

Inspection of a good school: Rocklands School

Purcell Avenue, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS13 7PH

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 July 2022

Outcome

Rocklands School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to Rocklands School. They feel happy and safe and they benefit from positive and productive relationships with staff and their peers. Pupils work hard together and value their education. They understand that what they learn now will help them in their life beyond school.

Pupils study a wide range of subjects. They remember information from lots of different areas. Staff have high expectations of pupils. Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Staff encourage pupils to look at books and read at the appropriate level. Pupils know that reading helps them to learn and that it is an important skill for their adult life.

Staff ensure that pupils have many opportunities for personal development. Pupils gain knowledge from a range of experiences, including trips, visits, clubs and performances. Recently, pupils staged 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' at a Birmingham theatre.

Pupils are friendly and behave well. Pupils, staff and parents and carers raised no concerns about bullying. Pupils are confident that staff would help them to resolve any issues should they arise. The school council's 'kind squad' promotes positive interactions during social times. For example, squad members encourage pupils to play together if they are by themselves.

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

The curriculum reflects leaders' high aspirations for all pupils. It is broad and balanced and designed to give pupils the knowledge and experiences that they need for future learning, and life beyond school. Communication, reading, personal development, preparation for adulthood, work-related learning and spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education are all promoted within programmes of study.

From early years to Year 6, the curriculum is carefully structured and sequenced. This helps pupils to build on prior learning in order to deepen their understanding of the

subject matter. Staff use assessment well to check pupils' understanding and identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. They use this information to shape their teaching.

Pupils have many opportunities to look at books, describe what they can see and listen to stories, songs and rhymes. There is a sharp focus on developing pre-reading skills and helping pupils who are at the early stage of learning to read become more confident readers. Leaders have introduced a new phonics scheme to further improve this aspect of the school's work. However, the new scheme is not yet fully embedded and not all staff are trained to deliver it. Consequently, it is yet to have its full impact. Many pupils develop a love of reading, and some are fluent readers by the time that they leave the school.

Staff have secure subject knowledge and use questions and a range of resources to help pupils to learn. Pupils' work across the curriculum is usually of a good quality. However, not all staff deliver aspects of the curriculum as well as others. Consequently, pupils' work is not consistently of the highest standard in every subject.

Most pupils learn well in mathematics. However, sometimes teachers move learning on too quickly for some pupils. They introduce new information before pupils are fluent in what they are studying or before their learning has been consolidated.

The curriculum promotes pupils' broader development exceptionally well. SMSC education is delivered through lessons, assemblies, charity events, visits and clubs. Pupils take part in a range of activities, including the singing and signing choir, weaving and archery clubs, horse riding, cycling and trips to places such as an ice-cream factory and an art gallery. A range of activities take place during enrichment afternoons every Friday. Pupils use Stephen Lawrence Day as an opportunity to be the best that they can be.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school. Pupils are keen to learn, and they focus well in lessons.

The school is well led and managed. Leaders have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. Staff enjoy working at the school and value their professional development. They feel that leaders listen to them, are considerate of their workload and promote their well-being.

Those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. They ensure that the school has a clear vision and strategy, that resources are managed well and that leaders are held to account for the quality of education that they provide.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. All who responded to Ofsted Parent View said that they would recommend the school to another parent, and many made very positive comments. Their views are reflected in the observation of one parent, who said, '[The school has] the most amazing, dedicated, knowledgeable staff who go above and beyond.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead is knowledgeable, tenacious and caring. Staff take concerns seriously and act promptly to safeguard pupils. They work with families and external agencies when necessary. Leaders check and record staff's suitability to work with children.

Staff are well trained and receive regular updates. They understand their responsibilities. They know how to report concerns, and they follow-up issues appropriately.

Leaders are alert to safeguarding issues. They use this knowledge to inform training for staff and to shape the curriculum. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and within the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum is not consistently strong in every area. Consequently, pupils do not always produce work of the highest standard in every subject. Leaders should ensure that all staff plan to allow pupils to produce work of a consistently high quality. This will allow all pupils to achieve exceptionally well.
- The school recently introduced a new phonics scheme. It is not yet embedded. This means that pupils are not yet getting the full benefit of this programme. Leaders should ensure that all staff are trained to deliver the new phonics scheme well so that all pupils become fluent and confident readers.
- At times in mathematics, staff move on learning too quickly for some pupils. They introduce new information before pupils are fluent in what they are studying or before their learning has been consolidated. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills they need to deliver the mathematics curriculum consistently well so that all pupils have strong mathematical knowledge.

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 predecessor school, Rocklands School, to be good in March 2014.

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	145276
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10241464
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	125
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Alexander
Headteacher	Sandra Swift
Website	www.rocklands.manorhall.academy
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became part of the Manor Hall Academy Trust in April 2018.
- The school is registered for pupils aged 2 to 11. There are currently no children aged under four years attending the school.
- The school does not use any alternative off-site providers.

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out under section 8 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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- This was the school's first inspection since becoming an academy in April 2018.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders, groups of staff and the chair and the vice-chair of the

local governing body. The lead inspector also met with the school's improvement partner.

- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils and spoke with pupils in their lessons and around school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during social times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements. They spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed the school's safeguarding information and single central record.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school, including improvement plans, leaders' self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the local governing body and documentation relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and free-text comments. They considered responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jane Edgerton

Ofsted Inspector

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