

Inspection of a good school: Rock Ferry Primary School

Ionic Street, Rock Ferry, Birkenhead, Merseyside CH42 2BL

Inspection dates:

26–27 February 2020

Outcome

Rock Ferry Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are polite and welcoming. They follow teachers' instructions sensibly, listen carefully during lessons and contribute to discussions. The pupils that I spoke with told me that behaviour is good most of the time. Staff do not accept bullying. Pupils told me that staff will deal with bullying when it happens. Pupils said that they feel happy and safe at school.

Pupils are proud of their school and its achievements. They take part in lots of clubs, including football and dance. They also have the chance to attend a residential visit in Year 6. Pupils take on responsibilities, such as school councillors or peer monitors. This prepares them well for the future.

Leaders have improved the curriculum. Staff now have higher expectations of all pupils and this can be seen in current pupils' work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in all aspects of school-life. There is a range of extra support for these pupils. Parents and carers told me that they value the nurture and care given to pupils.

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

Leaders, governors and staff worked together to create the vision 'be the best they can be'. They expect all children and pupils to succeed. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND.

The 2019 published data shows that while pupils made the progress that they should across key stage 2, the standards that they reached in reading, writing and mathematics were below the national average. Specific issues within this group of Year 6 pupils halted the previous trend of improvement.

The published data does not reflect the achievement of pupils currently at the school. The standard of work in pupils' books is strong. It fully reflects what leaders want pupils to know and be able to do in each year group.

Leaders have raised their expectations of teachers and their aspirations for all pupils. Leaders have worked together to design an effective and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum builds on what pupils have already learned in a logical way. Leaders have included the development of 'mind, body and soul' into their curriculum planning. This makes sure that equal weight is given to pupils' academic, social and emotional development. As a result, pupils leave school as well-rounded youngsters. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as other pupils. They achieve well due to the support that they receive to meet their learning needs.

Leaders have set out clearly what they expect pupils to know in the curriculum in all subjects in each year group. In art, for example, Year 2 pupils use perspective in their work. They have a well-developed understanding of how to compose artwork. For example, some pupils could explain how they had used the size and position of trees and mountains in their landscapes to create depth. However, in some other subjects, the curriculum plans are at the early stages of being implemented.

The English and mathematics curriculums are well planned. Teachers have an effective knowledge of these subjects. They deliver the curriculum plans effectively, making sure that pupils' learning builds on what pupils already know and can do. Leaders have effective systems for checking on pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. They have started to develop similar systems to make sure that pupils are learning what they should in other subjects. However, it is still early days for this new strategy.

Leaders prioritise reading. They have ensured that all staff are well trained. The youngest children are taught the sounds that letters make from their entry into the Nursery class. Younger children can read simple texts accurately. Older pupils develop their understanding of reading through well-sequenced learning. Pupils who do not have secure knowledge of phonics receive extra support from skilled staff. Teachers match books carefully to pupils' reading ability. Staff effectively support all pupils, including those with SEND, to build up their knowledge of letter sounds and words. Many pupils across the school read fluently and accurately.

Staff help children in the early years to make a strong start to their education, especially in their language development. The curriculum is planned well to build on children's needs and interests. Adults plan appropriate activities, using excellent resources, to ensure that children gain knowledge and skills across all areas of learning.

Leaders provide pupils with a rich variety of extra-curricular activities. These help to develop pupils' social and emotional skills. Pupils take part in a wide range of school clubs. They also take part in joint curriculum projects with other schools. These develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural and global issues.

Pupils behave well in class. Little time is lost due to disruption. They move around the school politely. Leaders have used a range of strategies to improve pupils' attendance.

This includes, for example, a range of rewards and meetings with parents. Even so, pupils' attendance is slightly below the national average. This is due to a small number of families who take extended holidays during school time.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the efforts by leaders to consider their work-life balance and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders have created an ethos and culture which ensures that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and central to the life of the school. Staff, particularly the family support worker, know families well. Leaders train staff well. Staff know how to spot the early signs that pupils may be at risk of harm and how to act on any concerns. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to keep pupils safe from harm.

The majority of pupils feel safe in school. They are taught to keep themselves safe on the roads and railways and how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have successfully designed a curriculum for the subjects they lead. However, a small number of subjects are at the early stages of being implemented. Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics have not fully developed their systems for checking on how well pupils' knowledge builds up over time. This means that leaders are not sure if the new curriculum plans are having the intended impact across the school. Senior leaders should now ensure that the new curriculum plans are implemented fully for all subjects. They should also provide subject leaders with the opportunities to check the impact of their work to make sure that pupils learn what leaders intend.

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 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 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 23–24 May 2011.

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	105045
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10111044
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	336
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jennie Richmond
Headteacher	Sara Radley
Website	www.rockferryprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The senior leadership team has been restructured to comprise headteacher, deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers, the special needs coordinator and the school business manager.
- School leaders have worked with SEND specialists to create the Nurture Base to help develop pupils' social, emotional and mental health barriers to learning.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher. I held meetings with subject leaders and with the leaders for SEND and the early years. I also spoke with governors and a representative from the local authority.
- I did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, art and mathematics. This involved discussions with leaders and pupils about their work. I also visited lessons in these subjects and spoke with teachers. I also looked at pupils' work and heard pupils read
- I also spoke with the leaders of geography, history and physical education and looked at pupils' work in science, geography and English.

- I scrutinised the school's recruitment checks on its staff. I spoke with staff about the school's procedures and systems for protecting pupils from risk. I also discussed how pupils are taught to keep themselves safe through the curriculum.
- I spoke with pupils and I listened to pupils read. I also observed their behaviour in classrooms and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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