

Inspection of a good school: Rotherfield Primary School

Rotherfield Street, Islington, London N1 3EE

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 April 2023

Outcome

Rotherfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in the caring culture of this school. They feel safe and confident to share their ideas. There is a strong system of pastoral care across the school. Pupils are confident that adults will listen to their concerns and stop any unkindness quickly.

Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic success. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well from their starting points. Children in early years settle quickly into the routines that teachers provide for them.

The school is a calm and orderly place in which to learn. All staff encourage pupils to follow the school's 'ready, respectful and safe' expectations. They also support pupils who need help in managing their own behaviour. Older pupils are enthusiastic monitors, helping younger pupils at lunchtime and playtime.

The range of planned trips enriches the taught curriculum for pupils at Rotherfield. Pupils have opportunities to visit St Paul's Cathedral, the Tower of London, the theatre and a synagogue. The school now uses forest school to develop outdoor education.

Pupils learn about diversity and different relationships. They value differences between people and are welcoming to pupils new to their school. They are well prepared to become active and positive citizens.

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

Leaders share a vision of high expectations for pupils at Rotherfield. They have designed an ambitious curriculum that focuses on prioritising reading and mathematics. From the start in early years, carefully thought-through resources ensure that all children have access to activities that develop their knowledge of letters and sounds and of numbers. This is both in formal sessions and in independent time. The outdoor space is used effectively to promote children's development of reading, writing and mathematics. From

Year 1, pupils build on these solid foundations so that they gain the required knowledge in the core subjects. This enables them to access the subjects in the wider curriculum successfully.

Reading continues to be a school priority. This is evident in the leadership and implementation of the school's chosen phonics programme. Younger pupils are taught the initial letter sounds effectively. In Year 1, the teaching of simple words to segment and blend is effective. All staff follow well-planned lessons. Pupils who need help are ably supported by well-trained adults. Pupils with SEND are well supported through these sessions. The books that pupils read match accurately the sounds they are being taught. Staff understand the need for pupils to gain fluency quickly. Assessment information is used effectively to track pupils' achievements regularly.

There is a well-sequenced programme of mathematical learning in place for pupils at Rotherfield. Teachers receive the right tools to enable them to deliver the planned learning effectively. Pupils enjoy their lessons and demonstrate high levels of independence when working through their given tasks. Learning is recapped from previous lessons effectively, and new learning is introduced in a consistently structured way. Work in books is well presented. Pupils know that they learn skills in mathematics lessons that they can apply in wider curriculum subjects. For example, they use these skills in science when measuring and using graphs and in geography when finding coordinates for mapping.

Leaders use specialist teachers for Spanish, computing and physical education. In these subjects, planning is clear and sequenced well for pupils to gain the appropriate skills. The thematic approach to learning in the wider curriculum links learning across these subjects. In most topics, this approach works well. For example, Year 2 pupils talk with confidence and enthusiasm about their topic on the Great Fire of London. This is also the case with topics that consider the impact of enslavement, Jewish history in relation to the Second World War and gender equality when looking at the work of the suffragettes in Year 6. Where topics do not work as well, the learning focus is unclear for pupils. Leaders agree that more work needs to be done to refine the planning to ensure that the learning is clear for pupils.

The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils like taking positions of responsibility. For example, monitors help younger pupils in the lunch hall and on the playground. A pupil-led food council supports change through gathering pupils' opinions about the school menus and how well these link to their learning in the classroom.

In lessons, behaviour is extremely positive. Pupils show respect for each other and towards all adults. This is because lessons are well planned and enjoyable.

Too many pupils are missing their education, and this is affecting their academic attainment. Leaders work with families to continue to improve this figure, but there is still more to be done.

Staff morale is high. They are appreciative of the way in which the senior leadership team considers their workload and they say that the school's collaborative ethos supports them in their role.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Records for checking staff's suitability to work with children are carried out robustly and kept meticulously. Staff are confident in spotting when pupils are at risk of harm. This results in no information being overlooked. The work with vulnerable families is effective. Leaders have positive links with the local authority to escalate concerns if required.

Governors regularly check the school's systems for record-keeping and safeguarding procedures.

Pupils know how to stay safe when online, including what details should be kept private when using online technology. They successfully learn about the risks they may encounter when transitioning from primary to secondary school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some planned learning for the foundation subjects needs refining as it limits pupils' understanding of subject-specific knowledge. Leaders should review topics to ensure that pupils are able to build on prior learning successfully and more effectively.
- A significant number of pupils are absent from school too often. This means that they miss out on key learning. Leaders should ensure that the strategies they use to improve attendance help all parents and carers to understand the importance of regular school attendance and the impact that absence has on their children's success at school.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2018.

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	131740
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10268963
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Donna Shah
Headteacher	Abi Misselbrook-Lovejoy (Executive Headteacher) Joanna Jones (Head of School)
Website	www.rotherfieldprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has entered into a federation with Newington Green Primary School.
- The school does not 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 the evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other senior leaders. The inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and spoke to the school's improvement partner.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. As part of each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke to teachers. The inspector spoke to a range of pupils about their learning and viewed a

sample of pupils' work. The inspector also looked at planning for computing and Spanish.

- The inspector reviewed a range of school documents, including school policies, records of behaviour and school improvement documents.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector checked the procedures for recruiting new members of staff, spoke to the designated safeguarding leads and spoke to staff about how they report concerns.
- The inspector spoke to parents and considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also took into account the views of staff through the Ofsted online surveys for staff. There were no responses to the online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Sara Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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