

Inspection of Reed First School

Jacksons Lane, Reed, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 8AB

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This village school is friendly and welcoming. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils are happy to come to school. They are respectful and polite. Pupils enjoy praising each other for their achievements.

Leaders ensure pupils have opportunities to develop their strength of character, so they become more confident learners. In the past, there were lower expectations of pupils. Staff now have higher expectations and pupils rise to the challenge to do their best. Pupils are motivated and develop positive attitudes to learning. They achieve well and enjoy learning.

Pupils value how the staff are kind and help them with any worries. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively, and pupils feel safe. Classrooms are calm and purposeful places to learn.

Pupils learn a broad and balanced curriculum. They value the wider experiences they have that help to make their learning more fun and interesting. Pupils particularly enjoy being in the outside area, which allows them to play in a natural environment.

Parents make very positive comments about the school. They say their children make progress and that they learn about important values. Parents are happy with the care and support their children receive.

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

Leaders' curriculum plans are thought through and organised carefully so that pupils can learn the important knowledge they need to achieve well.

All subject planning begins in the early years, where communication and language development are key factors. Adults help children to communicate confidently and make sense of the world around them. The curriculum builds on what children know and can do and what sparks their interest. Opportunities for children to develop their mathematical understanding are carefully planned. Deliberate language choices help with pupils' learning across the school.

Staff have good subject knowledge, and ongoing training is a priority. Pupils talk with confidence about how they learn from the guidance that staff give them. They say that it is 'OK to make mistakes'. Some subjects have newer curriculums. Due to past teaching, some pupils have less secure knowledge and skills in these subjects. Leaders recognise this and, in most subjects, this is being addressed. In a few areas, teachers still need to make the necessary adaptations to help pupils remember and use important knowledge.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. Children begin daily phonics lessons from the start of Reception. Staff receive regular training and guidance to teach phonics and reading well. Pupils are grouped so that they are learning at the right pace and to enable them to receive targeted support if necessary. Adults check on pupils' phonics knowledge regularly. They use these checks to identify where they need to adapt the phonics curriculum and to provide extra help to pupils. Pupils who fall behind with their reading are helped to catch up quickly. Teachers ensure that pupils read books that are matched to the sounds pupils know. This helps pupils to read accurately and with understanding. The books pupils read more widely are linked to the topics they learn, including celebrating diversity and promoting personal growth.

Staff create purposeful working environments. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. This ensures that lessons flow smoothly. Pupils' learning is rarely disturbed by others' behaviour. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their aspirations and how to be more resilient. This prepares them well for the next stage in their learning. In the early years, well-established routines and clear expectations help children feel safe. Children's experiences in the early years prepare them well for learning in key stage 1. Pupils enjoy various opportunities to develop their learning outside of the classroom. They are enthusiastic about assemblies linked to the school's values.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified at an early stage. They access the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers adapt the curriculum and activities appropriately so that pupils with SEND make gains in their learning and independence. Leaders ensure that pupils who need more specialised support receive this.

The headteacher and staff have a clear vision for providing high-quality education. Governors are dedicated to the school and, over time, have organised the building of a library on the school site. However, governors are less clear on some priorities to make the school even better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. This ensures staff are vigilant and can recognise the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They know the importance of reporting all concerns. Leaders follow up on concerns promptly. They work with outside agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.

Leaders ensure that all the checks on adults' suitability to work in schools are carried out thoroughly. Governors check regularly on safeguarding procedures.

Pupils learn how to recognise different risks. They speak with confidence about how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- The curriculum plans in some subjects are new. In a small number of subjects, pupils have gaps in their understanding due to weaknesses in previous curriculum planning. Leaders should continue their work to train staff to be more confident in adapting the curriculum where needed. Teachers need to fully account for the pupils' prior knowledge and understanding as precisely as possible in their planning, so that pupils achieve as well as they can in all subjects.
- Governors are becoming increasingly effective in fulfilling their roles. They work with leaders to agree and monitor progress towards priority areas for improvement. However, governors are less clear about some priorities to improve the quality of education and how these will be achieved. Governors must ensure that priorities for improvement focus precisely on what is needed to improve the quality of education further.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use 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 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	117129
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10241545
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Shelley Ward
Headteacher	Victoria Wittich
Website	www.reed.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher and chair of the governing body have been appointed since the previous inspection. The headteacher was appointed in 2019. The chair of the governing body was appointed in 2020.
- All the class sizes are smaller than average and so the pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- In most subjects, children are taught a two-year cycle due to the mixed-age classes. Phonics, relationships and sex education, and personal, social and health education are taught in year groups.
- The school provides a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and other school leaders to discuss the quality of education and safeguarding for pupils.

- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and a parent governor.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and history. 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 looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed the information that is published on the school website.
- The lead inspector had a phone conversation with the school's improvement partner.
- To evaluate the arrangements that are in place to safeguard pupils and staff, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader, considered school records, and spoke with staff and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the single central record of pre-employment checks and the school's safeguarding records.
- Inspectors observed the pupils' behaviour in lessons and at play times. They spoke with pupils to seek their views and experiences of the school. Inspectors reviewed the records of behaviour and bullying incidents.
- Inspectors considered the 22 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, together with 15 free-text comments. Inspectors reviewed the six responses to the staff survey. They also considered the 28 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kim Hall

His Majesty's Inspector

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