

Inspection of an outstanding school: Rathfern Primary School

Rathfern Road, Catford, London, SE6 4NL

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2021

Outcome

Rathfern Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils in this school enjoy and excel in their learning. They enjoy learning about a wide range of subjects and find them interesting. Pupils' exemplary behaviour is calm and sensible and contributes to the school's positive learning environment. Adults have high expectations for every pupil.

They understand Rathfern's values and this is reflected in how they treat each other. Pupils are adamant that bullying does not take place in their school. They feel safe and are confident that if it did, adults would deal with it well.

Pupils are resilient. The school has supported pupils to catch up on missed learning caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, they have completed science investigations that were not possible during remote learning.

Leaders and staff are keen learners. They continually develop their knowledge of the curriculum and how to teach it. Schools from the local area and beyond recognise the expertise of staff in this school. They often ask the school's leaders for advice and support.

Parents and carers appreciate how leaders communicate with them to offer help and support. They are proud of being part of the school. They like that the school clearly tells them about their child's learning. Parents said that their children are incredibly happy at school.

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

Leaders and governors are knowledgeable about the curriculum and the best ways to teach it. Teachers use assessment well to check what pupils already remember before teaching new content.

Everyone in the school is committed to ensuring that all pupils can read. Staff teach reading as soon as children start in the Nursery. All staff receive high-quality training so that they are well-prepared to teach pupils how to read. Pupils show a genuine love of reading. They talk about their favourite books with enthusiasm.

Pupils enjoy and achieve highly in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils remember what they were taught in the past. This is because teachers and support staff know how to help pupils remember more of the things they learned. For example, in history, pupils in Year 4 used a timeline to help them remember when events took place in the past. These events occurred over time from the ancient civilizations until the modern times.

Teachers get the best from pupils in their classes. They do this by carefully choosing ways to present new learning. Sometimes, this involves adults providing extra sessions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These sessions are focused on content that pupils may find difficult.

In the early years, the curriculum is planned so that it prepares children for what they will learn in Years 1 and 2. Children's knowledge of history, for example, is developed at an early age by learning about past, present, and future events in their lives.

Pupils' behaviour is extremely good. Pupils show respect and care for each other inside and outside of lessons. They are articulate and confident. Pupils also go out of their way to help adults and their peers.

Pupils are taught about being responsible members of their community, and of the world. The school has appointed pupil community ambassadors who have a deep and genuine concern for the environment. They work on projects which include community clean ups, tree planting, and raising funds for the homeless. The ambassadors serve as role models and are an inspiration to their peers and adults alike.

Staff appreciate the effort that leaders and governors make to ensure that their workload is not burdensome.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe at school, at home, or when online. Pupils and staff are supported to report any concerns freely. This culture of openness is evident throughout the school.

Leaders deal with safeguarding incidents effectively. Leaders work with external agencies to support parents and pupils. Pupils receive age-appropriate sessions that include guidance on respect for individual privacy.

Onsite therapists support pupils' mental and emotional health. They consider and address the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pupils' well-being.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in December 2015.

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	100700
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10199481
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	488
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rosemary Benson
Headteacher	Naheeda Maharasingam
Website	www.rathfern.lewisham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 – 9 December 2015, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a research hub for the Chartered College of Teaching.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and the members of the school's senior leadership team, middle leaders, governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector completed deep dives in reading, mathematics, and history. As part of this focus, he held discussions with curriculum leaders about the design of the curriculum and how it is being implemented. Together with leaders, he also visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and held discussions with teachers and pupils.
- The inspector also looked at curriculum plans and visited lessons for some other subjects.

- In considering the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, the inspector looked at the single central record. He also looked at records relating to the safeguarding of children. He considered records of staff training. He also held discussions with a range of pupils, staff and leaders.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through the 108 responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online survey for parents. He also considered 28 responses to the Ofsted survey for staff and 59 responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector also considered opportunities for pupils' personal development. He met with the school's community ambassadors. He made observations of pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff and discussed how well leaders consider their well-being, including steps to help them manage their workload.
- The inspector had a virtual discussion with the school improvement adviser provided by the local authority.

Inspection team

Edison David, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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