

Inspection of a good school: Riverdale Primary School

Hambleton Avenue, Redcar, North Yorkshire TS10 4HH

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 September 2021

Outcome

Riverdale Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders, staff and governors want the best for the community they serve. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have created an environment where pupils can thrive. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong.

Pupils speak confidently about their school. They say that they feel safe during lessons and outside on the playground. Their parents agree. Pupils firmly believe that their teachers and teaching assistants care about them. One pupil said, 'They keep us safe and are amazing! They look out for us!'

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They attend well. Pupils say that behaviour is good. In lessons, they demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They are courteous towards one another. This is because leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Adults model these expectations consistently throughout the day. Pupils are particularly happy about the recent changes made to the behaviour policy. They see the new rules as positive in acknowledging the good decisions they make.

Pupils understand different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They say that bullying incidents are rare. When pupils do have disagreements, they are confident that adults are on hand to sort things out.

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

Children in the early years get off to a flying start with their learning. Early years staff are developing children's language and communication very well. They provide exciting and varied opportunities for children to speak and listen. Children are actively engaged in their learning. This is because the environment and activities that are planned are appropriate to their needs and interests.

Reading is taught well and is a strength of the school. Leaders have ensured that it has a high profile in school development planning. Staff are skilled at teaching phonics. Children

are involved in reading activities as soon as they start school. In Nursery, they build up a love of story and language through songs and rhymes. Children enjoy listening to adults read. In Reception class, phonics is taught from the first week in school. Children receive daily phonics lessons and are soon confident in blending sounds to make simple words. Teachers are clear about which sounds and words children should be able to read, term by term. The books children receive are carefully matched to the sounds they learn. This builds their confidence and fluency in reading. Pupils who are not reading confidently receive help and support which is tailored to meet their needs. This means that no pupil is left behind.

The mathematics curriculum is well designed. Content is taught in a logical order. Teachers ensure that children are exposed to number and aspects of mathematics from Nursery. Teachers clearly explain mathematical topics to pupils. Pupils learn new things quickly. There are regular opportunities for them to revisit the things that they have learned before. For example, in Year 1, pupils were drawing on their knowledge of number to determine more than, less than or equal to. Teachers check if there are concepts that pupils have not fully grasped. They adjust their teaching to ensure that gaps in knowledge are filled and new knowledge is taught from secure foundations. Pupils in key stage 2 can explain their learning in mathematics with clarity and confidence.

The special educational needs coordinator keeps a close eye on the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Early identification means that staff can provide support for pupils quickly. Staff make careful adjustments to activities throughout the curriculum. As a result, pupils progress well. The school also provides effective emotional support through its nurturing provision. Parents greatly value this support.

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for pupils to learn. They have made sure it is well planned in all subjects. Subject plans identify the core knowledge that pupils will be taught and when. Leaders are now beginning to plan the subsequent knowledge and skills that underpin this learning. This includes the most important vocabulary that pupils should know and understand. This is particularly evident in art and design. Plans clearly identify the learning that children should acquire from Nursery to the end of Year 6. However, some subjects, such as geography and history, are not as far along in this journey. This means that pupils struggle to recall what they have been taught previously. Plans do not always consider what children have learned in the early years.

Pupils speak confidently about the varied opportunities the school provides for them to develop personally. Through the curriculum, they learn about different faiths and cultures. They understand the importance of treating one another equally and valuing difference. They understand what it means to keep healthy; this includes mental well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, place the safeguarding of pupils at the forefront of their work. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Leaders have established a culture of vigilance. Staff are well trained to recognise the signs of neglect or abuse. They know

how to act on concerns and report them immediately. Leaders have forged strong links with external services. They are able to access support and guidance should the need arise.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. This includes keeping safe online. Specialist visits and visitors, including the police, have supported pupils to recognise dangers while out and about in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently planned and sequenced in all subjects. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. Currently, in some subjects, such as geography and history, leaders' plans do not enable pupils to build on what they remember or have learned in the past. Leaders should ensure that, in all subjects, the important knowledge and skills that pupils should learn, and the order in which they learn it, are planned coherently. Plans should build securely upon what pupils have learned in the past, including the early years.

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 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 good in February 2016.

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	145046
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10200618
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steve Elliott
Headteacher	Kirsty Reilly
Website	www.riverdale.ironstoneacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Ironstone Academy Trust in September 2017.
- The chair of the governing body has recently been appointed.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and groups of staff. The inspector also met with the chair of governors and the chief executive officer of the Ironstone Academy Trust. The inspector discussed with them the quality of education provided by the school, the pupils' wider development, pupils' behaviour and staff's workload.
- The inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector did deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. This involved meeting with senior and curriculum leaders, scrutinising

curriculum planning and visiting lessons where pupils were learning these subjects. The inspector talked to pupils in lessons and met with them to look at their work. The inspector also met with teachers to discuss the curriculum they were delivering.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school, including lunchtime. The inspector also met with groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school.
- The inspector met with pupils to gather their views through formal and informal discussions.
- In order to judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector read the relevant school policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and interviewed the designated safeguarding lead. The inspector also met with school staff to check their understanding of safeguarding and their training. Additionally, the inspector met with governors to check their understanding of their statutory responsibilities to keep pupils safe.
- The inspector spoke with several parents and carers at the end of the school day. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the 27 free-text responses, 76 responses to the online pupil survey and 16 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Gill Wild, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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