

Rakegate Primary School

Rakegate Close, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV10 6US

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are driving improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement at a brisk pace. Leaders communicate a clear vision for school improvement.
- Teaching is good overall. Teachers set high expectations of pupils' behaviour and most expect the quality of pupils' work to be good. Leaders monitor teaching rigorously, taking swift action to support and develop teaching further.
- There are some variations in teaching. In some lessons, the work is not challenging enough for the most able pupils. Additional adults are not always used effectively. Some pupils are over-reliant on additional support from adults. This slows their progress.
- In 2017 there was a dip in standards at the end of key stage 2. Leaders addressed this rapidly. Current pupils in school are making good progress and achieving better standards.
- This is an inclusive school. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is highly effective.
- Children in Nursery and Reception settle quickly into school routines. Not all children make as much progress as they could in early years, particularly boys and disadvantaged children.
- Adults in early years do not make effective use of children's previous learning when planning activities. The outdoor learning area does not stimulate children's enthusiasm for learning well enough.
- Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. The school effectively celebrates their achievements in attendance.
- Pupils behave well. They are courteous and polite.
- Governors are providing challenge and support to secure continued improvements. The new chair and vice-chair have rapidly improved governance.
- Most parents and carers speak highly of the school. They value the personalised support for children and their families. Parents appreciate the range of curricular experiences the school provides for their children.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Safeguarding is effective. There is a strong, caring and nurturing culture across the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently use assessment information more carefully to provide pupils with work that is appropriately challenging in all subjects
 - making sure that the most able pupils are challenged sufficiently and work is not too easy
 - making sure that additional adults support learners to be more independent learners.
- Improve the early years provision by:
 - monitoring the progress of groups of learners, in particular boys and disadvantaged children, to ensure that they make as much progress as others
 - ensuring that monitoring of the effectiveness of improvement plans pays more attention to the progress that children make
 - ensuring that teachers and other adults make effective use of assessment information to plan learning activities to meet the children's needs and interests
 - ensuring that the outdoor learning environment provides high-quality and purposeful learning activities to enable children to make faster progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Staff, parents and governors recognise the transformation being brought about by the new senior leadership team. One pupil said, 'The headteacher is upgrading our school.' The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong, determined and effective leadership. Staff morale is high because leaders value the skills of all staff.
- Senior leaders communicate a clear vision for the school. New approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics have been implemented this year to address a dip in outcomes in 2017 at key stage 2. Developments have been embraced by staff and are resulting in rapidly improving teaching and learning.
- Senior leaders are rigorous in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the impact of new systems. Sharply focused plans are in place to identify where improvements are needed. Leaders diligently go back and check where teaching still needs to improve. There is now good capacity for continued improvement across the school. Middle leaders are clear on their new roles and responsibilities. They are becoming more established as leaders, providing challenge and support in their role of monitoring the work of other colleagues.
- Leaders quickly identify any pupils who are falling behind or need additional support. Flexible approaches to the deployment of teachers within year groups are enabling pupils to access extra support. This is resulting in pupils making greater progress.
- Systems are in place to set high expectations for the performance of all staff in school. Teachers value the professional development provided as a result of professional reviews. Leaders are developing a strong culture of learning among staff.
- The curriculum is well planned. Leaders plan curriculum topics that motivate and inspire pupils. Topics provide pupils with opportunities to make connections between different subjects. The school is effective in promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This contributes to the way pupils are with each other and the respect they show for different cultures and religions. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- First-hand experiences, including visits and visitors, are used well to extend and enrich pupils' learning. As a result, pupils widen their vocabulary and deepen their knowledge and understanding. Pupils value and anticipate residential visits. Pupils talk confidently about how these opportunities develop their resilience and confidence.
- Additional funding is being used effectively to target those who need to catch up. Leaders regularly review the impact of programmes to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are swift to adapt programmes for pupils to ensure effectiveness. This is resulting in any differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils narrowing in most year groups.
- Sports funding is used well. Sports coaches engage pupils in a range of clubs and activities. Pupils are enthusiastic about the daily mile they run or walk. Pupils are encouraged to develop a good understanding of how to eat healthily and how to keep themselves healthy through regular physical activity.

- Leaders have benefited from support from the local authority. Leaders are working well with the local authority adviser in their shared drive for continued improvement.

