

# Rowanfield Infant School

Alstone Lane, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL51 8HY

|                                              |                      |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Inspection dates</b>                      | 24–25 May 2016       |
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Good</b>          |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | Good                 |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good                 |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | Good                 |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | Good                 |
| Early years provision                        | Good                 |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, governors and senior leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Good leadership has improved the quality of teaching and pupils' progress since the previous inspection.
- All groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well. Pupils make good progress during their time at the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability achieve as well as their classmates because adults support their needs effectively from an early stage.
- Children in the Reception classes get off to a good start because of the effective early years provision. As a result, they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils behave well at all times. The school is successful in promoting positive attitudes to learning so that pupils are keen to succeed.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Staff value pupils' contributions to learning and make sure they are well cared for. As a result, pupils enjoy school and feel safe.
- Teachers plan stimulating tasks that capture pupils' interests across subjects. These help to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is some variation in the way that phonics (the link between sounds and letters) and handwriting are taught across the school.
- Middle leaders do not yet make full use of the information they gather from their monitoring to improve teaching and learning.
- A small minority of pupils do not attend regularly enough and this impedes their progress.

## Full report

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

- Reduce the variation in the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers follow a consistent approach to teaching phonics and handwriting.
- Extend the skills of middle leaders so that they make fuller use of the information from their monitoring to further improve teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.
- Make greater use of the positive parent partnership to raise pupils' attendance further.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in the staffing of the school, including some new leaders. Nevertheless, through her determined leadership, the headteacher has formed a highly effective staff team, including governors, who share a strong sense of ambition for the school.
- A strength in the leadership is the enabling of staff to observe and share good practice to improve their teaching. Staff training has a high priority and is linked to stringent checks on teaching. As a result, teaching is now consistently good and pupils' achievement is rising.
- Middle leaders check the quality of teaching frequently and this has aided the improvements to teaching to good levels. However, they have not fully addressed those areas which would move teaching to outstanding, such as remedying the variation in the teaching of phonics and handwriting.
- The increased focus by leaders on rigorous and accurate assessment has led to an improvement in pupils' outcomes. The information gathered is used to make sure that pupils are making good progress and in providing additional support where needed.
- The performance of teachers is closely linked to the school's priorities to raise pupils' achievement. Governors set challenging targets for the headteacher.
- The school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity and in eliminating discrimination. For example, provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is effective in helping them settle quickly into school life so that they are able to communicate effectively in English.
- Leaders and staff are also effective in providing the additional support needed in and out of the classrooms to ensure good progress for pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- Pupil premium funding is used wisely to provide additional adults and targeted where pupils need help to learn. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are supported well, both personally and in their learning, enabling them to be successful and take advantage of everything that the school has to offer.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong with good opportunities for pupils to explore their ideas and feelings. The school's motto that this is 'where our little gems come to shine' has helped to inspire the whole school community with a greater sense of self-belief.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is promoted well through, for example, learning about democracy when electing a name for the pet fish and helping to make decisions about the names for the new houses. This work is ensuring that pupils are suitably prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school provides a broad and well-balanced curriculum that covers the required subjects of the national curriculum. Teachers stimulate pupils through interesting topics such as 'Green Shoots and Mucky Boots'. They place a strong emphasis on learning outdoors which helps to increase pupils' engagement in their learning.
- The sports funding has been used effectively to increase teachers' confidence in teaching this subject through working alongside specialist coaches. Also, pupils have more opportunities to try new activities, such as multiskills and mini-tennis, and learn to be competitive.
- The school has accessed some valuable support from the local authority that has helped to improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance, as well as helping to promote good attendance. Work with other schools in the locality has facilitated the sharing of good practice.
- Most parents are positive about the work of the school and are supportive of what leaders are trying to achieve. They appreciate the comprehensive way the school ensures they know how well their children are doing with regular meetings and reports, and the breakfast club that provides care before school. However, this work has not yet secured the best possible attendance rates for a small minority of pupils.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Since the previous inspection, governors have increased their checks on the school's work so that they are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. This has enabled them to challenge school leaders and hold them firmly to account for pupils' progress. They understand how well the school is doing in comparison to national standards.
  - They keep their skills up to date through well-considered training from the local authority. They reflect on their contribution in helping the school to continue to improve.
  - Governors have a clear understanding of how the performance of staff is managed to tackle any underperformance and how good practice is rewarded. They set challenging targets for the headteacher's performance.

