

Inspection of Redlands Primary School

Lydford Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5QH

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils from diverse backgrounds learn and play together in this school. They enjoy finding out about each other's cultures and learn first hand how different people can live harmoniously in modern Britain. There is an atmosphere of acceptance and respect. Pupils genuinely appreciate each other as individuals and learn to view their differences as strengths.

Pupils are not, however, getting the education they deserve. After an unsettled time, new leaders have started to make much-needed improvements. They are supporting staff to develop the curriculum, but there is much to do, so pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Leaders have rightly taken urgent action to improve systems for keeping children safe. They are working with staff and parents to re-establish the high standards of learning behaviour that pupils are capable of. Pupils have responded well to the stability new leaders have brought. There are positive relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils behave responsibly. For example, in the playground, pupils keep an eye on the friendship bench, ready to help anyone who sits there. Very occasionally, pupils are unkind to each other, but this rarely goes as far as bullying. Pupils nevertheless understand what bullying is and rightly trust staff to help them tackle it.

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

New leaders have got a firm grasp on what needs to improve. In partnership with the local authority, they are taking the right actions without delay. The new chair and vice-chair of governors have a realistic view of the school and understand what must be done to return the school to a secure footing. They are working with the governing body so that they understand their responsibilities for holding leaders to account effectively.

Staff are growing in their confidence and skills to teach early reading. A new curriculum is in place and leaders are providing effective training. Pupils learn to sound out their letters and blend the sounds quickly. They are confident to have a go at words they do not recognise. Teachers make sure that pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds they know. Staff check which sounds children do not know and provide individual support to help them catch up. Teachers promote a love of reading by sharing texts related to the wider curriculum with their classes.

Elsewhere, the curriculum is not established. Leaders have not defined the knowledge which must be taught in every subject throughout the school. Teachers do not know exactly what to teach or when. Because of this, assessment is not as effective as it could be, as teachers are not clear what they should be checking pupils remember. This means there are gaps in pupils' subject knowledge, so they do not make connections with new learning as well as they should.

Many subject leaders are very new to post and do not have the depth of subject knowledge or skills to support teachers effectively. They have not ensured that all learning begins in the Nursery and Reception Years or identified what subject knowledge children need for Year 1. As a result, there is too great a focus in early years on what children will do, rather than what they are expected to learn.

There are some pockets of clearer curriculum thinking, for example in science and physical education (PE). In these curriculum areas, subject knowledge is broken down into smaller steps starting in Reception Year. Pupils develop confidence in the early stages of learning these subjects. In PE, they work on their balance, throwing and catching balls to develop control and techniques in readiness for Year 1. Teachers check to see that pupils have remembered and understood the curriculum content by revisiting previous learning and making connections with new learning.

New leaders have strengthened systems to make sure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are assessed early and any needs are identified. Leaders challenge outside agencies persistently to get the support required to meet pupils' needs. They support staff so that they know how to adapt learning so that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils benefit from opportunities to develop personally. Educational visits are planned to extend pupils' understanding of the world. Pupils visit museums and other experiences locally, and enjoy trips to London. They sing in concerts and choirs and play musical instruments in assemblies to develop their confidence. A range of sport, music and gardening clubs are on offer to widen pupils' experience. Pupils learn how to look after their physical and mental health and how to keep themselves safe.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders train staff to notice any small changes in pupils' attendance or behaviour and make sure they know how to report them. Staff have a good understanding of the risks pupils might face and they report concerns quickly. This means that leaders can proactively identify children who may be in need. Leaders respond very quickly to reported concerns. If any necessary help is not forthcoming from outside agencies quickly enough, leaders take decisive action to ensure children get what they need. Staff have good relationships with families, who are confident that leaders and staff will act in their best interests.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- Curriculum thinking in most subjects is at an early stage. This means that teachers are not sure what pupils should be learning. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge, which makes new learning more difficult. Leaders need to make sure

that they identify the component knowledge in each subject area, starting in early years and building up to the end of Year 6.

- The curriculum in early years is not well designed. As a result, teachers think more about the activities children will do rather than what they want them to learn. Leaders need to ensure that staff understand how they should be building children's learning across all areas in Nursery and Reception.
- Many subject leaders are new to post. They do not have the knowledge and skills to develop the curriculum or support staff in their subject. Leaders need to develop subject leaders so that they can all contribute effectively to the rapid improvements needed.
- Governors are not holding leaders to account for the quality of education pupils are getting. They have not been aware that pupils are not achieving what they could. Governors must make sure that they fully understand their roles and responsibilities so that all the appropriate checks and balances are in place.

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

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| Unique reference number | 109787 |
| Local authority | Reading |
| Inspection number | 10256384 |
| 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 | 223 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Sarah Bamford |
| Headteacher | Theresa Buttery (interim headteacher) |
| Website | www.redlandsschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 7 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- In October 2022, an interim head of school was appointed, followed by the appointment of an interim headteacher in November 2022. A new chair and vice-chair of governors were appointed in November 2022.
- The school is not currently using any alternative provision.

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.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher and head of school. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and PE. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records and interviewing staff, and through discussions with pupils.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through their responses to Ofsted Parent View. Further views of pupils and staff were gathered through Ofsted's online surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors met with school leaders about safeguarding arrangements and attendance.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance records and behaviour incident logs.

Inspection team

Jo Brinkley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

James Broadbridge

His Majesty's Inspector

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