

Inspection of a good school: Rodings Primary School

Dunmow Road, Leaden Roding, Dunmow, Essex CM6 1PZ

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 May 2023

Outcome

Rodings Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud of their school. They say the best things about Rodings are the teachers and the pupils. They describe everyone in the community as kind and supportive. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe. Bullying rarely happens. Pupils are confident that teachers will stop any unkind behaviour quickly.

Pupils' good behaviour in classrooms and on the playground is notable. Classrooms are calm places, where pupils focus on their learning. Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations for their learning. This helps them to achieve well. They value opportunities to work with subject experts, who help to make their learning memorable. For example, Year 4 pupils worked with a local composer, which greatly enhanced their understanding of notation in musical compositions.

Pupils enjoy participating in the wide range of clubs on offer. These include art, woodwork, gardening, choir and various sporting activities. These opportunities help pupils to learn new skills and develop their talents.

Pupils have the chance to take on roles of responsibility. Pupils feel valued and know that the ideas they share contribute to decisions made in the school. Members of the 'School Parliament' spoke to governors about having additional benches on the school field. These are now in place.

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

In almost all subjects, leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum, which enables pupils to develop their learning in small steps. In these subjects, teachers have the expertise to teach leaders' planned curriculum well. Teachers introduce new ideas clearly. They check pupils' understanding before moving on. They typically provide more practise and extra help for individuals and groups who need it. Teachers routinely check what pupils have remembered, and this helps pupils to retain important subject knowledge.

In a few strands of the curriculum for English, planning is less well developed to support pupils' long-term success. This is seen in aspects of the curriculum for early letter and number formation and basic sentence punctuation. The most important knowledge and skills that pupils should learn have not been so clearly planned out. This means that some pupils in the school have less confidence when putting some writing knowledge and skills into practice.

Staff teach leaders' chosen phonics programme very well. All staff are well trained and make skilful use of appropriate resources. Staff are swift to identify and support pupils who are struggling to learn to read. Books chosen for pupils to read match the sounds they know. As a result, pupils get the help they need to learn to read quickly and fluently. This starts with the youngest children in the early years. Pupils are passionate about reading and keen to share their favourite authors and titles.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) participate fully in the school community. Teachers adapt tasks so that pupils with SEND get the help they need to access the same curriculum as their classmates. Where pupils need extra help to meet their specific targets, this is provided. This helps pupils with SEND to make strong progress.

Staff use a consistent, positive approach to managing pupils' behaviour, known as 'The Rodings Way'. This begins in the early years. Staff use reward strategies well, such as 'hot chocolate Friday,' to promote positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' choices contribute to highly respectful classroom environments. They understand routines and rules and the reasons for them.

Pupils' wider development is provided for well. Pupils are kind to each other and accepting of differences. Leaders have established a personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. This helps pupils to learn about mental and physical health and the importance of respectful and healthy relationships. Pupils learn about democracy. As members of the school parliament reflected, 'It is about making the school a better place for generations to come.'

Staff are proud to work at the school and report that leaders are considerate of their well-being. Leaders consider the needs and views of staff members when making decisions. Governors have an accurate understanding of leaders' strengths, what is working well and what needs to improve. This enables them to support school improvement by monitoring progress being made and holding leaders to account effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils know that there is always someone to talk to if they are worried. They know how to keep themselves safe online and in the wider world.

Staff are well trained and regularly updated, so they are aware of the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. They work closely with parents and carers, many of whom are

highly positive about the relationship they have with the school. Leaders ensure that other agencies are involved, when required, to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding records are thorough and that all required checks are made on adults working in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Important knowledge and skills in transcription and grammar have been identified by leaders, but this is not clearly set out. Teaching does not support pupils to develop this knowledge as well as they should, which affects the quality of their written work in English and in other subjects. Leaders should focus on ensuring that teaching gives pupils the knowledge they need to correctly transcribe and punctuate their written work so that it is of a consistently high quality.

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 January 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

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| Unique reference number | 115266 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 10284253 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 295 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Steph Green |
| Headteacher | Colin Raraty |
| Website | www.rodingsprimaryschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 30 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Currently, no pupils in the school attend alternative provision.
- There is breakfast and after-school provision on the school site, which is run by a separate, Ofsted registered provider.

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.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspector also met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Meetings were held with subject leaders for history, computing and PSHE, and the inspector discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils work in these subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and other staff to discuss their work to keep pupils safe.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including the school development plan, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspector considered the 132 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 97 free-text comments. Thirty-three responses to the Ofsted staff survey were also considered. There were no responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- The inspector spoke to groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school. The inspector also observed the behaviour of pupils during breaktimes and around the school.

Inspection team

Stephen Cloke, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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