

Inspection of Rettendon Primary School

Main Road, Rettendon Common, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 8DW

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Rettendon pupils like the fact that their school is small because it means they get to know everyone well. Pupils thrive in the family atmosphere at the school. They feel happy and safe here.

Pupils behave, learn and achieve well, especially in mathematics and English. Their relationships with adults are rooted in respect. If pupils struggle to meet the adults' expectations around behaviour, they get the support they need to improve. Bullying is rare and, if there is any unkindness, adults deal with it.

Pupils enjoy having a say in the running of the school as school councillors or eco-councillors. These roles help them understand the concept of democracy. Head gardeners enjoy tending their class 'allotment' beds. Pupils appreciate the link they have made with a local allotment holder to learn more about the joys of horticulture.

A variety of experiences enrich pupils' learning. An opera singer runs inspiring weekly singing sessions for every class. Different faith representatives visit the school to teach pupils about their beliefs and customs. Visitors from a range of professions enable older pupils to consider what jobs they might do later in life.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious and detailed curriculum for pupils, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In most subjects, the curriculum is designed so that pupils build a strong body of knowledge and skills over time. In art, for example, pupils begin sketching in Reception. They use pencils and charcoal. By Year 6, pupils use a range of media and techniques such as cross-hatching, scumbling and shading.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong in most areas of the curriculum. They design learning activities that pupils enjoy. They use questioning effectively to assess pupils' understanding. They adjust their teaching to address any gaps in pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils learn the intended curriculum well. In history, for example, Year 3 and 4 pupils describe in detail what life was like for Victorian children. Pupils use appropriate subject-specific vocabulary when talking about their learning.

Leaders' planning and monitoring are not well established in a few subjects. Teachers are less well supported to deliver the intended curriculum as precisely as leaders intend. Pupils are not developing the same rich understanding in these subjects, as they are in subjects like mathematics and art. In some subjects, curriculum leaders do not know how well pupils are faring.

Pupils learn to read well. Phonics lessons start in Reception where children learn the sounds they need to know quickly. Teachers spot any pupils who are falling behind.

They put effective additional support in place for these pupils to catch up. The books pupils take home enable them to practise the sounds that they are learning in class. Older pupils read widely. They know reading is important for their future lives.

In the early years, children, including those with SEND, settle quickly and safely. They experience a wide-ranging and well-planned curriculum. They particularly enjoy being taught how to use different tools safely to develop early woodwork skills. They enjoy helping to make decisions about their learning, for example deciding on rules for the outdoor play space. Children learn and play harmoniously together.

The school's values of responsibility, honesty, fairness and tolerance permeate everything pupils and adults do. Pupils know about diversity. They know difference is something to celebrate. Most pupils are confident and resilient. If their well-being dips, the pastoral care at the school ensures that they are well supported.

Governors share leaders' ambitious vision for the school. They are challenging and supportive in equal measure as they work with leaders to drive improvements. Most parents speak highly of the school. They appreciate the strong sense of community. This is also true of staff, who work together as a team for the good of pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. All staff and governors are trained to recognise the signs that a pupil may be at risk. Staff are extremely vigilant and record any concerns they have quickly. Leaders follow up concerns and take the appropriate action. They ensure that support is in place for vulnerable pupils and families.

The system for carrying out and recording vetting checks on adults who work or volunteer with pupils is robust.

Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe. They know about the risks associated with using the internet. They know who to talk to if they have any worries.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not planned precisely what they want pupils to learn and when. This means that teachers are not well supported to deliver the curriculum as effectively as they should be. Leaders need to provide staff with planning and training that allows them to deliver the intended curriculum more effectively.

- Leaders' systems for monitoring the impact of the curriculum have not yet been fully implemented in the foundation subjects. This means leaders do not make timely improvements to the curriculum in these subjects. Leaders must prioritise full implementation of the new monitoring schedule. They should use the information they gather to inform curriculum planning to ensure that pupils are getting high-quality teaching in every subject.

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	114856
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10255099
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Whittle
Headteacher	Phil Andrews
Website	www.rettendon.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been recent changes to the school's leadership team. The headteacher took up his post in September 2022 and the deputy headteacher took up her post in January 2023.
- Leaders were not using any alternative provision at the time of the inspection.

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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art, and religious education (RE). For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult. An

inspector also looked at a sample of books from science and history across all year groups and spoke with pupils about these subjects.

- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders to review records. She scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school development plan, external reviews of the school and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from different year groups during lessons and at breaktimes. They also considered the 20 responses to Ofsted’s pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents. This included speaking with parents at the end of the school day and reviewing the 54 responses and 47 free-text responses submitted to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors gathered the views of staff by speaking with many of them.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

John Crane

Ofsted Inspector

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