

Inspection of a good school: Robert Sandilands Primary School and Nursery

Digby Road, Speen, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 1TS

Inspection dates:

26–27 November 2019

Outcome

Robert Sandilands Primary School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff work in harmony together at this school. Pupils trust their teachers to do their best for them. They feel safe and looked after. Staff take every effort to get to know their pupils well. They make sure that pupils are happy and ready to learn.

Teachers are dedicated to developing each pupil as an individual. They are very ambitious for pupils to succeed. As a result, there are high expectations of what pupils can do. Teachers encourage pupils to challenge themselves. They do this both in pupils' learning and in their personal development. Pupils understand how important these challenges are. As one explained, 'It will help us when we are adults.'

Pupils behave very well throughout the school. In class, they concentrate well and work with purpose. In the lunch hall and out on the playground, pupils show respect and care for each other. Older pupils take it on themselves to look out for the younger ones.

Parents appreciate what the school does for their children. One parent's comment summed up how many feel, 'The support all children give to one another, the sense of team, and the respect the children show each other is amazing.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have taken care over putting together the curriculum. They have clear subject plans that set out what and how they want pupils to learn. Teachers make sure that pupils understand the purpose of what they are learning. Their teaching is often skilled in deepening pupils' understanding. For instance, in mathematics pupils must prove their answers to be right. They debate the methods they have used to solve a problem. They will do this often as a whole class. Pupils explain and discuss their thinking with accuracy and confidence.

Leaders and teachers are ambitious in their plans for what pupils will learn. This has ensured that pupils have very secure knowledge and understanding. The strongest

learning is in mathematics and English. Here, pupils excel in what they achieve by the time they leave. Many subjects are close to the same high standard. For example, there is effective learning in history. Pupils have a real sense of curiosity. They do not flinch from grappling with difficult ideas.

Teachers ensure that they introduce new knowledge with care. As a result, pupils make deep gains in their understanding. This is especially true in the older year groups.

Reading is a priority throughout the school. Pupils love to talk about what they are reading. They are regular and frequent readers. Pupils often use the school's two libraries. These stock a range of books that are well matched to pupils' interest and phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) ability. Teachers ensure that pupils have a rich diet of reading. They place a strong and persistent focus on widening pupils' vocabulary.

Leaders of the early years provision are striving for further improvement. Staff begin teaching phonics as soon as pupils start school. Leaders' aim is that more children become even better at reading by the end of Reception year. They have implemented an ambitious plan to further improve children's learning. Teachers ensure that children who need to catch up do so quickly. By the end of Year 2 all pupils can read independently. This gives pupils a strong starting point for the next stage of their education.

Pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning. They want to listen and understand. They show respect to their teachers and to each other.

Teachers are quick to pick up on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have a thorough understanding of each pupil's needs and what support is then required. Many teachers show skill in adapting their teaching to support the individual needs of pupils with SEND.

Learning at the school is not just about what happens in lessons. Leaders want all pupils to have opportunities to develop into well-rounded people. The school guarantees pupils key experiences during their time at school. These help them gain a wider view of the world. Opportunities range from learning basic first aid to visiting the Houses of Parliament. As a result, pupils have a well-developed sense of themselves as individuals. They also grow to understand more about the world they live in.

The headteacher is passionate about education. She wants the very best for each pupil. Staff and governors share this vision. Teachers value the training and support they receive. They recognise that leaders make every effort to reduce unnecessary workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of care and safety at the school. Staff are alert to any risk to pupils. They keep watch over them and ensure that they feel safe from harm. Staff work well with families to secure the right support at the right time.

Leaders are diligent in the delivery of safeguarding training to staff. They are careful to

carry out all appropriate recruitment checks. Governors are conscientious and knowledgeable in their monitoring of the school's safeguarding practice. Indeed, everyone at the school gives proper attention to all safeguarding matters.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and teachers have made successful changes to the curriculum across the whole school. They have improved many aspects of the pupils' learning experiences since the last inspection. They have now turned their attention to the early years curriculum and have embarked on a series of developments. Leaders are right to be focusing in this area of the school. They should continue to increase the rate at which Reception children acquire their phonics skills so that children make an even better start to their early reading.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Robert Sandilands Primary School and Nursery to be good on 18–19 May 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil

premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	109861
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10111391
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	264
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ian Nichol
Headteacher	Elizabeth Bucknell
Website	www.robertsandilands.westberks.dbpriary.com
Date of previous inspection	18–19 May 2016

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school with nine classes. The early years consists of one Nursery class and one Reception class.
- Year 4 has two classes. All remaining year groups have one class.
- There have been changes in leadership since the last inspection. A new headteacher and a new chair of governors have been appointed in that time.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with school leaders and other members of staff, including the special educational needs coordinator and the early years leader. She also met with governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements. She looked at relevant documentation, staff recruitment checks and training. She also considered how well adults in the school act on emerging concerns about pupils' welfare.
- The inspector spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views about the school. She considered 60 responses to Parent View, 19 responses to the

staff questionnaire and 25 responses to the pupils' questionnaire

- The inspector did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. This involved talking with senior leaders, subject leaders and class teachers about how these subjects are delivered. She then visited a range of lessons to see this in action, talked to pupils about what they have learned and looked at their work.

Inspection team

Yasmin Maskatiya, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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