

Inspection of Ruskin Academy

Ruskin Avenue, Wellingborough NN8 3EG

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Ruskin Academy is a school where pupils flourish. Pupils arrive promptly at school each day and their attendance is high. They engage readily with their peers, enjoy each other's company, and show everyone respect. Pupils are enthusiastic and their positive attitudes are infectious. One parent, whose comment was typical of many, said, 'My child often talks about how much they love school and learning.'

Almost all pupils behave extremely well. Lessons are hardly ever disrupted. Pupils are adamant that bullying is rare. They say staff deal with any fall outs between pupils quickly. Staff award many more positive than negative behaviour points. Pupils strive to achieve 'gold', for modelling the school's values consistently. Pupils welcome and include everyone. One pupil reflected others' views when they said, 'Everyone knows we should treat people how we want to be treated.'

Pupils are excited by the extensive range of trips and visits they experience. Most pupils enjoy attending after-school activities, including science, film, sports, games and slime clubs. The sports breakfast club helps some pupils get to school early each morning. Pupils like the fact that their work is interesting and hard at the same time. They learn to be resilient and independent learners.

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

Since joining the Lion Academy Trust, leaders' hard work and commitment have improved the school significantly. School and trust leaders are ambitious for the pupils, the staff and the school's local community. As one parent, with a comment that was typical of many, stated, 'Staff have high expectations for my child and support them to achieve their potential.' Pupils achieved well at the end of Year 6 in 2022.

Leaders have identified exactly what they want pupils to know and when. Teachers follow the planned curriculum closely. They know exactly what they are teaching and how best to deliver it. They use a range of high-quality resources and tasks to engage and challenge pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They highlight important vocabulary to strengthen pupils' understanding.

Pupils say they find the well-structured lessons helpful. Most pupils can explain what they are learning, how it links to what has gone before and what they will learn next. Pupils frequently share their ideas with their 'talk partners'. They develop more complex responses by agreeing with, building on or challenging each other's thinking. These discussions build pupils' confidence.

Pupils check what they know against precise success criteria and identify how they can improve. Teachers adapt the curriculum carefully to fill gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well because the curriculum is well matched to their needs. In most subjects, there

are frequent opportunities for pupils to revisit the most important ideas. However, in a small number of subjects, pupils do not have enough time to secure their learning before they move on. When this happens, pupils muddle up precise details and struggle to remember important facts.

Pupils who are confident readers benefit from reading widely and often. They enjoy competing to win the reading trophy each week. However, a few pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read, including some with SEND, do not get the help they need. Tasks often do not link closely to the letters and sounds these pupils know or to the books they are reading. Help to improve their handwriting is limited. These pupils take too long to become accurate and fluent readers.

The school's personal development programme is extensive. Pupils know how to look after themselves and others. They understand key British values such as the rule of law and tolerance. They learn to appreciate the awe and wonder of the natural world. Pupils understand why it is important to win and lose well when playing competitive sports. They know how to look after themselves so that they stay fit and healthy.

Staff love working at the school and feel valued. They appreciate leaders' help to manage their workload and promote their well-being.

Trustees are well informed about the school. They support leaders effectively and make sure that leaders' work to improve the school is having the right impact.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe and well looked after in school. They know that staff will help them if they share something that is worrying them. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe in different situations, including online.

Staff know how to spot if a pupil is at risk of potential harm. Leaders act swiftly if staff raise a concern. Leaders seek advice from external organisations when necessary to get pupils the right help.

Occasionally, leaders do not record every action they take to keep pupils safe. They are taking action to ensure that their record-keeping is timely and thorough.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read do not get the right support. Leaders do not check closely enough that the reading curriculum for these pupils is based on their knowledge of phonics and their ability to write. Support for these pupils to improve their reading is poorly planned and

structured. These pupils do not become accurate and fluent readers as quickly as they should. Leaders must ensure that support for pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read is matched closely to these pupils' reading knowledge and skills. Leaders must make sure that staff who support these pupils with their reading have the necessary expertise to do so.

- In a small number of subjects, teachers do not check carefully enough that pupils have secured their knowledge before the learning moves on. When this happens, pupils' knowledge of key subject information is sometimes superficial, jumbled or inaccurate. Leaders need to ensure that teachers deliver the planned curriculum effectively, so that pupils have a strong foundation of subject knowledge before they move on to the next steps in their 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	146414
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10254738
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	274
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Robin Thompson-Clarke
Headteacher	Stephen Oswald (head of school)
Website	www.ruskinprimary.net
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ruskin Academy converted to become an academy school with the Lion Academy Trust in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Ruskin Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall. Many of the teaching staff have joined the school since that time.
- The head of school took up the role in September 2022. He is also the school's designated safeguarding leader.
- The previous head of school supports the school as an associate leader for the multi-academy trust.
- The school does not make use of the services of any alternative providers.

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 met with the head of school and the executive headteacher of the trust. They met with other school leaders, including the coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust and the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors did deep dives in five subjects: reading, mathematics, science, art and design, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, and considered pupils' work. They spoke with pupils and teachers. They heard pupils read. On the second day of the inspection, inspectors examined the curriculum in a wider range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from each year group. They spoke with pupils informally and observed the behaviour of pupils during social times.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks, holding discussions with safeguarding leaders, staff and pupils, and reviewing documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took note of the responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation audit and school improvement plan. They considered information about behaviour and suspensions, pupils' attendance and the wider curriculum.

Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Steven Barnes	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Anderson	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Evans	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023