

Inspection of Rowanfield Junior School

Alstone Lane, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL51 8HY

Inspection dates: 3–4 March 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The previous 'outstanding' judgement reflected the school's overall effectiveness in January 2014 under the relevant inspection framework at that time.

The new judgement of 'good' reflects the current inspection framework as well as any changes at the school since the last inspection.

The school has not been inspected for six years, which is longer than the five-year maximum interval between inspections. Changes in school effectiveness may have happened at any point in that period. The long time between inspections is because the law changed in 2011; it made outstanding schools exempt from routine inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of Rowanfield Junior School. They throw themselves into everything on offer. Pupils behave well, and they have positive attitudes in class.

Pupils are thoughtful and caring to one another. They are safe. Pupils are very well looked after. They say that bullying happens rarely. Pupils say that when they do have a worry, or they fall in and out with friends, staff listen and help, whatever the circumstances.

Pupils learn about 'big ideas' and 'life-changing experiences', such as life as a refugee. Pupils particularly enjoy the wide-ranging experiences that teachers plan within and beyond the classroom. For example, virtual reality workshops, and subject-based theme weeks, like arts week, and science, technology and mathematics (STEM) activities.

Pupils learn a lot in reading, writing, and mathematics. Pupils are reading more now and enjoying it. Pupils are proud to use the ambitious vocabulary they learn, and they apply this in their writing well. However, pupils learn more in some subjects than others. This means that pupils do not retain the depth of knowledge they should in every subject.

Pupils learn about keeping mentally and physically fit and healthy, including drugs education. They enjoy trust-wide sports events. There are lots of clubs offering a range of activities for pupils to enjoy, such as gardening and cooking.

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

In the past, many pupils entered the school with skills and knowledge well below their age. These pupils have needed to catch up, and they are. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum for writing and mathematics are well thought out. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to ensure that pupils' needs are met well. When pupils struggle to understand or have gaps in their knowledge, leaders identify this and make sure that teachers tackle it head on. Consequently, pupils' academic standards are on the rise.

Leaders' actions to get everyone reading with good understanding are paying off. There is a sharp focus on developing pupils' vocabulary. Many pupils who were not reading much before are now becoming avid readers. Pupils who struggle to read when they arrive get extra support. These pupils enjoy reading to adults and they are beginning to gain greater confidence as a result. However, the school's work to ensure that all staff in Years 3 and 4 are experts in the teaching of phonics is at an early stage. As a result, some pupils do not catch up swiftly as they could.

In the past, there has been a lot of focus on preparing pupils for external tests. This narrowed the curriculum. It prevented pupils from gaining the depth of knowledge they should have in every national curriculum subject. Leaders are well on the way

to sorting this out. They have taken strident steps to plan a well-sequenced curriculum that will give pupils the building blocks they need to do well in every subject. As this new curriculum is being implemented it is proving to be highly ambitious for all pupils. Pupils are enjoying it. However, the school's curriculum is still under development and some subjects are further ahead than others. Pupils recognise that they spend less time learning some subjects than others.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive caring support. Pupils' emotional needs are met very well. While pupils with SEND learn well overall, there are occasions when staff do not use their assessments precisely enough, particularly in lower key stage 2. This hinders the amount of practice pupils get to deepen their understanding and retain new learning.

Leaders' determined actions are ensuring that pupils attend well. As a result, pupils' overall attendance is broadly in line with that seen nationally.

Leaders and teachers provide lots of opportunities for pupils to have real life experiences to ensure that they learn about life beyond their immediate locality. Pupils gain an appreciation of the arts, religion and different cultures, and visit places of worship. This means that they become responsible young citizens and gain a wider understanding of the world.

Staff get lots of opportunities to work with other trust schools and develop their skills and knowledge as teachers and leaders. Consequently, staff feel valued and well supported in their day-to-day work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff are vigilant in ensuring that they keep pupils safe. Leaders carry out all the checks that are needed to assure themselves of staff suitability to work with children. Trust staff and governors check that the systems and processes for safeguarding are working well. Any actions that arise from their visits are acted upon straight away.

Staff training is up to date. Systems for reporting concerns are used and applied effectively by staff. Staff work closely with external agencies to minimise pupils' risk of harm. Pupils feel safe and they are.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet planned coherently in every subject. It is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to plan and train staff in how to deliver the curriculum that they are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied. Leaders need to ensure that

the curriculum is well planned and implemented in every subject so that pupils know and remember more in every subject of the national curriculum.

- In Years 3 and 4, staff do not have strong subject knowledge in teaching early reading and phonics. Pupils who cannot use and apply their phonics to read accurately are not catching up quickly enough. Leaders must ensure that all staff are trained in the teaching of phonics so that their subject knowledge is good, to enable pupils who have previously struggled to read catch up quickly.
- There are occasions when staff do not use their assessments of what of pupils can and cannot do, precisely enough. While most pupils with SEND do well, a minority of these pupils do not get enough practice to deepen their understanding and retain new knowledge. Leaders need to assure themselves that all pupils with SEND get enough practice to consolidate and deepen their knowledge in all subjects.

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 the school and 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	137255
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10111640
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	320
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruth Lewis
Headteacher	Shona Riddell
Website	www.rowanfield-junior.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school's leadership has changed since the last inspection. The school's previous headteacher is now the director of academies for the trust.
- The school is part of a multi-academy trust (MAT) called Gloucestershire Learning Alliance (GLA). The MAT was formed in November 2013. The MAT is made up of six primary schools in Gloucestershire.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

The previous 'outstanding' judgement reflected the school's overall effectiveness in January 2014 under the relevant inspection framework at that time.

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The school has not been inspected for six years, which is longer than the five-year maximum interval between inspections under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees and chair of the local academy board. She also met with the chief executive officer (CEO) and director of academies on day two of the inspection. Inspectors also met with other central trust staff with specific responsibilities for school improvement.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy head, and other members of the extended leadership team, including the leader of SEND.
- Inspectors met with teachers who are new to the profession or in their second year of teaching.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to the safeguarding, attendance and behaviour of pupils.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View and the school's recent parent and carer survey. An inspector also met with parents at the start of the school day to gather their views of the school.
- Throughout the inspection, inspectors met with staff and pupils to gather their views.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, writing and history. This included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, meeting with senior and subject leaders and discussions with teachers and pupils. We also looked further into the quality of education pupils receive in science, geography and personal, social, health and economic education.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Susan Horsnell	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Jelley	Ofsted Inspector

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