

Inspection of a good school: Red Oak Primary School

Southwell Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 0RZ

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 May 2023

Outcome

Red Oak Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Red Oak Primary School. They attend regularly and demonstrate exceptional attitudes to learning. Pupils aim high and respond positively to the high expectations set, where everyone has the opportunity to excel. Pupils enjoy learning because lessons are relevant and engaging.

Safety is prioritised. Pupils are happy and kept safe. They thrive as a result of the commitment to their care and well-being. Pupils trust staff to support them when problems arise. On the rare occasions when bullying occurs, leaders deal with it effectively.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. In class, pupils are keen to do well and eager to contribute to discussions. From the start of early years, they follow clear routines and expectations. Pupils are confident and friendly to visitors.

Opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their leadership skills, for example in the role of subject ambassadors. Pupils help subject leaders to improve learning in their subject. The high volume of extra-curricular club opportunities enjoyed by pupils are varied. Alongside several sports clubs, pupils can enjoy film, cooking, mathematics and philosophy clubs, and many more. Pupils' passion for these activities is clear. They benefit immensely from being an integral part of the school and wider community.

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

Leaders, staff and governors share a highly aspirational vision for all pupils, irrespective of their background or ability. In all subjects and year groups, leaders have designed clear and ambitious curriculum plans. These plans capture prior learning for teachers to build on. Subject-specific vocabulary, content and skills are explicit. Teachers have strong

subject knowledge and teach content in the order leaders expect. As a result, pupils confidently recall knowledge from earlier learning and can explain how what they are learning now follows on from this. Teachers regularly check what pupils know and understand. They use this information effectively, to adapt teaching and to address any gaps in pupils' understanding.

Leaders' commitment to teaching pupils to read begins as soon as children start in early years. There is a consistently well-delivered phonics programme in place. All staff are trained to teach phonics and are highly successful in engaging and developing pupils as readers. Staff continually assess pupils' reading ability and adapt the curriculum appropriately so that pupils learn to read well. Pupils engage with high-quality, diverse texts across the curriculum, and they talk enthusiastically about the books they read. In the early years, texts help broaden children's curiosity and develop their love for reading. For example, children join in enthusiastically with the repetitive text of the familiar story 'The Little Red Hen'.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve as highly as their peers. This is because teachers and leaders know them well. Leaders provide staff with a wealth of information to ensure that they are fully equipped to successfully meet the needs of all pupils in the school. Leaders meticulously evaluate the impact of this support. This leads to further adaptations to ensure pupils with SEND can successfully access the full curriculum.

Leaders have ensured that all staff and pupils have consistently high expectations of themselves and of each other. This starts in the early years provision, where children take turns with resources and learn how to develop caring and kind relationships. These positive behaviours are developed further across the school and lead to a consistently respectful school culture. Behaviour is impeccable.

Pupils are very well supported to look after their physical and mental health. Pupils have developed a strategy to support and promote their mental health and physical well-being. The idea that 'healthy body equals healthy mind' links to a range of programmes designed by pupils, and which have been shared with other schools.

Pupils participate in weekly current affairs lessons, where they learn the skills of debate and form their own views and opinions based on research. They actively engage in a range of activities to make a positive difference to the local community and beyond. The charities that pupils support and the activities that they undertake are chosen by pupils. This supports pupils' awareness of the causes and promotes contextual understanding of a democratic process.

Staff are extremely proud to work at the school. They know that leaders listen to their views and consider their workload. They value the extensive professional development they receive. The governing body has a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills to hold leaders rigorously to account. As a result, governors are highly effective. They check that leaders are taking the right actions at the right time, with the best interests of pupils in mind.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of vigilance. Diligent checks ensure that all adults are safe to work with children. All staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates from external agencies.

Staff know individual pupils very well. As a result, they recognise any signs of concern at an early stage, and report these quickly. Leaders deal with concerns promptly and effectively.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that teaches pupils how to stay safe online, as well as teaching the importance of keeping physically and mentally healthy.

School governors and the trust carry out regular checks of safeguarding at the 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 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

Unique reference number	140573
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10211395
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	455
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Philip O'Hear
Headteacher	Heather Madsen
Website	www.redoakprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 February 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Red Oak Primary School is part of The Active Learning Trust.
- Leaders use one registered alternative provider.
- The school has provision for three-year-olds.

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.
- Deep dives were carried out in early reading, mathematics and history. Each deep dive included a discussion about the curriculum with leaders, visits to a sample of lessons, discussions with teachers, discussions with some pupils about their learning and looking at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to pupils read to an adult.
- The inspector evaluated the curriculum plans and spoke to leaders and pupils about several other subjects.

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders. The inspector met with parents and with some external providers who work in the school.
- The inspector met with the chair of governors, the safeguarding governor, the chief executive officer and the deputy chief executive officer.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised the single central record and reviewed safeguarding paperwork and systems. The inspector spoke with leaders, teachers, support staff, members of the local governing body and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in school.
- Thirty-four responses, along with 30 free-text comments, to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents were reviewed by the inspector. She also considered 55 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Bridget Harrison, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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