- Governors' financial management is sound. They are aware of the impact of additional funding to improve disadvantaged pupils' achievement and to develop sport.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Training for staff is up to date and checked regularly in areas such as child protection. Leaders have created a culture of safety and support for pupils by ensuring that the school's policies and procedures are understood by everyone in the school community. Most parents support the view that their children are kept safe in school.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** is good

- Teaching is typically good across the school. Pupils are keen and attentive because teachers plan well for the different groups in their classes. This has helped to increase progress for all groups of pupils across the school to good levels.
- Pupils find their work interesting and quickly become absorbed in their activities. For example, pupils in the outdoor nature area were totally engrossed in making sculptures of their chosen mini-beast using the natural materials they found.
- Teachers know their pupils well and use assessment information effectively to identify and plan for pupils' needs over time. Pupils particularly like lessons that are interactive. For example, Year 1 pupils became animated when acting out their poems about clouds which enhanced their understanding of rhyme and rhythm.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved and pupils' achievement is good. The school's latest information shows that pupils are developing good knowledge and skills in all aspects of mathematics. Regular opportunities for pupils to apply their new learning and extend their thinking are leading to faster progress.
- Reading is taught well and teachers encourage pupils to read frequently both in school and at home. Pupils say they particularly like the '25 night' challenge where they were rewarded for reading regularly which helps increase their fluency as readers. Small-group work ensures that comprehension skills are developed systematically.
- The teaching of writing is effective, and teachers provide a range of good opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects. For example, pupils demonstrated good competence in the way they wrote their happy 90th birthday letters to the Queen and also in science when writing their information leaflets about mini-beasts.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and make a valuable contribution to learning. They provide very effective support for individuals or small groups of pupils who need extra help. They provide good emotional support for pupils which helps increase their confidence as learners.
- The school provides well for pupils who have special educational needs or disability through working with other agencies to ensure that support is tailored precisely to help them be successful in their learning and emotional development.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged benefit from a range of additional support and the expertise of their teachers to enable them to catch up with their classmates and achieve well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make rapid gains in their communication skills because of the effective support from staff.
- The most able pupils are extended well in their learning. Teachers ensure they maintain the challenge for these pupils by setting additional problems that stretch their thinking even further. For example, in mathematics, some Year 2 pupils were successful in finding three quarters of numbers and then challenged further to explain why answers were odd or even.
- The school has introduced an effective system for feeding back to pupils about their work that is applied consistently by all staff. Pupils find the system of marking easy to understand. They respond well to teachers' motivational comments that help them to improve their work.
- There is some variation in the way phonics is taught across the school. Sometimes, this hampers progress in developing accuracy in reading and not all pupils reach the expected standard for pupils in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Teachers do not always demonstrate a consistent approach to the teaching and development of handwriting which limits pupils' progress on occasions.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The relationships between adults and pupils are very effective and contribute greatly to the pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Pupils undertake various roles responsibly. They take particular pride in being members of the school council or acting as lunchtime helpers in the playground. They understand that sometimes they have to take turns in these roles and deal with this very maturely.
- Most pupils say they feel safe in school because the adults look after them well and they are taught to respect each other. Pupils willingly express and share their ideas knowing that their contributions will be valued. For example, around the 'sparkle mat' in acts of worship, pupils talk with insight and empathy about the feelings of themselves and others.
- Staff are very skilled in addressing personal and emotional needs. They know the pupils well and are quick to respond sensitively and effectively to support pupils' specific needs, especially those of pupils who are considered vulnerable.
- The arrangements to keep pupils safe are strong. Staff and governors undertake regular safeguarding training and work well with outside agencies to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and each other safe both in and out of school. They talk knowledgeably about healthy eating, being physically active, computer safety and staying safe around the current building works. Presentations from the police have reinforced the need to be alert to 'stranger danger' and how to stay safe when approached by strangers or crossing roads.
- Leaders monitor attendance rates stringently and follow up quickly on any absences for vulnerable pupils. Rigorous steps taken by leaders to promote punctuality and good attendance, such as first day home visits and access to the 'sparkle space' breakfast club, are starting to show positive impact. Even so, irregular attendance by a small minority of pupils is keeping the overall rate of attendance below national expectations.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Typically, pupils throughout the school are friendly and polite to visitors, move around the school sensibly and use the school's equipment respectfully.
- Pupils respond very positively to the school's system for managing behaviour with the 'rainbow' system of colours on the class chart. They take great pride in moving on to the 'purple ray' to earn a certificate for excellent work and behaviour, or earning a 'super silver' privilege.
- Pupils understand that a few of their classmates need extra help and appreciate the sensitive way that adults offer support so that learning is not disrupted. Behaviour is not outstanding because a few pupils still need reminders to pay attention and work harder. However, they respond quickly to the guidance from adults and soon redeem themselves.
- Pupils are clear that bullying and derogatory or aggressive language are not tolerated here. Pupils say they would trust the adults to help sort out any problems, such as name-calling or physical bullying.
- The school's records show that the school is vigilant and thorough in dealing with any unacceptable behaviour, including bullying and incidents leading to fixed-term exclusions. School leaders work very closely with families and outside agencies to ensure the very small number of pupils whose behaviour gives cause for concern are well supported. As a result, these pupils are now fully included in school and making good progress in their learning.

