular visits to classrooms and the informative reports they receive from the headteacher. They ask searching questions about the academy's performance and hold the headteacher effectively to account for it. Governors ensure that any underperformance is quickly addressed and only good teaching is rewarded through pay rises and promotion.
- Governors ensure that all their statutory duties are met in full. They ensure that finances are spent effectively to benefit pupils. They know how the sport and pupil premium funding is allocated and are aware of how successfully this is leading to improvements in pupils' progress.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils and parents hold positive views about the behaviour in the academy, and these reflect inspectors' findings during the inspection.
- Pupils are courteous, friendly and supportive of their classmates. Through their studies and visits, pupils demonstrate an appreciation of different cultures and faiths. They show consideration and respect for people who hold different views to their own. As a result, there is no hint of discriminatory behaviour by pupils anywhere in the academy.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in lessons, with pupils showing positive attitudes to learning. This is because they enjoy their time in the academy and are motivated by the well-designed and interesting activities that staff provide. They get on well with each other and are particularly good at working together in the mixed-age classes, readily helping each other as necessary. Children in the early years quickly learn to support and challenge each other by sharing their views, for example in their spelling and handwriting work.
- Pupils behave well around the school, moving sensibly in the school building and playing well with each other on the playground and outdoor play areas.
- Attendance is above the national average and this high level has been maintained over the past two years. There has been recent improvement in the attendance of different groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Parents and pupils understand the importance of good attendance.

**Safety**

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Parents are overwhelmingly confident that their children are safe.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and secure in the academy, valuing the high quality of care that is offered by all the staff. They say they can easily approach teachers and support staff with any concerns, being certain that any issues will be followed through and resolved.

- Pupils understand what bullying is and the different forms it can take. They welcome the opportunity to talk about bullying in assemblies and lessons. Pupils say there is no bullying in the academy and records show no incidents this year. Lunch and playtimes are well supervised with pupils enjoying the way that adults support and join in with their play activities.
- Academy leaders ensure that all risks are carefully assessed. Teachers make sure that the details of their plans have been agreed and shared with all relevant staff. As a result, staff and pupils enjoy and gain a great deal from well-organised visits. On all such visits, the needs of any pupils, who require additional resources to enable them to participate, are taken fully into account.
- Governors are kept well informed about how well the school keeps the pupils safe. A governor with responsibility for safeguarding regularly visits the school and checks that systems are effective. For example, she checks how well evacuation procedures in the event of a fire are followed.
- Pupils are clear how the academy helps them to stay safe when using the internet. Year 6 pupils have written their own rules which help them to know what to be aware of and what to do if they are worried. The inspector spoke to this group and was left in no doubt that pupils have a thorough understanding of the nature of the dangers this technology can potentially pose.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is now good in every year group and has improved over the past year as a result of effective staff training and good leadership by the headteacher. The good teaching the academy offers results in all groups of pupils making consistently good progress in almost all subjects.
- This good teaching is having a particularly positive impact on pupils' learning and progress in reading. Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge and use this to ask questions skilfully in order to check pupils' understanding. The inspector saw examples of effective questioning in the early years where staff probed children's understanding of why particular letter combinations made certain sounds, and whether they could use this understanding to spell certain words correctly. Other staff make equally good use of questions to check and extend the learning of older pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well. Teachers devise well-designed activities for these pupils, which incorporate the views of pupils and parents. This leads to pupils being motivated and ready to engage in their work; they make good progress as a result.
- Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress through termly meetings and daily opportunities to talk with staff. Pupils enjoy the homework tasks teachers set them, and appreciate the fact that they are given a range of different activities to choose from. They often respond very imaginatively to these tasks, for example choosing to write recipes and making cakes to represent volcanoes. This results in high completion rates. Pupils' positive attitudes towards their homework make a significant contribution to their good progress.
- Pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 make good gains in their early reading. This is because the teaching of reading of these age groups, including the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), is good. Staff assess pupils' ability to read words carefully and then quickly move them on to more challenging vocabulary when they are ready. The teaching of reading is equally good in Key Stage 2, with staff consistently ensuring that reading tasks challenge pupils appropriately.
- The teaching of writing is generally effective but is not always quite as successful as it is in reading. Teachers generally set pupils well-designed activities that hold their interest and challenge them to produce their best work. They ensure that pupils' standards of spelling and punctuation are good and that their writing skills are reinforced appropriately in other subjects. Consequently, particularly in the last academic year, most pupils have made good progress. However, not all teachers check to make sure that pupils use the advice they have been given when their work is marked. This means that a few pupils, including some of the most able, do not always make progress quite as quickly as they could.

