

Rushden Primary Academy

Goulsbra Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 0YX

Inspection dates

14–15 June 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Relationships between pupils and adults are warm and strong. This creates a climate in which pupils develop well and make good progress throughout the school.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 was above average last year. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check was also above average.
- Pupils benefit from a well-organised and well-thought-out curriculum, which is rich in opportunities for pupils to learn and explore.
- The teaching in the early years encourages the children to find things out for themselves. They make good progress through enjoyable activities in the varied and stimulating outside area.
- Leaders receive effective support from experienced leaders in the academy trust.
- Leaders are ambitious for their pupils and make certain that plans for school growth do not have a negative impact on current pupils' learning.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders are thorough, diligent and caring in their duties in this area.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and incidences of poor conduct are rare. Adults are skilled at dealing with any disruptive behaviour quickly and firmly.
- Most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, make consistently good progress.
- Assessment arrangements are thorough. Leaders make sure that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are checked by other schools in the trust and elsewhere to make sure that they are accurate.
- Leaders prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain so that they are tolerant and celebrate different cultures, religions and lifestyles.
- Teaching is good. Nevertheless, some teachers do not challenge the most able often enough, do enough to help pupils to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar or insist that they present their work neatly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons that stretch and challenge the most able pupils, including in the early years, so that they consistently deepen their learning, knowledge and skills
 - ensuring that teachers systematically help pupils to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - raising teachers' expectations for pupils' presentation so that their work is well presented.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Relationships between adults and pupils are consistently strong and warm. This is one of the reasons why leaders have been able to create a school that provides a climate for pupils to thrive, develop as citizens and do well.
- Relationships between pupils are equally productive. They have inclusive attitudes and are of the view that discrimination in all of its forms is wrong. Pupils believe strongly that everyone has a right to be treated equally and they are prepared to tell adults in the school if they think that this is not happening.
- Teachers and other adults at the school promote fundamental British values well. Pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and celebrate festivals from a variety of religions. Pupils work easily and naturally with each other and demonstrate good manners as they move around the school or queue in the dining hall.
- Pupils benefit from a well-ordered and relevant curriculum, which provides them with the basic tools they need for good learning. Mathematics and English have a prominent role, but this is not at the expense of the humanities or arts subjects. Leaders are also careful to include plenty of opportunities for pupils to learn about how to understand, express and deal with their emotions.
- The curriculum is also rich in opportunities for pupils (including Reception) to learn outside of school, for example visits to The Space Centre for Years 2 and 3. There are also good opportunities for pupils to benefit from visitors to school, such as a recent archery session, which helped Years 3 and 4 understand the Norman Conquest.
- Leaders use the additional pupil premium funding to make sure that disadvantaged pupils do not fall behind.
- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, are managing the considerable challenge of expanding the school well. They are vigilant and organised in making sure that these significant changes do not have a negative impact on existing pupils' experiences.
- Leaders have established thorough and reliable ways of making sure that the information they gather about pupils' performance is accurate. Examples of work are scrutinised by teachers across the trust and outside it so that they can be sure that the information on which they base improvement plans is accurate.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This enables them to make effective improvement plans, which focus on the right areas to improve.
- Leaders' expectations for the presentation of pupils' work are not consistent and too many pupils do not present their work neatly. Leaders are now well placed to ensure that the high standards seen in the pupils' best work are the expected standard for all teachers.
- Leaders inform parents and carers about their children's progress at school. Most parents value this highly, but a small minority of parents think that the school needs to do more to communicate with them in a more useful and timely fashion.