## Outcomes for pupils are good

- Since the previous inspection, due to improvements in teaching, pupils' progress has increased in all subjects. They leave this school well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- An increasing proportion of children achieve a good level of development at the end of their time in Reception. Current figures are just above average, showing that children make a successful start to school.
- Levels of attainment at the end of Year 2 are rising and are at least in line with the national expectations

for pupils of this age. Inspection checks on the school's own assessment information and pupils' work across key stage 1 reflect these rising standards and good progress during their time in this school.

- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability and any pupils who need to catch up receive carefully targeted support. Pupils who speak English as an additional language respond well to skilled support and quickly acquire effective communication skills. Currently, these groups are making good progress.
- There are no gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others with similar starting points in school. Staff identify and address their learning needs at an early stage. Most benefit from additional adult support and many have their confidence boosted by being fully included in school activities such as extra-curricular sports or breakfast club. As a result, these pupils are making good progress and sometimes faster progress than their classmates.
- The most able pupils are being challenged increasingly effectively in their work as they are required to extend their thinking and apply their knowledge in every lesson. They are able to talk about their ideas with increasing confidence.
- Pupils develop effective number and reasoning skills in mathematics. They say they enjoy the 'stretch and sparkle' challenges that ensure the work has the right degree of difficulty which leads to faster progress.
- Achievement in writing is much improved since the previous inspection. The quality of writing in pupils' books is good and they have a wide range of opportunities to write well in other subjects. However, occasionally their style of handwriting is inconsistent which hampers how clearly they write.
- While showing improvement, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2015 was below average. A slight inconsistency to teaching phonics slows the progress of some pupils in becoming accurate readers. However, by the end of Year 2, the large majority have developed proficiency in reading with a good level of understanding.

## Early years provision

is good

- Parents praise the effective arrangements for starting school that ensure children settle quickly into their new routines and become comfortable in their new environment. Parents appreciate the good levels of communication and regular opportunities to find out how well their children are doing.
- About two thirds of children start school with skills and knowledge below or well below those seen typically for their age. The proportion of pupils who reached a good level of development at the end of Reception in 2015 was just below that expected of children with a similar age nationally. This proportion is set to rise again this year and therefore, from their individual starting points, children make good progress and are ready to start Year 1 as confident learners.
- Teachers' assessments and tracking of children's learning is of good quality and activities are well matched to their needs. Adults record children's learning within focused and independent activities, as the opportunities arise. Learning journeys track children's progress through the year very thoroughly and the home learning books provide plenty of interesting activities for families to complete with their children.
- Teaching is good and learning activities are designed to capture children's interest, for example the 'Welly Wednesday' outdoor sessions where children explore the nature area and develop curiosity about their world.
- Children enjoy their learning and get on well together. Their behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes to school. They are developing a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe inside and outdoors.
- Adults are deployed well to keep children secure and to maintain their welfare. They are vigilant in ensuring that children with special educational needs or disability and others considered vulnerable have their needs supported very carefully.
- Disadvantaged children and those who have little or no spoken English on starting school also benefit from having their needs closely met from an early stage.
- Phonics skills are taught each day and underpin the development of early reading and writing successfully. However, a slight inconsistency in approach does not enable some children to learn as well as they could.
- Good leadership and management have created a cohesive staff team that works together well. Staff receive appropriate training so that they support children's learning effectively. The early years leader has a clear view of the strengths of the provision and is aware that further improvement is needed to ensure that there is a consistent approach to teaching phonics across the setting.

## School details

|                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 115592          |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Gloucestershire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 10017405        |

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

|                                            |                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Infant                                                                                     |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community                                                                                  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–7                                                                                        |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                                                      |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 253                                                                                        |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                                                         |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Lou Burridge                                                                               |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Aysha Akif                                                                                 |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01242 515334                                                                               |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.rowanfieldinfant.co.uk">www.rowanfieldinfant.co.uk</a>                 |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | <a href="mailto:admin@rowanfield-inf.gloucs.sch.uk">admin@rowanfield-inf.gloucs.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 24–25 September 2014                                                                       |

## Information about this school

- This is an average-sized school. Pupils are organised in nine classes, one for each year group.
- Most pupils are White British. A very small minority speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is the additional government funding to give extra support to those pupils who are eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The school provides care for pupils through the breakfast club.
- The school meets the requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place over two days. Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school, some in conjunction with senior leaders. In addition, they made visits to classrooms, the dining hall and the playground, as well as observing acts of worship.
- Meetings were held with pupils, governors and school leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority who supports the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 52 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and the results of the school's own parent survey, as well as consulting informally with parents at the start and end of the school day. They also took account of the 32 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and the 31 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans. They examined information on current pupils' progress, minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding procedures and the plans for the use of the primary physical education and sports premium.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to them in classrooms and evaluated samples of their work.

## Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

David New

Ofsted Inspector



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