

Inspection of a good school: Rothwell Victoria Infant School

School Lane, Rothwell, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 6HZ

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 July 2021

Outcome

Rothwell Victoria Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this school because teachers make 'learning fun'. Pupils say that teachers help them to use their manners and to understand how to be a good friend. Parents say that leaders always make time to see them and listen to their concerns. Leaders support parents and families in getting help, including from other organisations.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. Pupils are encouraged to name on a 'trusted hand' those adults with whom they feel comfortable to speak if they are upset or need help. These adults help children to talk about their worries. Pupils say that they have learned about online safety and how to stay healthy.

Pupils in Year 2 say that they are 'excited and nervous' about moving to the junior school. They say teachers have answered any questions they may have and have helped them to understand how they are feeling. This has prepared them for the move to their new school.

Leaders ensure a range of activities are on offer at lunchtime. Pupils say this has made lunchtimes enjoyable. Pupils enjoy playing sports games with a coach, planting seeds and learning about nature. Leaders plan to reintroduce a greater range of clubs once COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions allow.

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

Leaders understand that some pupils do not get enough opportunities to share books beyond school. They know that some pupils need extra support to help them with their communication skills. Pupils say they enjoy listening to stories their teachers read to them. Teachers in the early years provide children with lots of opportunities to develop their language. They make sure vocabulary development is a key part of the curriculum in the early years.

Leaders have ensured that teachers have received training to teach reading. Teachers make regular checks on the sounds that pupils have remembered. Leaders say that some pupils have not remembered sounds because many pupils were not in school due to COVID-19. Most pupils learn to read well. On occasions, pupils who need extra help with early reading do not receive books that match the sounds they know. Adults do not consistently encourage the weakest readers to use their phonics knowledge when reading.

Curriculum plans in mathematics outline what pupils should learn. Leaders have worked with other schools in the multi-academy trust to build a cohesive approach to the curriculum plans. Leaders have ensured that pupils receive regular practice in recalling facts. Leaders have plans to ensure that all pupils get equal access to problem-solving. Significant training for mathematics for all staff is planned for the autumn term. Pupils say they like mathematics because it helps them 'to learn new things'.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. The pace of curriculum development has slowed as a result of COVID-19. Leaders have developed curriculum plans with the junior school that most pupils will attend when they leave. This helps to ensure that pupils build on what they already know as they move from Year 2 to Year 3.

Some curriculum plans include what children in the early years need to know. However, leaders have not ensured that all curriculum plans identify the key knowledge that pupils need to know across each year group.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) say that the school supports their child well. The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) helps families to access support from other services. Pupils with SEND receive equipment and resources to help them learn in school. However, leaders have not yet ensured that all curriculum plans include the essential knowledge that SEND pupils need to know.

Leaders support families to understand the importance of sending their child to school. Leaders make robust checks to ensure that pupils attend school. Some pupils who need the most help, however, do not attend as regularly as they should.

The multi-academy trust and the local governing body prioritise work with other services to support vulnerable pupils and families in the school. Leaders in the trust have also worked with school leaders to develop the curriculum.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel valued and well supported. They say that leaders' actions have supported their well-being.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that attendance, reading and planning pupils' learning in all subjects may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is given the utmost priority. Staff at the school are vigilant and receive regular training to support their understanding of safeguarding. They are aware of issues in the local area that may affect their pupils. Leaders have ensured that all staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. Leaders have established strong systems for raising and following up concerns. They maintain detailed safeguarding records and work well with other agencies so that pupils receive the support they may need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although leaders work closely with families, the attendance of some pupils who need extra help in their learning remains low. This means these pupils are not in school regularly enough to ensure that they learn the school's curriculum and improve their reading. Leaders should make sure that their actions improve the attendance for pupils who need additional support to read.
- Leaders have not ensured that all of the weakest readers receive the support they need to learn to read fluently. These pupils do not always receive reading books that match the sounds they know. Staff do not consistently encourage pupils who need extra help with their reading to use their knowledge of sounds to read unfamiliar words. Leaders should ensure that the teaching of early reading helps all pupils to become confident readers.
- In some curriculum areas, leaders have not identified the subject-specific knowledge that pupils should learn. In science, history and geography, leaders have not ensured that plans outline the key knowledge that pupils, including those with SEND, need to learn in all year groups. Pupils do not always have a deep understanding of key knowledge in these subjects as they progress through the school. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans in all subjects identify what key knowledge pupils should learn and when.

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 outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 6 July 2013.

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	140061
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10199239
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	311
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Graham Tomkins
Headteacher	Ashley Izzard-Snape
Website	www.rothwellschools.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 July 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since 2019, a new executive headteacher has been appointed to lead across Rothwell Victoria Infant School and Rothwell Victoria Junior School. A significant restructuring of the leadership team has led to a deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers and a SENDCo working across both schools.
- The school is part of the Pathfinder schools trust, a multi-academy trust of eight primary schools and one secondary school in Northamptonshire.
- There have been significant changes in governance, including appointments of a new chair and vice chair of the local governing body.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, the SENDCo, the leader for early years and curriculum leaders. A meeting was held with representatives from the Pathfinder trust and of the school's local governing body.
- The inspector looked closely at the quality of education in early reading, mathematics and science. This involved speaking with leaders, staff and pupils. The inspector visited lessons and reviewed samples of pupils' work. Subject plans and samples of pupils' work for history and geography were reviewed.
- The inspector considered a wide range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour and minutes from meetings of the governing body. A meeting was held with pupils and staff to evaluate the school's safeguarding culture. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school was considered.
- The inspector considered the views of parents and staff shared through the Ofsted surveys and by meeting parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector

Seconded Inspector of Schools

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