

Inspection of Rowley Hall Primary School

Windsor Road, Sandwell, Rowley Regis, West Midlands B65 9HU

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly school and are enthusiastic about their lessons. They show positive attitudes and want to do well. But, in some subjects, pupils do not make consistently good progress in their learning. This is because some aspects of the curriculum are not as well thought out and organised as others. The experience for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is mixed but improving.

Pupils like their teachers and have warm relationships with them. Leaders have worked hard to bring about improvements to pupils' behaviour. Pupils are well mannered and respectful. Their behaviour around school and in lessons is good. Pupils trust staff to deal swiftly with any incidents of bullying that may occur.

Pupils are cared for and feel safe at school. They know there is always help at hand if they have any concerns. The school is a happy, caring community where pupils' well-being is central to the school's work. Pupils get involved in, and benefit from, extra-curricular activities, including table tennis and Young Voices (choir).

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

In some subjects, the curriculum is ambitious and planned well. Teachers carefully build on what pupils already know. In mathematics, pupils make good progress and demonstrate confidence in their learning. However, in some other subjects, while leaders are clear about what they intend pupils to learn, they have not organised the planned learning into a coherent sequence of lessons. For example, the English curriculum does not set out what pupils should learn in a well-ordered manner. Consequently, pupils are not as secure in their literacy knowledge and skills as they should be. Teachers check on how pupils are getting on, but they do not identify consistently well what pupils can and cannot do.

Children in the early years do not consistently benefit from meaningful, well-planned learning activities. Teachers' expectations of what children should achieve are variable and not always high enough. The shortfalls identified in key stages 1 and 2 with curriculum organisation, and the way the curriculum is implemented, equally apply to the early years.

Leaders have invested in raising the profile of reading. The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 is well planned and taught. Most pupils secure the necessary phonics knowledge to enable them to read with confidence. However, in key stage 2, the reading curriculum is not structured effectively, particularly for those pupils who struggle with reading. Also, teachers in key stage 2 do not have the expertise in phonics to support weaker readers. This means that some pupils do not make the progress in reading that they should.

Leaders have rightly focused on improving provision for pupils with SEND. Teachers accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND promptly. Pupils typically access the

same curriculum as other pupils, but with additional support. However, not all teachers use assessment information well enough to plan learning that meets the needs of individual pupils. Also, leaders have not checked whether the extra support provided is making a difference. As a result, these pupils sometimes make less progress than they should.

Leaders provide many opportunities that help to promote pupils' wider personal development. Pupils understand UNICEF's 42 Articles of a Rights Respecting School. They are taught to respect the environment. For example, pupils learn about sustainability when making collages from plastic bottle tops. Pupils understand that valuing individual differences is important. They know that respecting fundamental British values is an essential part of living in modern Britain.

Pupils' behaviour has improved since the last inspection. New systems to ensure pupils develop good attitudes to learning are working well. Leaders promote good attendance. However, a small number of pupils still do not attend school as often as they should.

Governors' actions are well intentioned. They ensure that the school's finances are healthy. They are becoming better at holding leaders to account for the school's performance, but there is still some way to go. Governors' oversight of the curriculum and provision for SEND is sometimes limited. They do not have the depth of knowledge to challenge leaders about decision-making in the way that they should.

In recent years, the school has experienced changes in senior leadership. This caused some instability and contributed to the pace of school improvement slowing. Now the pace of change has gathered momentum. The headteacher has created a strong team spirit in the school. Staff morale is high, and leaders are mindful of their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher, governors and safeguarding team ensure a strong culture of safeguarding exists in the school. Staff know how to recognise and report causes for concern. They are aware of the risks in the local area. The headteacher ensures staff have regular training and are vigilant about pupils who may be at risk of harm. The curriculum supports pupils in knowing how to report concerns and how to stay safe online. Leaders carry out pre-employment checks on staff in an appropriate way. Staff develop close relationships with families and provide help and support as soon as concerns arise.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school curriculum has been overhauled. However, the intended learning in some subjects has not been translated into well-thought-out sequences of learning. This means that, in some subjects, pupils do not build effectively on their prior learning and embed key knowledge. This leads to inconsistencies in the progress that pupils make. Leaders must ensure that the intended curriculum, including in the early years, is implemented effectively across all subjects so pupils can achieve well.
- Leaders have not ensured that struggling readers in key stage 2 get the right help and support they need to catch up with their peers. This means some pupils cannot read with confidence and fluency. Leaders should ensure that there is a well-sequenced reading programme and teachers receive the training they need to best support older pupils with reading difficulties.
- Teachers do not consistently make good use of information about the needs of pupils with SEND when planning learning. Leaders do not have a comprehensive understanding of how effective the different interventions are for pupils with SEND. Consequently, these pupils achieve less well than they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers take pupils' needs into account effectively when planning pupils' learning. Leaders should evaluate the intervention programmes that they use to ensure that they are of benefit.
- Governors have some gaps in their knowledge of the curriculum and provision for pupils with SEND. Consequently, governors are unable to hold school leaders to account for the school's performance as well as they should. Governors should seek to get a better understanding of the curriculum and SEND so they can challenge leaders more robustly on their decision-making.

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	103955
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10201047
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	649
Appropriate authority	Governing body
Chair of governing body	Timothy Coleman
Headteacher	Nicholas Miller
Website	www.rowleyhall.sandwell.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is maintained by the local authority and is federated with the Rowley Learning Trust.
- The school does not use 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 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 of the school.

- Inspectors initially inspected the school on 24 and 25 November 2021. On 18 January 2022, two of Her Majesty's Inspectors returned to the school to gather further evidence around leadership and management, and the quality of education. The evidence gathered from all three days was used to inform the final judgements.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and spoke with other school leaders. Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke to representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentary evidence. This included the school's plan for improvement, curriculum plans, and analysis of premium and sports funding spending.
- Inspectors carried out subject deep dives in: English, reading, mathematics, science, art and design, and history. Inspectors also looked at other curriculum plans. Inspectors held discussions with curriculum leaders, scrutinised plans, conducted lesson visits and held discussions with both teachers and pupils about their learning.
- An inspector spoke to parents and gathered their views. Inspectors considered parents' responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors took account of the of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors met with leaders to check that safeguarding procedures and processes were effective. Inspectors also checked the single central record to ensure that the required recruitment checks on staff have taken place.
- Inspectors visited the 'hub' provision for pupils with SEND and spoke to leaders about the quality of this provision. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes and as they moved around the school.

Inspection team

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Anna Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Ogden	Ofsted Inspector
Janice Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Hill	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jonathan Leonard	Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children’s social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children’s services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021