Governance of the school

- The new chair and vice-chair of governors are supporting the headteacher well in addressing historical weaknesses in teaching. Governors are working in partnership with the leadership team to secure rapid and continuous improvement in the school. The chair of governors is actively ensuring that governors visit school more regularly. As a result, this first-hand knowledge is helping governors to evaluate the effectiveness of the school improvement plan and the progress that pupils are making.
- Governors attend regular training. Governors' skills in providing challenge to leaders are increasingly evident in governing body minutes from this school year. Governors are now holding leaders to account with greater rigour.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture of safeguarding in school is very strong. Leaders have high expectations of the care shown by all those working in school. Staff are vigilant. They notice small differences in pupils' behaviour which may indicate cause for concern. Systems to report concerns are clearly communicated and understood by all staff. Consequently, the systems to safeguard pupils are robust. Senior leaders have a comprehensive picture of safeguarding across the school.
- Leaders work well with the in-school mentor and external professional agencies to signpost families who need additional support. Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families is a strength of the school. Pupils said that their recent work with the police on antisocial behaviour is helping them to understand how to stay safe in the local community.
- Leaders ensure that staff training on safeguarding is comprehensive. For example, training on forced marriage, radicalisation and child sexual exploitation is up to date.
- Leaders ensure that procedures to recruit, interview and appoint staff are thorough. Safeguarding procedures and policies are regularly reviewed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The new senior leadership team has brought about rapid improvements in teaching. As a result, teaching and learning are improving across the school. Where teachers and other staff need more support, leaders are providing clear guidance and advice.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge in all curriculum areas. Where teaching is strong, pupils are keen to learn, presentation of their work is of a high standard and they are challenged to think. Skilled questioning from teachers allows pupils to explore ideas, including building on suggestions from their peers. For example, pupils are encouraged to give opinions about other pupils' answers.

- The teaching of mathematics is a strength. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to solve real-life problems. In mathematics, pupils are challenged to record their proofs, explain each step of their working-out and explain their answers in detail. For example, in Year 6 pupils were confident when making connections between decimals, fractions and percentages to solve complex problems.
- Teaching of phonics is effective and provides secure foundations for the development of reading skills. Pupils are confident to use phonics when they read unfamiliar words. Work in books shows that pupils are applying phonics knowledge in their writing and spellings.
- Recent changes to the school's approach to reading in key stage 2 are having a positive impact. New reading resources are inspiring pupils to read books from a wide range of authors and to explore different genres of books. Pupils are proud of their new school library, accessing it during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Pupils are enthusiastic readers.
- In key stage 2 pupils read with confidence from their class novel. Teachers use questioning well to deepen pupils' understanding of the text. As a result, pupils are confident to talk about the progress they are making as readers.
- Pupils have opportunities to write for different purposes. Teachers are planning interesting and relevant writing experiences. As a result, pupils are developing a love of writing and making greater progress in writing. Work in books shows that pupils are using their grammar skills effectively in longer pieces of writing and when editing their work. Presentation is good and pupils take pride in their work. Pupils follow the school's 'presentation promise' displayed prominently at the front of their books.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive additional support in small groups. The leader for special educational needs provision works closely with teachers to carefully review each pupil's progress. This results in effective planning for pupils' next steps and they make good progress from their starting points.
- Additional adults in some lessons do not always make a difference to pupils' learning. At times adults do not provide enough challenge or they too readily provide pupils with answers. As a result, pupils are over-reliant on additional adults and their progress slows.
- Teachers do not always use what they know about pupils' prior learning to plan an effective level of challenge for all groups of learners. For example, books show that in some lessons, work is not challenging enough for the most able pupils. It is often too easy and at times some pupils lose motivation.
- Pupils regularly complete homework. They enjoy the extended holiday projects linked to new topics. Parents agree that their children receive regular, useful homework tasks.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Pupils are proud of their school. They keenly celebrate diversity. Pupils are friendly and polite. They welcome visitors, being inquisitive about visitors and showing good manners. They hold doors open for staff and visitors.
- Pupils are keen to share their work and their achievements. There is a strong culture of celebration of achievements across the school. The school creates many opportunities to celebrate pupils' learning successes.
- Pupils have excellent opportunities to contribute as leaders in their school community, for example as school councillors, playtime buddies and digital ambassadors. As a result, pupils develop into mature young people who are active citizens of their school community.
- Pupils who have social, emotional or mental health needs are cared for very well. Positive relationships between pupils and staff are evident. Pupils express a confidence that they can talk to staff who listen to them.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Pupils feel safe in school. They understand about different types of bullying and say that bullying does happen, but it is rare. They say that teachers respond quickly to any incidents of bullying. Pupils report that the increased number of staff on duty at lunchtimes is helping pupils to behave well. The school makes good use of sports coaches at lunchtime to promote team games for both boys and girls.
- The school's before- and after-school club provides good-quality care for pupils. Pupils of different ages play together. Parents spoke highly of this provision.
- The majority of parents spoken to during the inspection confirm that staff are caring and approachable. On Parent View, responses show that parents feel that their children are safe in school. Parents commented positively overall about communication with school. During the inspection, a large number of parents attended two events for key stage 1, where pupils shared their learning in the school hall.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy learning. Most pupils manage their behaviour well in lessons. Pupils show tenacity, and they keep trying to find ways to solve problems and explain their ideas. Adults encourage pupils to talk maturely about their learning.
- The majority of pupils behave well around school. They are polite and courteous to each other. There is a strong sense of caring for each other and helping others. For example, pupils regularly fundraise for different charities, both locally and nationally.
- A new system for recording behavioural incidents has been introduced recently. Leaders recognise the need to analyse behaviours and incidents of bullying. Leaders are now using information effectively to support individual pupils.
