

Inspection of Redbourn Primary School

Long Cott, Redbourn, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 7EX

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected almost seven years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Redbourn Primary School embody the school's 'THRIVE' values. These are: teamwork, healthy, responsible, innovative, valued and empathetic. Leaders' regular assemblies teach pupils what these mean and how they may show them, in and out of school. For example, older pupils happily help around school. They support younger pupils in the dining hall, tidy away play equipment at the end of lunchtime and operate the technology during assembly.

Pupils meet staff's high expectations for behaviour to help them focus on learning. Pupils know teachers aim to make learning interesting. For example, teachers captivate pupils through expressive storytelling when reading aloud to the class. Pupils like the way the system of rewards involves working as a team to achieve a privilege. Working together fosters kind relationships. The well-sequenced relationships education ensures pupils learn to be respectful of others. Therefore, bullying rarely happens. Pupils know vigilant staff will resolve it fast. Consequently, pupils feel safe in their school.

Pupils appreciate the extra experiences available to them. Visitors encourage pupils' aspirations. These include historians, poets and members of sports teams. Residential trips offer a chance for pupils to be independent. They get to take part in exciting outdoor pursuits they may not otherwise experience.

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

Most school leaders and governors are relatively new to the school. Together, they have identified and prioritised improvements sensibly. They rightly knew to resolve historic issues with staffing and with pupils' behaviour. Now, dedicated staff are in post and pupils are ready to learn. Leaders know that further change to the curriculum and how staff teach it will help maximise pupils' achievement.

The reading curriculum is not working as well as it could. Staff identify pupils' barriers to reading. However, they do not resolve these efficiently. They may identify the sounds pupils do not know, but their teaching is not tightly focused on getting pupils to learn them. This shows itself in the weakest readers struggling to read fluently. Though leaders have plans to address this, they have yet to take effect.

Leaders are developing the curriculum, setting out the specifics pupils will learn. With this, they are deciding what shared approaches would be best for assessment. Where it works better, for example in mathematics, content is clearly sequenced. Training means teachers teach concepts well. Rehearsal helps pupils remember key facts and vocabulary. For example, children in the early years regularly practise counting. This readies them for number work in Year 1. Staff use questioning and 'in the moment marking' to quickly correct any misunderstanding. Consequently, pupils generally keep up with the pace of the programme.

However, there are subjects that lack this clarity. Teachers cannot be sure what pupils learned before. They may repeat content without building on it to further pupils' understanding. Pupils then have gaps in knowledge they should know.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are subject to the same issues in the curriculum. Still, there remains much to celebrate in how leaders inspired staff to improve the additional support these pupils receive. Staff work wisely and patiently to arrange appropriate adjustments. These help pupils to focus and learn. For example, staff provide a pupil with tactile resources that meet their sensory needs. Plans for these pupils include specific, time-focused and measurable objectives. These help efficiently review provision. Parents greatly appreciate the clarity in the revised systems. They understand how the support helps their children.

Staff cater for pupils' personal development well. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles through physical education. This includes a range of after-school sporting opportunities. Staff encourage pupils' musicality, teaching them to play instruments like the recorder and the ukulele. Pupils learn to celebrate what makes them and others unique. They recognise their school as a place where it is acceptable to be different.

Leaders ensured pupils' behaviour improved immensely over the last year. Leaders embedded a culture whereby staff recognise behaviour as communication. Supportive relationships between staff and pupils mean pupils feel safe to 'have a go' in lessons. Staff now work sensitively to put in place suitable support to help pupils follow the 'golden rules'. It helps pupils to treat others kindly, as well as to focus on their learning. Staff in the early years quickly settle children into routines, so children happily share and work together to solve problems.

The strengths in pupils' behaviour outweigh the issues with their attendance. Still, the current system for monitoring attendance lacks rigour. A pupil's attendance falls too low before robust action occurs. It is then difficult to improve the attendance to an acceptable level.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Skilled governors and dedicated leaders oversee suitable checks and training for staff. Staff understand their role in sharing concerns to help leaders arrange timely support for pupils. Leaders appreciate the importance of maintaining clear, comprehensive records. These demonstrate their tenacity in keeping pupils safe.

Pupils are very well versed in how to stay safe on and offline. They refer to guidance given in assemblies, lessons and on school trips. Pupils, too, trust staff to notice when their behaviour has changed. Staff will quickly check in with pupils to identify and resolve a concern.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff have not received suitable training or access to resources to teach reading well. As a result, reading lessons do not help all pupils to learn how to read with fluency and accuracy. Leaders should put in place a rigorous reading programme and provide suitable training and resources for staff to teach reading confidently and well.
- In some subjects, the curriculum is at an early stage of development. The specific concepts and vocabulary pupils will learn are not set out in a clear, logical sequence. As a result, teachers struggle to plan lessons that build on what pupils already know to strengthen their understanding. Leaders should ensure new subject leaders receive the training and support they need to introduce teachers to the specifics pupils should learn. Leaders should also support the monitoring of curriculum changes, ensuring any issues are identified and resolved efficiently to maximise pupils' achievement.
- Leaders monitor attendance, but their response to attendance concerns is not improving rates of persistent absence for some pupils. The more time pupils are away from school, the greater the gaps in their knowledge of the curriculum. Leaders should review their systems for monitoring and responding to attendance concerns, ensuring there is a systematic approach to resolving attendance issues and making sure pupils catch up on missed learning.

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	117236
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10241099
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	446
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Cara Brazier
Headteacher	Emma Fenn
Website	www.redbournprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 November 2015, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Most leaders, including the headteacher and many governors, have been in post for one school year, or less.
- Redbourn Infant School and Redbourn Junior School amalgamated in April 2018 to become Redbourn Primary School. The previous inspection grade, outstanding, was awarded to Redbourn Infant School in November 2015. Prior to the amalgamation, Redbourn Junior School was graded as requiring improvement. Both schools were inspected under inspection frameworks used at the time.
- The school has before-school childcare, run by school staff and managed by school leaders. The school also has after-school childcare, run by a separately registered and inspected childcare provider.
- Currently, school leaders do not make use of alternative provision for any pupil.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the headteacher, two assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, six governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some education support staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- An inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects, including computing, French and physical education.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and a deputy designated safeguarding lead to review records. The lead inspector met with the school business manager to scrutinise the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke with governors, staff and pupils to evaluate safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school improvement plan and minutes of governor meetings.
- To gather pupils' views, inspectors spent time observing and speaking to pupils. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- To gather parents' views, the lead inspector reviewed the 114 responses and 74 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Two inspectors also spoke to parents at the start of a school day.
- Inspectors gathered staff members' views by speaking to several of them and reviewing the 47 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Daniel Short, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Crozier	His Majesty's Inspector
Julie Ingram	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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