

Inspection of Royal Rise Primary School

Royal Rise, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2DQ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this good and improving school. They talk with pride about how their school is 'better since it changed its name'. They told inspectors that bullying is not a problem here and that most pupils behave well most of the time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well by staff and by their peers alike. Inspectors witnessed many acts of kindness during the inspection. Older pupils clearly understand the school's values. They also smile a lot, and were not afraid to share a joke with inspectors when the opportunity arose.

Parents and carers are increasingly positive about the school. Pupils who have recently joined from other schools say that they feel welcomed. Children in Reception have already settled into the school's routines. Despite it only being their fourth full day in school, children sat patiently and were inquisitive as 'Freddy frog' introduced them to special letters and sounds hidden in a basket.

Staff are caring and nurturing. Their expectations are high. Consequently, pupils have growing confidence in themselves. One told the lead inspector that the school is now 'a good place to learn,' and that, 'no matter who you are, everyone is good at something.'

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

It is evident that a great deal of progress has been made since the school joined the multi-academy trust. Leaders are dedicated to improving all aspects of the school. The headteacher enjoys a high degree of autonomy, while being able to draw on expertise and support provided through the trust when needed. Governors are supportive and understand their roles. Communication between each tier of leadership is effective, leading to a clarity of purpose and good leadership at all levels.

The school's curriculum has evolved over the last four years. Leaders continue to develop it in line with their priority of ensuring that planned learning closely meets the needs of all pupils. Leaders are keenly aware of changes to the early years foundation stage framework and how its implementation will help to ensure that children in Reception continue to get a good start to school.

Classroom visits showed that pupils enjoy learning. Leaders understand that reading sits at the heart of pupils' ability to access the wider curriculum. Children are introduced to the school's phonics scheme quickly. Expectations of their progress in early reading are set and monitored closely. Most pupils read with fluency by the time they reach the end of Year 2. Those who struggle, including those with SEND, are supported well. Older children talk enthusiastically about reading, are able to describe why they like, or are not so keen on the books of different authors.

Children enjoy their mathematics lessons. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum builds pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills successfully over time. Additionally,

staff have made sensible adaptations to the mathematics curriculum in the light of COVID-19 (coronavirus). Leaders have also taken the needs of pupils with SEND into account when designing the mathematics curriculum, ensuring that pupils' individual needs are addressed across the school.

The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is a strength. It supports pupils' personal development well, particularly those who are vulnerable and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Physical and mental health, as well as the importance of good friends and respectful relationships, are all aspects covered in an age-appropriate way as pupils move through the school.

Leaders have carefully considered pupils' prior experiences and sought to address common barriers to learning in designing the geography curriculum. It takes into account the school's locality and begins, like most of the school's curriculum, in Reception. Despite its strengths, leaders are aware that the geography scheme of work would benefit from a clearer focus on the detailed knowledge pupils need to know as they move through the school.

While the quality of education the school provides is good, leaders know that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the trajectory of improvement. Rightly, their recent priorities have been on supporting the well-being of pupils and staff, while maintaining the quality of education as best they can. Largely, this has been successful. However, the professional development of staff, including for those new to teaching and those new to the school, has suffered. Some staff need to develop their subject knowledge. Not all staff who teach phonics are expert enough to teach the school's scheme with complete fidelity. Early career teachers in particular talk with passion and pride about their work, but would benefit from further development focusing on the way they teach the curriculum for each subject.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture to keep pupils safe is strong. Staff understand the potential risks pupils face both in and out of school, including when online. They are keenly aware of additional risks to pupils' well-being posed by COVID-19, ensuring that ongoing support is in place where required.

Leaders and governors understand their responsibilities and act decisively when they have concerns. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and cared for in school. The very large majority of parents who replied to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire also think that their children feel safe in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are aware that the subject knowledge of some staff could be better. This is particularly the case for, but not restricted to teachers who are in the early stages of their careers and those new to the school. Additionally, some staff who are delivering the school's phonics scheme are not as precise as they could or should be when teaching or supporting pupils with their reading. While the impact of COVID-19 is partly to blame for this, leaders now need to act quickly to address this deficiency. A high-quality and effective professional development package needs to be put in place. This should include developing teachers' pedagogical knowledge, as well as ensuring that all staff who teach early reading do so with the skill and expertise that pupils at the school deserve.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	144615
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10200910
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	178
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Melanie Shackleton
Headteacher	Sarah Griggs
Website	www.royalriseprimary.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This was the first inspection of the school since it became a sponsored academy and joined the Cygnus Academies Trust in July 2017.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. The lead inspector met with the chair and three other members of the governing body. Inspectors met with the chief executive officer and other officers from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and PSHE. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils'

work, and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils about how teaching in these subjects builds on pupils' knowledge over time. The lead inspector heard pupils read to an adult from the school. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

- Throughout the inspection, inspectors assessed the school's culture to keep pupils safe. A wide range of documentation was considered, including policies and safeguarding records. The single central record of checks on the suitability of adults to work with children was also scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked to pupils formally and informally to gain an understanding of how safe they feel in school. They reviewed pupil, staff and parent surveys, and also took the opportunity to talk to parents at the start of the first day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alice Roberts

Her Majesty's Inspector

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