- The teaching of mathematics is good overall. Most teachers plan activities that are imaginative and challenging and strike a careful balance between calculation work and problem-solving activities. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and lessons are generally purposeful experiences that allow pupils to make good progress. However, whilst teachers mark pupils' mathematics work regularly, their comments do not accurately state what pupils need to do to make improvements. On occasions, activities do not always build on pupils' previous learning as clearly as they should, and this limits pupils' ability to quickly master new skills and make the truly rapid progress some are capable of.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Children start in Reception with skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. Last year they made good progress and most moved into Year 1 having reached a good level of development. This year, children are making similar rates of progress to previous years and are on track to attain well in every area of learning.
- Pupils achieve well across the school. Pupils are currently making good progress in every year group, with reading being particularly strong. This is an improvement on 2014. Even though standards were at least in line with averages in reading, writing and mathematics last year, pupils' progress, especially in reading, was less than it should have been. Both standards and progress have improved sharply this year. This has been because teaching has been improved and also because pupils have improved their attitudes to learning and consequently made faster progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is due to recent improvements in how the school works with the multi academy trust, with academy staff now drawing successfully on the expert advice it provides to support individuals effectively. Their improved rates of progress are enabling this group to catch up with their classmates.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their classmates. There were too few disadvantaged pupils in last year's Year 6 to compare their results with those of their classmates or similar pupils nationally without the risk of identifying individuals.
- Last year, the proportion of most-able pupils making at least expected progress in all subjects was similar to the proportions seen nationally. This year, they are again making good progress overall. However, their progress in reading is typically stronger than in writing and mathematics, although this does vary between different year groups.
- Over their time in the school, pupils make good progress in reading. Pupils enjoy their reading and quickly become fluent by applying their phonic understanding. The majority achieve the required standard in the Year 1 national phonics screening check. Current reading standards in Key Stages 1 and 2 are significantly higher than previously.
- Pupils' progress in all year groups in writing, whilst good, is not always as strong as it now is in reading. The inspector's scrutiny of pupils' writing in books indicates that individual pupils do not consistently use teachers' advice to make improvements in their next pieces of writing. This slows their progress.
- In all year groups pupils are able to apply their mathematical skills accurately to solve problems. For example, in Year 6 pupils measured forearms and hand spans accurately and used the information to create diagrams which allowed them to explore patterns in the data they had generated. Most pupils are currently making good progress in mathematics. In some classes, however, teachers do not state clearly in their marking precisely what pupils need to do to improve, and this leads to pupils' progress being slightly slower than it could be.

### **The early years provision** is good

- The good start children get in the Reception class prepares them well for the later phases of their education in school. Staff quickly assess children when they arrive in Reception, closely monitor their

progress, and devise appropriate plans and targets to reflect and extend each child's learning. As a result, children of all abilities make good progress through the Reception Year. They are well prepared for their move into Year 1 because most children reach a good level of development across all areas of learning. This year a similar proportion of children to last year are on track to attain this good level of development.

- The early years setting is well led and managed. The leader has a clear vision for making further improvements. She is developing even more efficient record keeping systems to enable staff to identify any weaknesses in children's progress more quickly. Records of children's achievements are shared with parents through their individual learning profiles.
- Teaching is good, with all adults demonstrating secure knowledge of all the statutory areas of learning. Adults question children thoughtfully, probing their understanding and developing their vocabulary well. Staff use their accurate knowledge of how well pupils are progressing to provide activities which challenge them appropriately so that they make even more rapid progress.
- Behaviour is good, with children responding well to their teachers' clear expectations. They thoroughly enjoy their learning, showing good attitudes in all their activities. The setting's well-designed and well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning environments ensure children feel, and indeed are, very safe at all times.
- Children's progress is monitored regularly and with increasing accuracy. Adults maintain detailed records of their learning and use their assessments systematically to inform their planning. Consequently, activities build on children's previous learning and interests well. This underpins their good achievement.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140074
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	450353

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	94
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lisa Pruden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Willis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01536 710124
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