

Inspection of Rye Community Primary School

The Grove, Rye, East Sussex TN31 7ND

Inspection dates: 28 February and 1 March 2023

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy members of Rye Community Primary School. They talk positively about their lessons and the experiences they receive. Leaders know their pupils well, and this leads to warm and supportive relationships throughout the school.

Leaders have high ambitions for their pupils and what they can contribute to their school. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the 'I RESPECT' values of 'independence, resilience, equality, smart, partnership, effort, caring and compassionate, and truthful'. They know why these values are important and how they help to shape their inclusive and caring school community.

Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. Behaviour at social times is mostly calm and settled. Occasionally, there can be some disagreements during games, and behaviour can be a little more unsettled. While leaders have taken actions to improve this, it is not yet at the level they know it can be.

Pupils feel safe at this school, and all confidently name adults they would speak to if they had concerns or worries. Bullying is rare, and pupils are certain that staff will resolve any issues quickly, if necessary.

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

Leaders have developed a carefully considered curriculum that identifies key information pupils need to know and in what order. This planning reflects the high ambitions that leaders have for all, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Across all subjects, learning is developed effectively from the early years upwards, meaning that pupils can see how their knowledge builds from the earliest stages. This has led to pupils increasingly being able to discuss their learning and how it builds on previously secured knowledge and skills. Previously, pupils' attainment in national curriculum tests has been low. Current pupils are making good progress through this strengthened curriculum and are prepared well for the next stage of their learning.

In most subjects, teachers have effective systems to assess what pupils know and can remember during lessons. This means that teachers pick up on any misunderstandings and clarify them for pupils quickly, adapting the next steps in teaching as needed. In early reading, and particularly in mathematics, this is more systematic and highly effective in supporting teachers to prepare lessons based on what pupils have remembered over time. However, this approach is not yet embedded across some foundation subjects. As such, sometimes, teachers may not revisit key knowledge or skills that need to be recapped or developed, meaning that pupils may not recall their learning in the longer term.

The teaching of early reading is secure. Staff are confident and knowledgeable. They check pupils' progress carefully and identify any who may need additional

support. Pupils who receive this extra help become confident and fluent readers. Overall, pupils enjoy reading. From the early years upwards, they talk with enthusiasm about the stories they read and share. Leaders have thought carefully about the selection of texts that pupils have access to. These are becoming increasingly diverse and expose pupils to a range of worlds beyond their own experiences.

Behaviour in lessons is generally calm and focused. In the early years, children respond to the clear routines in place and work well together in both indoor and outdoor provision. This pattern is evident across the school, although some older pupils report that a few children can occasionally disrupt their learning at points. Leaders have put in place clear behaviour expectations, which staff now follow with increased consistency. As a result, behaviour is mostly very settled, and low-level disruption is increasingly rare.

Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Leaders' actions are increasingly effective, and more pupils are now attending regularly. However, this work continues.

Beyond the classroom, leaders provide pupils with a range of opportunities to support the development of their wider skills, including gardening club, forest school and cookery. Leaders reflect on their offer regularly to ensure that it is appropriate for all pupils, particularly those with SEND. For example, groups have recently been introduced to help pupils learn how to regulate their emotions. Leaders also provide a range of activities to help develop pupils' wider life skills. For example, they work with the local bank to develop pupils' financial literacy and take younger pupils to the local charity shop to encourage them to practise budgeting and shopping responsibly.

Senior and trust leaders have worked closely together to identify the areas for improvement and put in place appropriate actions. Trust leaders support and challenge leaders well. They have developed effective links with families and the local community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders ensure that all staff have the relevant training to help them to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff know their pupils well and are swift to report any concerns. Those responsible for governance ensure that leaders take the right steps to check that adults are safe to work in the school.

Staff liaise effectively with external agencies and ensure that pupils and their families get the help they need. They are unafraid to challenge where this support

needs to be better. Pupils learn through the curriculum how to keep themselves safe, including keeping safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the past, the levels of persistent absence have been too high. This has meant that too many pupils missed out on their education. Leaders' actions have started to show impact in this area, and more pupils are now attending regularly. However, leaders must continue their work to identify and address the barriers that prevent pupils from attending regularly so that attendance continues to rise.
- Assessment is not yet well embedded in some foundation subjects. As a result, staff do not know what knowledge pupils have remembered over time. Leaders need to ensure that the foundation subjects have a systematic approach to assessment, similar to that established in early reading and mathematics.

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	146826
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10256249
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	264
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Giles Lambert
Headteacher	Kelly Martin
Website	www.ryeprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Rye Community Primary School converted to become an academy school in the Aquinas Trust in 2018. When its predecessor school, also called Rye Community Primary School (but in a different multi-academy trust), was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school does not currently use 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.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, executive headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with members of the

Aquinas Advisory Council and the board of trustees, including the chief executive officer. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, art 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. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to adults they know.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors held meetings with safeguarding leaders, advisory council members, teachers and pupils. They scrutinised the single central record and checked safeguarding records.
- The inspection team took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and advisory council minutes. Inspectors also considered external reports of the school from the local authority, as well as stakeholder engagement surveys undertaken by the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experience of the school. They took account of parent, carer and staff views through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Marian Feeley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Anne Allen

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