Governance of the school

- The school is supported by governors from the trust and an advisory council, all of whom have an accurate view of the school. They are clear where its strengths and weaknesses are and they, and other leaders, share this information so that there is a school wide approach to improvement.
- Leaders benefit from skilled and high-quality guidance from the trust's school improvement adviser, who ensures that leaders have the support they need to make improvements.
- Those responsible for governance make good use of information from external sources. They ensure that they are not over-reliant on the principal's view of the school by making regular visits and asking a wide selection of leaders to present reports to governors' meetings.
- Those responsible for governance keep a watchful eye on the school's safeguarding arrangements. They ensure that their training is up to date, relevant and takes into account local contexts. For example, they check that leaders have a clear awareness of child sexual exploitation and radicalisation.

Safeguarding

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Arrangements for the pastoral care of pupils are very effective and leaders leave no stone unturned in their work to make sure that pupils are safe. There is a culture of safeguarding in the school and adults are well trained to spot any potential threats to pupils' well-being.
- Leaders, including the school's very able family support and attendance worker, are relentless in their work with outside agencies, especially if they think more could be done to increase the safety of a child in their care. They keep detailed and ordered records and scrutinise them to make sure there are no patterns of behaviour missed.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe. They are clear about how they would act if they or someone else was in trouble and they care instinctively about each other and about how their classmates feel.
- All the necessary checks of staff, volunteers, governors and others are carried out accurately. Although leaders always obtain satisfactory explanations of gaps in employment history, they do not always keep a record.
- Leaders make sure that pupils who are excluded from school for a fixed term are safe during the exclusion period.
- Leaders keep clear, systematic and timely records of any safeguarding concern. They use a system that allows them to easily spot patterns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers make good use of their subject knowledge to plan learning effectively. They couple this sensitively with aspects of emotional understanding and pupils' interests, so that pupils are well motivated and make good progress.

- Formal assessment arrangements are a strength of the school. Aply assisted by the trust, leaders have created assessment processes that are accurate and identify next steps that pupils need to make to improve. Teachers then plan pupils' learning with this in mind.
- Most teachers use questioning skilfully to deepen pupils' knowledge. They are also sufficiently skilled to adapt a lesson as they are doing it, if it is proving too easy or if pupils need further clarification.
- Teaching assistants have a good impact on the rates of progress made by pupils. This is particularly true for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Support is effective and is clearly planned with the teacher to make sure that pupils get the help they need to reach their targets.
- The most able pupils are not making as much progress as they could. They do not get as much stretch and challenge to their learning as they need. Sometimes work for this group is too easy; this is particularly the case in mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of the standard of presentation in pupils' work and books are not consistently high. Pupils do not consistently use their best writing or presentation if they think their work does not have to be in their presentation books.
- Teachers do not tackle pupils' misconceptions in spelling, punctuation and grammar consistently. Too many pupils continue to make the same mistake for too long. For example, in one lesson, a pupil used the word 'done' four times without being challenged when he should have used the word 'did'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils welcome visitors to their school and are confident when talking to them. They show good manners and listen well to other people. Name-calling is extremely rare and where it is found, teachers deal with it effectively. Pupils respect each other naturally.
- Rates of pupil attendance are high and improving. At the same time, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is falling. Leaders have devised secure routines for making sure that pupils who are absent from school are checked upon. No group of pupils is disadvantaged by poor attendance.
- Bullying is very rare. This is because pupils are so well prepared to spot it and get help for it if they do see it. On the handful of occasions where it has occurred, it has been a one-off incident and not happened again.
- Pupils are well prepared for using the internet. Mechanisms in the form of a help button, 'Hector Protector', are in place if a pupil is worried and wants to alert an adult. Leaders are now working with parents to help them support their children. Leaders have also made sure that pupils are able to deal with encountering people they do not know and tell the difference between safe and unsafe strangers.

- Pupils also know how to recognise healthy lifestyles and healthy relationships and friendships. This has a positive impact on their happiness and sense of safety at school.