- Pupils' attendance is improving. It is broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing. Systems to improve attendance and punctuality are making a difference. As a result, pupils are arriving at school on time and ready to learn.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017 the progress and attainment of pupils leaving Year 6 dipped when compared to the previous year. In 2017, pupils' progress in mathematics and reading was average, with the least able pupils making better progress than the most able pupils in reading. Pupils' progress in writing was well below the national average in 2017, particularly for disadvantaged and the least able pupils.
- In 2017, too few pupils achieved the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school and the local authority identified that a high number of pupils in this cohort joined the school during key stage 2.
- Current assessment information and work in pupils' books show that significant improvements in attainment and progress have been made since September 2017. Pupils at different levels of attainment are now making sustained progress within key stage 2. As a result of improved teaching, most current pupils are attaining well and are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Occasionally, across key stage 2, progress for the most able pupils slows when teachers set work that is not sufficiently challenging.
- The well-focused work of leaders to raise standards in writing is resulting in sustained improvements in key stage 2. Pupils are writing at length and editing their work. Work in books in a wide range of subjects shows that the majority of pupils are working at age-related expectations in writing.
- In key stage 1 pupils have made accelerated progress from the end of Reception over the past two years. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics continue to be in line with national figures. In 2017, the most able pupils attained well in reading and mathematics, with outcomes broadly in line with the national average. Consequently, key stage 1 pupils are well prepared for key stage 2.
- Pupils achieve well in phonics. Over the past three years the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been broadly in line with the national average. In 2017 disadvantaged pupils achieved well in the phonics screening check, with achievement higher than the national average.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils achieved as well as other pupils in reading and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. In writing, disadvantaged pupils achieved better than other pupils by the end of Year 6. Leaders have used additional funding to provide additional staff. Work in books shows that in the majority of year groups disadvantaged pupils currently in school are achieving as well as their peers.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress. They benefit from teachers making accurate assessments of their learning, behavioural, social and emotional needs. The tailored support from adults is resulting in pupils being successful learners.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points, particularly in their spoken English and in mathematics.
- Pupils achieve well in other subjects such as music, science and physical education. The organisation of topics enables pupils to deepen their knowledge and explore links between different subjects.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children start in the early years with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. Despite there being a three-year improvement in outcomes at the end of Reception, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception in 2017 was below the national average. Outcomes for boys and disadvantaged children have been particularly low since the last inspection.
- Leaders are working closely with the local authority to review practice in early years. Action plans, however, are not sharply focused enough on what is going to change for groups of learners and how this will be reviewed. The pace of improvement in early years has not been as rapid as it could be.
- Teachers and staff in early years are not making enough use of the wide range of assessment information they gather. As a result, the activities children choose are not always matched well enough to their interests or abilities. Activities do not promote learning as well as they could.
- The quality of teaching in early years is varied. There is too much variation in how adults develop children's spoken language skills and promote thinking. Adults' questions are not always used to allow children to answer in sentences; one- or two-word responses are too readily accepted. This slows the progress of spoken language for some groups of children.
- Indoor learning spaces are well organised. However, the outdoor learning space does not engage the interests of young children sufficiently to support specific areas of learning. Time spent outside is not as productive as it needs to be.
- Children in early years are confident, inquisitive learners. Warm relationships are evident in all classes. Routines are well established and children behave well. They take turns listening to each other. All staff have high expectations of behaviour.
- Parents spoke positively about how well their children have settled in early years. Recently introduced home visits enhance the transition into Nursery and Reception. Parents value the opportunities to participate in events and see their children in the school setting through workshops and celebrations.
- The early years environment is a safe space for children. All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. Staff know the children well, and they are caring and sensitive in their work with more vulnerable children. Individual children are supported by the school mentor to settle into school. There are good links with outside agencies to support children and their families.
- There is good evidence that more children currently in Reception are being well prepared for the next stage of their education in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	104304
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10045489

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	458
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Martin
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Horton
Telephone number	01902 558608
Website	www.rakegateprimary.co.uk
Email address	rakegate.primary@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 June 2014

Information about this school

- Rakegate Primary School is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their new posts from September 2017.
- Over half of the pupils are from a White British heritage, with an increasing proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is in line with national average. The proportion of pupils who have SEN support is in line with the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club, both on site.
- A new chair of governors was appointed in the autumn term 2017.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a variety of lessons across all classes, with the majority being undertaken jointly with senior leaders. While visiting lessons, inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and talked to pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of pupils' work across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from across the school read. They observed playtime and lunchtime and visited the before-school club.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and middle leaders, including the SENCo, curriculum leaders and with six governors.
- The lead inspector met with six staff, including teachers, support and administrative staff, to seek their views on leadership, pupils' learning, safeguarding and professional development.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), spoke to parents of pupils as they brought their children to school and held one meeting with a parent.
- Inspectors considered 23 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including: attendance reports, the school's monitoring of how well it is doing, improvement plans, performance management objectives, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, governing body minutes, pupil progress information, local authority reviews, safeguarding policies and records.

Inspection team

Pamela Matty, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Helps	Ofsted Inspector

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