

Inspection of a good school: John Rankin Infant and Nursery School

Garford Crescent, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 6EX

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

John Rankin Infant and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love to come to this friendly and caring school. Staff greet pupils in the mornings with bright, welcoming smiles. Leaders are determined that all pupils will thrive and achieve well. As a result, pupils readily discuss strategies which help them persevere in the face of challenge. They explain their learning clearly and confidently. Leaders are keen to promote values such as independence and resilience. Pupils recognise the importance of using these values when learning something new.

Behaviour around school and in class is good. Pupils treat each other and adults with respect. Records show that bullying is rare, but when it happens, it is dealt with effectively. Pupils share this view. They rightly trust adults to help them if they have a worry or a concern.

Leaders want pupils to be fascinated by the world around them. Pupils particularly enjoy visits which enhance their learning, for example to a local museum or to the postbox to post a letter. Pupils also benefit from many opportunities to nurture their talents and interests. Textiles club, football and choir are particularly popular. Furthermore, all pupils enjoy the experience of live theatre during their time at the school.

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

Leaders understand the important ingredients needed to help pupils learn successfully. They have designed a broad curriculum, which they are refining over time. In most subjects, this sets out the essential knowledge that pupils need so that they can make sense of what comes next as they move through the school. In the main, teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subjects they teach. They plan activities to help pupils make connections with what they already know and to expand their understanding. Consequently, in many subjects, pupils develop knowledge in a clear sequence from Nursery upwards. In mathematics, for example, pupils make links between topics, remember their learning and achieve well. Pupils in Year 2 can see how applying their knowledge of multiplication helps them to understand division.

Work to refine the curriculum is not, though, quite complete. In a few subjects, for example religious education and music, leaders have not identified precisely what pupils need to learn and when. As yet, there are not always sufficient opportunities for pupils to review and revisit important knowledge to make sure that they remember it. This means that at times, pupils find it difficult to recall their learning readily.

Generally, teachers present new information clearly to pupils. They plan purposeful activities and make sure to check pupils' understanding. Occasionally, where teachers are not as familiar with exactly what they should be teaching or how pupils' learning develops over time in a subject, teaching is not as effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils' specific needs are met effectively so that they can learn well. For example, the youngest children in Nursery are provided with quiet, secure places to sleep and healthy snacks to eat. A well-equipped outdoor area further nurtures their physical development. Leaders have clear systems to identify any additional needs pupils may have. They ensure that staff work together effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access the curriculum. Leaders check carefully that any extra help is having the desired impact.

Leaders prioritise reading. Teachers read high-quality texts to pupils regularly. Children are taught phonics right from the start of Reception, using a precise programme. Pupils read books that are matched to the sounds that they know. This ensures that they become fluent readers quickly. Pupils who are struggling to learn to read are identified swiftly. Adult support for the weakest readers is systematically planned and effective.

Opportunities for pupils' wider development are well considered. Leaders ensure that pupils learn the importance of service and how to contribute positively to society. Pupils donate Easter and Christmas gifts to local elderly residents and have supported homeless people through work with a community soup kitchen. 'Eco-leaders', having learned about the threat of plastic pollution through work with a local university, are keen to encourage others to care for the planet.

Leaders are mindful of staff's workload. They ensure that staff have the time and space to focus on actions that have the greatest impact on pupils' learning. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know what needs to be done to help the school to improve. Governors are committed to working alongside leaders and the local authority to continue the school's improvement journey.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of vigilance. They understand the needs of their community well. There are clear processes to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders make swift referrals to external agencies when necessary to get pupils and their families the support they need. Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Checks are robust to ensure that adults in school are safe to work with children. Governors are clear that pupils' safety must be prioritised. They take

effective action when necessary to protect pupils' security and well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, leaders have not identified with enough precision what teachers need to teach and when they need to teach it. As a result, pupils sometimes struggle to recall prior learning securely. Leaders need to complete and embed a coherently sequenced curriculum from Nursery to Year 2.
- Teachers' subject and teaching knowledge are not consistently strong. Where this is the case, they do not always build pupils' knowledge systematically. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have the expertise and skills to maximise pupils' learning across all subjects.

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 June 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

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| Unique reference number | 109826 |
| Local authority | West Berkshire |
| Inspection number | 10241711 |
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 313 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Katie Kearney and Chris Adams (Co-chairs) |
| Headteacher | Flora Cooper (Executive Headteacher) |
| Website | www.jrs.w-berks.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 14 and 15 June 2017 |

Information about this school

- This is a three-form-entry, larger-than-average-size infant and nursery school
- The school is federated with John Rankin Junior School
- The Nursery has places for two-, three- and four-year-olds.
- The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2022.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and senior leaders. The inspector also met with members of the governing body, including one of the co-chairs of governors, and with an officer from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector also discussed planning and documentation from a range of other subjects with leaders.

- The inspector reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records and interviewing staff and through discussions with pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.

Inspection team

Sue Keeling, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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