Behaviour

- Pupils make good progress.
- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about their education and come to school ready to learn and correctly equipped.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour in lessons skilfully. Disruption to learning is rare, but when it does happen, teachers and other adults act quickly and firmly to ensure that pupils concentrate on their work.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is polite and orderly. Routines for lining up and entering and leaving classrooms are well embedded so that no time is wasted. Pupils greet visitors with a smile of welcome.
- The learning environment is well maintained and tidy. There is no litter or graffiti anywhere, which demonstrates how much pupils value their school. There are various pieces of equipment, which pupils use and take turns in using in their playtimes. They make sure that the equipment is put back neatly and tidily.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2017, pupils' attainment was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is also true for the proportion of pupils working at great depth. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils are on course to repeat this in 2018.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in key stage 2. The vast majority of current pupils are on track to reach their ambitious targets, set by the school, by the end of key stage 2.
- Progress in science is not as good as it is in English and mathematics, but it is improving strongly. Teachers are carefully linking reading and writing skills to work in science.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. Their attainment is similar to that of their peers. Leaders are vigilant in making sure that disadvantaged pupils who have gaps in their knowledge get the support they need to catch up quickly.
- Pupils' books and other work show good progress over time from their starting points for almost all pupils. However, they also show that there are times when the most able pupils could be given harder work and be expected to do more.
- Pupils read widely and often. They have good phonics skills and they are able to encounter new words without anxiety. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the national phonics check is consistently above the national average.

- The achievement of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving strongly and this has been an area of focus for school leaders. Effective leadership from the coordinator for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has led to clear improvements in pupils' performance and greater numbers of pupils are now meeting their targets.

Early years provision

Good

- Pupils start the Reception Year having developed skills typical for their age. They make good progress. The proportion who leave the early years having reached a good level of development is above the national average. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities also make good progress.
- There are rich opportunities for children to choose activities themselves, both in the classroom and the well-resourced and imaginative outside areas. Children enjoy their learning and are happy at school. They are curious and able to sustain concentration.
- Relationships between adults and children are very strong because they are caring and consistently positive. This leads to children making the most of their learning time.
- Leaders have made sure that they understand the learning needs of their children. They make sure that assessments of children's ability when they come to school are accurate. This helps them plan useful and relevant learning experiences for them. Parents contribute well to these assessments, which further improves their accuracy.
- Leaders also make sure that children are safe and undertake robust risk assessments and relevant paediatric safeguarding and first-aid training.
- The early years curriculum is broad and based on children's interests. This contributes to children being well prepared for key stage 1.
- Leaders are imaginative in looking for opportunities to enhance children's learning. A recent trip to Irchester Country Park helped children to better understand aspects of the natural world for their bugs project.
- Most children use phonics well in their writing. However, there are inconsistencies in the way adults make sounds. This leads to some misconceptions, which get in the way of children making consistent progress.
- The most able children make good progress, but this is not consistent. They are not given sufficient opportunities to stretch their thinking, especially in mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	141032
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10048104

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mike Hamlin
Principal	Liza Davies
Telephone number	01933 201 200
Website	www.rushdenprimaryacademy.org/
Email address	admin@rushdenprimaryacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The school opened in 2015 and is increasing in size each year.
- The current Year 4 will be the first year group to take their end of key stage tests in 2020.
- The school is a sponsored part of Greenwood Academies Trust.
- Governance is provided by the governing body of the trust.
- Leaders are also supported by a school adviser from the trust

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or part lessons with school leaders, including the principal.
- Inspectors had meetings with the principal, senior leaders, including the lead teachers for mathematics, English and early years, as well as the coordinator for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Inspectors also met with the school's advisory council and representatives from the trust, including the school's improvement adviser.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including senior leaders' own evaluations of the school's performance and plans for improvement and records of training. They also looked at information on pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour, attendance and how the school keeps pupils safe.
- Pupils' views were heard in a meeting with an inspector and also throughout the inspection. Inspectors also heard pupils read.
- Inspectors met with parents at the school gate and took into account the 47 responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and an additional 24 via the free-text service. They also considered responses from the online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Mark Mitchley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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