

Inspection of Robsack Wood Primary Academy

Whatlington Way, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN38 9TE

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 March 2022

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

Ofsted has not previously inspected Robsack Wood Primary Academy as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at school. They feel safe and are eager to learn. Pupils play enthusiastically at social times when there is always plenty to interest them. For example, some pupils do jigsaws, read, or play basketball in the playground.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Pupils are expected to behave well and almost all do. Those pupils who need reminders or help to follow teachers' expectations benefit from thoughtful support from staff.

Pupils cooperate well together in lessons and around school. Occasionally, pupils have disagreements and adults help them to remedy their differences. Staff provide coaching for pupils who need to discuss disagreements that have happened. Bullying sometimes happens but pupils feel that staff deal with it effectively and quickly.

When pupils are worried about something they write notes in the 'worry box' or the 'ask it basket' in their classrooms. Teachers then give advice on issues that pupils are worried about. Pupils are enthusiastic about contributing to school life. Some are voted onto the school 'parliament' by their peers. Others become librarians or apply to become 'prime minister' so that they can represent other pupils' views. The 'prime minister' can also spend the small budget that leaders allocate to them on extra resources for the playground.

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

Leaders, governors and trustees have strong moral purpose. They are passionate about providing high-quality education for all pupils and particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders prioritise improving reading, encouraging high attendance and looking after pupil and staff well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption to leaders' priorities for improvement. However, leaders' plans are now back on track.

Pupils learn a wide range of subjects. In reading, mathematics and science, leaders have organised learning very well. Teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. They are also clear about what pupils should know at the end of each term. Pupils achieve well in these subjects. However, the curriculum is not as well organised in other subjects. For example, in languages and music recent changes to the curriculum have not been thoroughly embedded. In these subjects, therefore, pupils do not learn as much as they could.

Phonics is taught as soon as pupils start school. Staff are well trained to teach phonics effectively. In early years, children begin to learn how to use phonics to read words with confidence. This ensures that children are well prepared to start Year 1. Pupils read with increasing fluency as they move through Year 1. The books pupils read are well matched to the sounds they know. Pupils develop a love of reading and become increasingly interested in stories and books as they get older.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to help pupils to understand increasingly complex material. Teachers check pupils' understanding accurately. In early years, children gain a solid grounding. For example, adults use well-thought-through explanations and rich language to ensure that children understand how to remember basic numbers and add them together to make larger numbers.

Leaders identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Teachers appropriately adapt the curriculum for these pupils, and staff provide carefully designed support. Leaders ensure that those pupils with SEND who require more specialist help have access to external professionals. This ensures that staff meet the needs of pupils with SEND well.

Provision for pupils' personal development is effective. Pupils are enthused by the various incentives on offer to them at school. For example, pupils who are recognised as being positive role models to others are awarded certificates at the end of term in 'celebration' assemblies.

Personal, social and health education helps pupils to discuss and understand a wide range of relevant issues. For example, pupils explore healthy relationships and appropriate behaviour within relationships in an age-appropriate way. Pupils are informed about what constitutes harassment and the types of behaviour that are unacceptable online. Pupils are prepared successfully for life in modern Britain.

Staff feel valued. They think that leaders are approachable and supportive. Staff appreciate the high-quality training provided for them. Staff find opportunities to work with colleagues from other schools in the trust very useful. Leaders ensure that staff feel that they have a healthy work-life balance.

Trustees and governors hold leaders to account well. They check on how well the key priorities of the school are making a difference to pupils' education. This has helped steady the school through the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is taken very seriously by all staff. They know pupils and families well. Staff are vigilant in looking out for signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders ensure that staff know how to report concerns they may have about pupils. Detailed records are kept of any reports made about pupils. Leaders take appropriate and prompt action if safeguarding concerns need to be referred to external agencies. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe and what to do if they encounter things that worry them online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In subjects other than reading, mathematics and science, leaders have not organised learning effectively enough. For example, in music and languages leaders have not selected and sequenced the knowledge that pupils should learn sufficiently well. In some areas of the curriculum, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. However, leaders are in the process of putting improvements in place in these subjects. Leaders must ensure that they continue their work on ensuring that learning is organised well across the curriculum. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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	141263
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10216090
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	464
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Professor Christopher Pole
Headteacher	Caroline Thayre (Executive Headteacher)
Website	http://www.robsackwoodprimaryacademy.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2013 and became the executive headteacher in September 2015.
- The school joined the University of Brighton Academies Trust in September 2014.
- A very small proportion of pupils attend an alternative provider, New Horizons School.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, trustees, the chair of the local board, and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- On the first day of the inspection, inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, geography and music. This meant that in

each subject, inspectors met with subject leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans in other subjects.

- Inspectors considered the views of staff from meetings with groups of staff and from the 55 staff who responded to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of 88 parents who responded to the confidential Ofsted parental questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the views of 66 pupils who responded to Ofsted's confidential pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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