

Inspection of a good school: Ryhope Infant School Academy

Shaftesbury Avenue, Ryhope, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR2 0RT

Inspection date: 23 November 2022

Outcome

Ryhope Infant School Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have ensured pupils at Ryhope Infant School Academy learn about their local community and know how to take care of it. Pupils show enthusiasm when they talk about the changes over time in Ryhope. They are aware, for example, of 'when there used to be a coal mine on the field'. Pupils respect the environment. They enjoy working with 'Groundforce' to collect batteries for recycling and looking after the school grounds in gardening club.

Leaders are ambitious about what pupils will learn. They are keen to make sure pupils learn about the world around them. Leaders make sure that pupils take part in practical activities, such as a visit to Ryhope beach to practise fieldwork skills for geography. Staff make sure that everyone is well supported in the activities on offer. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils' behaviour reflects the school's rules of 'treating others with respect, following instructions and trying your best'. Relationships between pupils and adults are strong. Pupils spoken to say they are treated fairly. They say that bullying does not happen, but if it did, teachers would sort it out. Leaders have made sure pupils know how to speak out when they are worried. This helps everyone to feel safe and happy at school.

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

Teachers have strong subject knowledge in English and mathematics. Curriculum plans show the important knowledge and vocabulary leaders want pupils to learn. The curriculum in some foundation subjects, such as history, has recently been revised to ensure that pupils learn about local history. Teachers are still getting used to these curriculum plans. Teachers' subject knowledge is variable in some foundation subjects. As a result, teachers sometimes provide work that does not match the ambition of the planned curriculum. Some pupils in key stage 1 do not have the knowledge they need to move forward in their learning.

Staff have expert knowledge of early reading and phonics. Leaders ensure there is high-quality teaching of reading right from the start in Reception. Pupils who need support with reading receive it quickly. Staff use assessment effectively to ensure books are well matched to pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they make. As a result, all pupils learn to read fluently. Pupils enjoy the stories staff read to them. They often join in retelling stories they know. Teachers check that pupils understand new vocabulary. This helps pupils to understand what is being read to them.

In most lessons, teachers make regular checks to correct any misconceptions pupils may have. Teachers adapt their teaching as necessary to correct these misconceptions. However, in a few mathematics lessons, these careful checks of understanding do not happen often enough. This means that some pupils are not as well supported as they could be to keep up with the learning.

The expert knowledge of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures there are clear systems in place for identifying pupils with SEND. Staff know pupils and their needs well. They adhere to the small steps in pupils' support plans, so that pupils with SEND can learn well. For example, staff use clear explanations and break down instructions into manageable steps. They model tasks to ensure pupils understand expectations. In mathematics, pupils who need extra support to understand new concepts practise core number skills before the lesson. For example, they practise using apparatus to make 38 before adding four. Pupils show that they understand crossing the tens boundary.

Children in early years are calm and concentrate well in activities. Strong relationships with key adults ensure two-year-olds settle quickly. They engage in activities such as matching shapes to their outlines. Staff model activities well. When staff purposefully name a shape 'incorrectly', children correct them. Regular singing of counting songs and rhymes helps children understand the language of number.

Pupils show respect for each other and the adults who care for them. Even the youngest children pay attention to the activities on offer. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. A few pupils struggle to manage their behaviour. Leaders make sure these pupils have the resources and support they need so that they can control their emotions better in the future.

The curriculum for pupils' broader development is a strength of the school. Leaders make sure that pupils have meaningful opportunities to visit the local community. Pupils enjoy ukulele, violin and tennis lessons. They sing in the school choir and take part in the 'Big Sing'. Some pupils were successful in reaching the regional finals for gymnastics in 2021. Pupils learn to be good citizens through activities such as the Easter parade in Ryhope. They enjoyed decorating a local shop window with a nativity scene and winning third place in the 'Scarecrow Competition' at Roker Park.

Staff feel supported and valued by the actions leaders take to support their workload and well-being. They say that leaders listen to their suggestions. Staff enjoy working in the school. Governors understand the strengths and areas for development of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in school. Systems for reporting safeguarding concerns are well understood. Training for staff and governors is thorough. Staff record all concerns to ensure wider issues are identified at an early stage. This means that leaders can take appropriate action when necessary. External agencies are used when appropriate to give pupils the support they need. Staff meet and greet parents and carers in the morning, ensuring strong relationships with parents.

Pupils learn about the risks they may face as they grow older. They know how to recognise healthy relationships.

Leaders make sure that all who work in the school are suitable to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' subject knowledge is variable in a few subjects. Teachers sometimes set work that does not enable pupils to achieve the aims and ambition of the intended curriculums in these subjects. Leaders should provide effective support to improve teachers' subject knowledge.
- In some subjects, including mathematics, some teachers do not always use assessment effectively to check pupils' understanding to inform teaching. This means that some pupils are not supported as well as they could be. Leaders should ensure that teachers make regular checks on pupils' understanding to ensure pupils are supported to build on prior 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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Ryhope Infant School, to be good in November 2010.

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	140928
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10240325
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Charlotte Gibson
Headteacher	Mrs Tammy Allen
Website	www.ryhopeinfantschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2019.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school care for pupils who attend the school.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and the SENCo.
- The lead inspector met with three trustees, including the chair of trustees. The lead inspector also met with the local authority school improvement officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum, visited lessons and met

with teachers from the lessons visited. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- The lead inspector viewed documentation relating to safeguarding. This included talking to staff about their safeguarding knowledge and understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. The lead inspector also met with designated safeguarding leads and checked the school's single central record.
- The lead inspector reviewed the free-text responses of parents and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector also reviewed the responses to the staff survey and one response to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their understanding of behaviour and how to keep themselves safe.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Amy Keith

Ofsted Inspector

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