

Inspection of Roach Vale Primary School

Roach Vale, Parsons Heath, Colchester, Essex CO4 3YN

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know and work hard to live up to the school rules of 'be brave, be kind, be respectful'. They get along well with each other, from early years to Year 6. Those who feel worried are supported by caring adults. Adults ensure that any instances of unkindness or bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe.

All pupils are encouraged to aim high in their learning and behaviour. They learn and achieve well. This includes children in the early years, who get off to a great start. Pupils are motivated by the rewards they can earn. They eagerly await the outcome of the weekly reading raffle, for example, when those who have read frequently at home might win a book.

There are opportunities for pupils to explore their interests at a range of clubs. These include construction games, gardening or 'chill and chat' in the school's outdoor learning lodge.

Older pupils learn valuable life skills, such as independence and courage on residential visits. All classes enjoy memorable day trips. These give them new experiences and bring their learning to life. On a recent visit to a country park, Reception and Year 2 pupils saw real-life pond-skaters and water-boatmen.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum that plans out the knowledge pupils will learn in each subject and the key language they need to learn across each year. Leaders have thought about how children's learning starts as soon as they arrive at the school in Reception. In science, for example, children in Reception know how many legs a bee has. They know how worms find their way around without eyes. In Year 1, pupils use this knowledge of animals further and learn to categorise them, comparing different categories and describe their characteristics.

Teachers typically present new learning to pupils clearly. They use a range of assessment methods to check how well pupils are grasping new knowledge. Teachers adapt their teaching according to the needs of their pupils. Leaders ensure that adults understand the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils, including those with SEND, learn and achieve well.

A few subjects are less well developed. Curriculum plans in these subjects do not break down the learning precisely into well-sequenced, small steps. These plans do not guide teachers well enough to deliver learning that helps pupils to build a secure body of knowledge. Some pupils do not learn as well as they should in these few subjects.

In the early years, the curriculum prepares children exceptionally well for the next

stage of their learning. Adults reinforce new language often to strengthen children's use of it. Adults model the skills and attributes they want children to learn, such as problem-solving and curiosity. Children show high levels of concentration when learning or playing.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Daily phonics lessons start soon after children join the Reception class. Well-trained adults deliver these lessons expertly. Pupils learn the sounds they need to be able to read. They take home books that enable them to practise these. Teachers are quick to spot pupils who need extra help. These pupils get the support they need.

As pupils get older, they develop other reading skills, such as predicting, inferring, and summarising. They enjoy using the school's well-stocked library or the key texts and reading displays in their classrooms. Teachers use these texts and displays effectively to introduce subject-specific vocabulary in an engaging way. Pupils learn and achieve well in reading.

Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. The clear routines adults have set up enable pupils to meet expectations. Pupils whose behaviour does not meet expectations get the help they need to improve.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships and lifestyles through a carefully planned curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils develop a respect for different cultures, lifestyles, and faiths. Pupils also get lots of opportunities for roles and responsibilities. Pupils act as librarians, school councillors or eco-councillors and learn important skills from these leadership roles. Pupils say their special jobs develop their confidence.

Governors know the school's strengths and next steps. They hold leaders to account, while providing them with support. Most staff feel valued by leaders. They appreciate the training they get. Many say leaders care about their well-being and workload. A small number of staff and parents hold negative views of the school's approach to behaviour management.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors are trained in safeguarding. They know the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders act quickly when concerns are reported. They keep records of these.

Leaders talk to external professionals and put support in place for pupils if this is needed. Adults who join the school are appropriately checked before they work with pupils.

Pupils learn about safety. They know that they can talk to an adult if they are worried about anything. This includes online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subject areas, there is a lack of precision in the way plans break down the learning into small steps and sequence them progressively. In these areas, some pupils are not building a secure body of knowledge. Leaders must ensure curriculum plans in all areas set out clearly what pupils will learn and when. This will support teachers' ability to enable pupils to achieve the end points leaders have identified.
- A small number of stakeholders have negative perceptions of the school's approaches to behaviour management. The work leaders do in this area is not widely understood. Leaders, including governors, should continue to explore ways of engaging with the school community effectively, so that stakeholders have confidence in leaders' approaches to behaviour.

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	114823
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10227033
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	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Johnson
Headteacher	Clare Sampson
Website	www.roachvaleprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school was not using alternative provision for any pupils 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, history, and science. 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.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders to review records. An inspector scrutinised the single central record of

recruitment and vetting checks. Inspectors also spoke with governors, staff and pupils about safeguarding.

- The lead inspector spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. She spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- 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.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils by speaking with them during lessons, in meetings and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents. This included speaking with parents at the start of the school day and reviewing the 17 responses and 7 free-text responses submitted to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors gathered the views of staff by speaking with many of them and considering the 16 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Becky Quinn

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023