

Inspection of a good school: Riseley CofE Primary School

High Street, Riseley, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK44 1DR

Inspection dates:

6 to 7 December 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Riseley is a caring school and pupils are happy here. They like their teachers and enjoy coming to school to see their friends. Pupils understand the new school values of being ready, respectful and safe. Most model these values well. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They are confident that if it does happen or another child is unkind to them that an adult will help to sort things out.

Most pupils work hard and behave well in lessons. They understand the new behaviour policy and respond to adults' high expectations. Pupils are confident and polite when speaking with adults. Riseley is an inclusive school, where everyone is valued.

Pupils are noticing the changes that leaders are making to the curriculum. They enjoy the topics they are studying. Pupils think the topics that they are learning about this year are more interesting than in the past. However, pupils have not had enough time to learn the new content of the curriculum.

Most parents and carers are supportive of the school. They recognise the improvements that leaders are bringing about. A few have concerns about the impact of frequent staffing changes. Some others feel that communication is not always as good as it should be.

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

Leaders have acted to improve the quality of education and pupils' attitudes to learning. They have set out expectations for an ambitious and well-ordered curriculum for some subjects. This was introduced at the start of the academic year.

While staff are teaching pupils the new curriculum, it has not yet been fully implemented across all subjects. There has not been enough time to see the impact on pupils' achievement over time. Systems to check how well pupils are learning are not in place for all subjects. In some subjects, such as mathematics, the curriculum is more embedded. In these subjects, there are clear systems to check how well pupils are learning. This helps to ensure that pupils develop their learning and understanding year on year.

Subject leaders are beginning to check to identify strengths and areas for development in their subject areas. They know that there are inconsistencies in how well all teachers are delivering the curriculum.

Leaders ensure that children learn to read as soon as they start school. Pupils who are in the early stages of reading have access to suitable books. These help them to practise the sounds that they have learned. Any pupils who need help to keep up are quickly identified and receive extra support. Consequently, most pupils read fluently by the end of Year 1. Pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and the books teachers read to them. They talk confidently about their favourite authors and the books they are reading.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start. They respond well to the clear routines and expectations that are in place. They understand what it means to be 'ready, respectful and safe'. Children vote for the books they want to hear adults read to them. They learn to share, take turns, and play constructively. Learning activities are well planned. This ensures that children build their learning and understanding across all areas of the curriculum.

Leaders and teachers identify pupils who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) early. Leaders support teachers to adapt their teaching in class. Additional adults also work alongside some pupils. This helps pupils with SEND make progress from their starting points. 'Kingfisher' provision helps pupils who need a more nurturing environment to be ready to learn.

Pupils and staff say that behaviour is much better than it used to be. This is because there are clear expectations which everyone understands. Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning, yet there are still a few pupils who do not show positive attitudes towards their learning. This happens when teachers do not consistently apply the behaviour policy. Also, a few pupils lose focus when teachers' expectations of what they can achieve in lessons are not high enough.

Leaders have ensured that there is an appropriate curriculum to support pupils' personal development. Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as school council members. Pupils value diversity both within their own school and the wider world. Younger pupils attend forest school. This helps to develop their resilience and social skills.

Leaders have identified appropriate priorities to bring about further improvement. Governors provide effective challenge and support to leaders. Staff feel well supported. They appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors, school leaders and staff receive regular and appropriate training. They know how to recognise potential signs of abuse, as well as how to report and record these concerns about pupils.

Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils and families get the help and support they need. Governors have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They ensure that all appropriate checks are made when appointing new staff.

Pupils are safe in school and learn how to keep themselves safe, including when working online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A newly designed curriculum is in place for some subjects. However, this curriculum implementation is in its infancy, and it is too soon to see the impact of the new curriculum on pupils' learning. Leaders should continue to monitor the implementation of the curriculum to ensure that it is having the desired effect.
- The new subject leader structure is allowing subject leaders to monitor their subjects. However, leaders have not yet collated their findings to address the weaknesses that remain in the teaching of the curriculum. Leaders need to use this information to ensure that all teachers have the knowledge and skills to teach all subjects well.
- There are still some inconsistencies in the expectations of staff and how they deal with inappropriate behaviour in class. Misbehaviour and poor efforts from pupils are not always addressed in line with school policies. Leaders should ensure that all staff have high expectations of both behaviour and learning and that all are implementing the behaviour policy consistently.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

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	109624
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10241627
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs	Catherine Vetch, Richard Carter
Headteacher	Leigh Pointon
Website	www.riseleyschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	30 and 31 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school works in partnership with another local school. The headteacher of this school works in an executive capacity across both these schools.
- Over the last two years, there have been several changes to leadership and staffing.
- The school is part of the diocese of St Albans.
- The school has a religious character, Church of England, and was last inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in May 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- There is before- and after-school childcare for pupils who attend the school. This is run by school staff and managed by school leaders.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held meetings with leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator and other subject leaders.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, considered curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. The inspector also observed some pupils read to staff and talked to them about their reading.
- The inspector also scrutinised curriculum documentation and pupils' workbooks for some other subjects, including science, geography, art, design technology, and personal, social, health and economic education, to gather more evidence about the quality of education.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour across the site. She met with groups of pupils to seek their views of the school. She also spoke to pupils informally in class, around the school and at breaktimes. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to review records. The inspector met with the office manager to scrutinise the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Also, she spoke to governors, staff and pupils, and reviewed surveys to further evaluate safeguarding.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including school development plans, behaviour support plans and minutes of governor meetings.
- The inspector considered the views of parents. She spoke with parents at the end of the school day. She considered 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 36 free-text comments.
- To gather the views of staff, the inspector spoke to several of them and also took account of the seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Joan Beale, lead inspector

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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