

Inspection of Ruskin Junior School

Wordsworth Drive, Upper Stratton, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 7NG

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils work hard in class. They are positive about the help they receive in lessons. They form positive and respectful relationships with staff. Pupils are proud of their many achievements. They walk around school in an orderly and calm way and usually follow the school rules. Most pupils enjoy school, are punctual and attend well.

There are lots of clubs on offer. Pupils look forward to going on school trips, which in turn support their learning. They like taking on responsibilities, such as being a librarian or being part of the 'mini police' club. There is an inclusive culture across the school. The work of young carers is celebrated. Staff provide nurturing support.

Pupils enjoy coming together as a school. For example, they sing with enthusiasm in assembly and listen attentively to staff.

Pupils say they feel safe. If bullying happens or they have concerns, pupils say that there are trusted adults who provide help and support. However, parents and carers are not always satisfied with the communication they receive about how issues are resolved. Parents report that leaders can be slow to follow up concerns when they raise them.

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

Leaders and staff use the advice and training they receive from the trust well. This ensures that the school is continually improving its curriculum and staff have the subject knowledge they need to deliver it. There is a sharp focus on providing pupils with the essential foundations of learning to read, spell, develop important speaking and listening skills and do mathematics. This in turn enables pupils to learn the wider curriculum well.

Governors are strategic in their decision-making. For example, they have increased the allocation of staffing to the leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and have provided financial resources to upgrade the school's reading books.

Pupils learn and recall the essential knowledge in the subject curriculums well. Work, including for pupils with SEND, is crafted to address what pupils need to know next. Sequences of lessons usually build pupils' knowledge incrementally. This helps them to make connections to prior learning and apply their knowledge to new tasks and situations.

Leaders have a clear rationale when they make adaptations to the curriculum, for example to ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge caused by COVID-19 are appropriately addressed. At the same time, pupils learn a range of subjects. The wider curriculum is suitably ambitious, for example in science and physical education

(PE). Nonetheless, some of leaders' work to upgrade subject curriculums is recent. As a result, approaches to assessment in some wider curriculum subjects are still being refined.

Pupils who attend the specialist resource base (SRB) receive an ambitious curriculum. Tailored support is effective in ensuring that targets from pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans are being addressed well. Strong systems of communication between home and school are in place for these pupils. However, the school's partnership work with parents for some other pupils with SEND is not as strong. While these pupils' learning needs are met in class, inconsistencies in the timeliness of meetings to discuss their child's education create unnecessary anxiety or frustration. The trust is starting to take action to sort this out.

Pupils who are at the early stages of reading get precise phonics teaching. This increases their reading accuracy and fluency. Pupils get lots of practice in retrieving information from the texts they read. This builds pupils' reading ability step-by-step so that they become confident readers over time. By the time pupils leave school they have secured a strong understanding of what they read.

The school's approach to teaching is underpinned by an emphasis on helping pupils become resilient learners who know what to do if they get stuck. When pupils find it difficult to regulate their emotions, trained staff manage this well. The curriculum teaches pupils about diversity, empathy and keeping healthy relationships. There is a sharp focus on supporting pupils' emotional and mental health needs and working with families.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff training is up to date and in line with current regulations. Staff know how to spot signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. They follow the agreed procedures for reporting concerns. Leaders take timely actions and work closely with other agencies when required. Pupils know how to keep safe online, including when using mobile phones.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The assessment processes in place for some wider curriculum subjects are not well developed. When pupils have knowledge gaps in these subjects, they are not identified as swiftly as they are in English and mathematics. Leaders need to ensure that assessment systems in all subjects are equally well developed and used by staff effectively so that pupils gain deep knowledge in every curriculum subject.

- Leaders' communication with parents is not always sufficiently strong. Records of discussions when parents raise concerns are sometimes incomplete. This makes it difficult for leaders to monitor repeat concerns and it causes unnecessary anxiety and frustration for parents. Leaders and trustees must ensure that parents' views are heard, recorded, understood and acted on swiftly, particularly about bullying and when co-producing individual plans for pupils with SEND.

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.

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	142539
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10241219
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	315
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Pauline Miller
Headteacher	Andrew Beadnell
Website	www.ruskinjuniorschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	21–22 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The SRB has up to nine places for pupils with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or related social, communication or interaction difficulties. All pupils who attend the SRB have an EHC plan.
- The school is one of 10 schools in the Blue Kite multi-academy trust. This is a group of primary schools in the locality of Swindon.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders and other school staff and examined a range of documents, including the school's action plans.

- An inspector met with two representatives of the local governing body and a trustee. An inspector also held meetings with the chief executive officer.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and considered samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector listened to pupils in Year 4 read to an adult.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted staff and pupil surveys alongside responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also met with parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Darren Preece	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Williams	His Majesty's Inspector

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